



HRM **PERSPECTIVES**

Insights on Human Resource Management Practices



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Insights on Human Resource Management Practices



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HRM Perspectives

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Editorial

I warmly welcome the readers and the contributors of the '*HRM Perspectives*' December, 2019 Issue of the Human Resource Management Perspectives peer reviewed journal published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM) of Sri Lanka. '*HRM Perspectives*', the journal of CIPM, Sri Lanka, has the potential of epitomising the growth of HRM research in Sri Lanka and the region. CIPM envisions to improve '*HRM Perspectives*' to an indexed journal having regional and international presence. CIPM redesigned the annual research symposium in 2019 with an improved focus on HRM research having understood its enhanced reputation and responsibility in leading the nation with research based HRM initiatives. Five scholarly articles have been selected for December, 2019 issue. '*HRM Perspectives*' has provided opportunities to our own members, students, and employees to publish their scholarly work. We firmly believe that great things start from inside and that charity begins at home. It is note-worthy to mention that there are many research articles already available for the next issue of the journal.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all who supported to make this issue a success. I thank the panel of eminent reviewers, and the editorial assistants for their commitment to enhance the standards, which the journal aspires. I heartily thank all the authors and writers, who submitted their research manuscripts. I must commend the foresight and encouragement received from the President of CIPM, SL, Mr Dhammika Fernando, and the governing council, and the support of members of the Applied Research & HR Publications Committee of CIPM and CIPM staff members for their support in publication of this issue. We very much look forward to your support in realizing the promise of '*HRM Perspectives*' to all stakeholders.

Dr L N A Chandana Jayawardena
Editor-in-Chief (chandanacj@gmail.com)

IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION IN AN APPAREL SECTOR ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the most valuable asset in an organization in present days. It is the main responsibility of the management to provide protection to the workforce to achieve overall organizational objectives. The main objective of this research was to identify the impact of organizational health and safety practices on employee turnover intention. Occupational safety and health (OSH) is one of the key functions related to employees physical, mental and social wellbeing under HRM functions. The selected sample includes 100 operational level employees of the ABC apparel solutions at the Kurunegala plant. Sampling method is Stratified Sampling Method. The methods of primary data collection were through Questionnaires. The quantitative analysis was undertaken with the use of statistical analysis methods. The methods used for statistical analysis were the Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and Regression. It was obtained that all the independent variables has a positive relationship with the used dependent variable, and all the hypotheses are accepted. The study revealed that employee turnover intention is positively influenced or affected by health and safety practices of operational level employees.

Key Words:-*Occupational Safety and Health, Workplace Conditions for Health, Reaction of Emergency Situations, Employee Turnover Intention*

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, it is an important task to manage employee turnover for any organization. (Opatha, 2012) states that the Human Resource Management (HRM) is the efficient and effective utilization of Human Resources to achieve the goals of an organization. Related to HRM functions, the occupational safety and health (OSH) is one of key functions related to employees physical, mental and social wellbeing.

According to (Opatha, 2012) OSH means the group of activities involved in creating, improving and maintaining total health and safety of employees. Therefore, this research was conducted focusing on the operational level employees at ABC apparel solutions limited to investigate the impact of organizational health and safety practices on employee turnover intention. According to the journal article of (Renuka Murthy, 2015) it is mentioned that Employee turnover defined by Hom and Griffeth (1994), was 'voluntary terminations of members from organizations'. Potential risks and hazards in the workplace lead to injury, property damage, fines, penalties and even death. So it becomes a cost to the organization.

Employee Turnover intention is considered one of the major consideration in contemporary organizations. Enhancing the quality of organizational Human Resource by providing them with maximum job satisfaction is critical in order to finally achieve organizational goals and objectives through the developed Human Resource. Occupational health and safety is known as the safety, health, and welfare of people at work. It is the main responsibility of the management to provide a safe working environment for employees. The report of Situational Analysis on Occupational Health and Safety in Sri Lanka published by Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo in 2016 mentions that, "Despite the favorable health indices, occupational health services in the areas of surveillance and health interventions faces significant challenges. Hence, there is a need to identify priority areas that require attention in occupational health and safety for Sri Lanka".

Effective occupational health and safety programmes in the workplace have many benefits for the company for both employer and employees. Having proper practice in Health and safety, leads towards productivity enhancement, clean and healthy working environment, reduced absenteeism, guaranteed safe environment, happier employees etc. effective health and safety practices will protect the organization's most valuable asset. The initial establishment costs for an OHS system and implementation can be material but in future, it becomes an investment to the company through business and can save money in the long run, with less injury, damages, fines and claims. Zero injury, damages will enhance the organizations corporate reputation and brand as well.

There are a number of Ordinances and Acts related to Employee Health and Safety such as, Workmen Compensation Ordinance (No 45 of 1942), Factories Ordinance (No 19 of 1934) Shop and Office Employment Act (No 19 of 1954), Maternity Benefits Ordinance (No 32 of 1939), Employment of Women, Young persons and Children Act (No 47 of 1965), Employee Provident Fund Act (No 15 of 1958), and Wages Boards Ordinance (No 27 of 1941) etc. The Factories Ordinance, No 45 of 1942, which plays a major role to ensure Safety, Health and Welfare of employees working in factories and in other places in the Sri Lankan context. The Factories Ordinance Act has provided provisions under following headings, to ensure health work environment, cleanliness, overcrowding, regulations increasing the amount of cubic space required for each person , calculation of the amount of cubic space in room , notice of number of persons employed to be posted in each workroom, temperature, lighting, sanitary conveniences , power to require medical supervision , vessels containing dangerous substances, training and supervision of young person's working at dangerous machines, heats and lifts etc. to protect the Sri Lankan workforce in injuries. Safety provisions have been provided under the following headings: prime movers, transmission machinery, provisions as to unfenced machinery, construction and maintenance of fencing, vessels containing dangerous substances, training and supervision of young person's working at dangerous machines, heats and lifts, cranes and other lifting machines,

construction and maintenance of floors, passages and stairs, safe means of access and safe place of employment, precautions with respect to explosive or inflammable dust, gas, vapor, regulations as to means of escape in case of fire, safety provisions in case of fire, regulations requiring the installation of fire-fighting appliances, power to make order as to dangerous conditions and practices, power to make orders as to safety of factory premises, regulation of the use of other machinery. Employee health and safety is very important area to the organization to prepare their policies and procedures. There are many research conducted in the world about employee health and safety. Those researches provided valuable information to conduct further research. Health and safety research is related with employee efficiency, employee absenteeism, employee satisfaction, employee turnover, employee relation, employee recruitment etc. Sufficient consideration is not given to the relationship between employee health and safety conditions and employee turnover. Many organizations do not consider much about the resignation of its employees and do not hold personal interviews to find out the reasons for their resignations because of the occupational health and safety issue. Therefore this study aims to fill this gap in the Sri Lankan Context.

Research Problem

The main research problem of this study is “How the employees’ perception on organizational health and safety practices impacts on employees’ turnover intention, in ABC Apparel Solutions Ltd, Rideegama.” So the well-being of the human resources is most important to achieve the organizational goals and vision. There are 845 operational level employees working in the ABC Apparel Solutions Limited. The company’s operational level employees Labor Turnover (LTO) rate is greater than other factories in the group and it was found that operational level employees’ turnover intention is the main cause of the higher LTO ratio. The LTO total of 2014/2015/2016 up to June at ABC apparel solutions limited has been depicted in Table 1 below, using the secondary data.

Table 1. Labor Turnover

Year	LTO Total
2013	175
2014	277
2015	353
2016 Up to June	137

Source – secondary data (2016)

According to (Benjamin.o.Alli, 2008) the best source of fundamental principles of occupational health and safety, mentioned that “The promotion of occupational safety and health, as part of an overall improvement in working conditions, represents an important strategy, not only to ensure the well-being of workers but also to contribute positively to productivity”. The health, safety and well-being of working people are thus prerequisites for improvements in quality and productivity, and are of the utmost importance for equitable and sustainable socio-economic development (Benjamin.o.Alli, 2008).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research was to identify the impact of organizational health and safety practices on employee turnover intention. Sub research objectives are;

- (1) To identify the present health and safety facilities offered to operational level employees of the ABC Apparel Solutions Limited.
- (2) To assess the level of turnover intention of operational level employees of the ABC Apparel Solutions Limited.
- (3) To analyze the effect of present health and safety facilities offered to operational level employees of the ABC Apparel Solutions Limited on their turnover intention.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 1, was constructed to demonstrate the impact of the organizational health and safety practices and employee turnover intent. Employee Turnover Intention was the dependent variable and Work Place conditions for Employees Health, Machine Protection Strategies, Awareness Programs, and Notices, and Reactions to Emergency Situations were independent variables of the study.

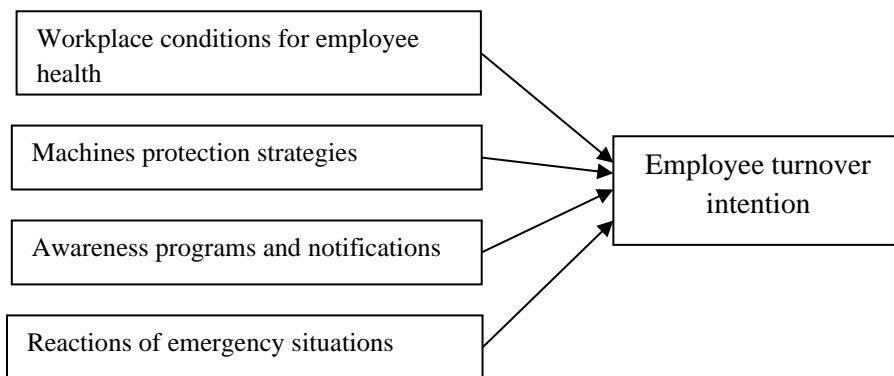


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

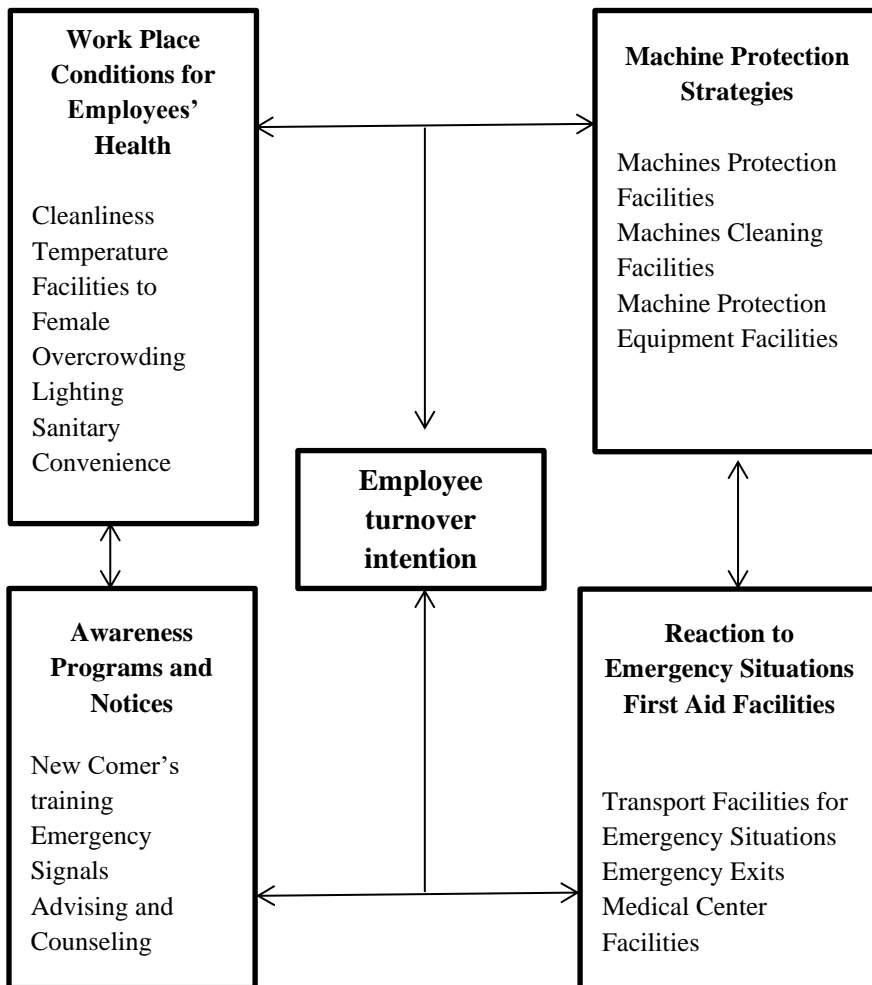


Figure 2. Employee Turnover Intention Model for Health and Safety

Figure 2, which is a further development of the conceptual framework (figure 1 above) provides extended details about turnover intentions and its drivers.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using the quantitative approach. Data were collected using a questionnaire. Questionnaire consisted of 30

questions and data were collected using the survey method among the 100 respondents who were operational level employees of the ABC apparel solutions, Kurunegala plant. The sample population has been selected by using the stratified sampling method. Primary data was used in order to conduct the statistical analysis. Primary data was measured by using 5 point Likert Scale. The results of questionnaires were used for quantitative data analysis. The quantitative analysis was undertaken with the use of statistical analysis methods. The used methods of statistical analysis were the Descriptive Analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and Regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the basic nature of this research. It shows mean values of data. Mean value provides the idea about the central tendency of the values of a variable.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. dev.	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness
Workplace conditions for employee health	1.00	5.00	3.660	.80818	-.649	.241
Machines protection strategies	2.00	5.00	4.143	.66033	-.944	.241
Awareness programs and notifications	2.00	5.00	4.200	.58985	-.777	.241
Reactions of emergency situations	2.00	5.00	4.163	.64003	-.666	.241
Employee turnover intention	2.00	4.67	3.270	.63510	.046	.241

Source – Survey data (2016)

Descriptive statistics related with factors (independent variables) and employee turnover intention (dependent variable) are presented in Table 3. Mean values for the all variables are significantly high. Also analyzing the skewness the values are near to central tendency that means employee turnover intention of most respondents is at a level higher than moderate level. The obtained values for standard deviation and skewness were .80818, .66033, .58985, .64003, .63510 and -.649, -.944, --.777, -.666, .046 respectively. As per the descriptive statistics it has been assumed the normality of the data set based on which it has been used the parametric test in hypothesis testing (refer Table 2).

Table 3. Correlations

		Work place conditions	Machine protection strategies	Awareness programs and notices	Reaction for emergency situations	Labor turnover
Employee Turnover intention	Pearson Correlation	.231*	.182	.202*	.277**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.069	.044	.005	
	N	100	100	100	100	100

Source – Survey data (2016)

The correlation between workplace conditions for employee health, machines protection strategies, awareness programs and notifications, reactions of emergency situations to employee turnover intention (dependent variable) were .231, .182, .202, .277 respectively as shown in Table 3.

Since the obtained value confident from 0.0 – 0.01, it can be identified that there is a low degree of positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore the alternative hypothesis with the 99% confidence has been accepted.

The researcher has used regression analysis to examine the relationship between factors (Independent variables) and the Employee turnover intention (Dependent variable). The Organizational Health and Safety practices impacts on employees Turnover intention was measured based on following four aspects namely, (1) Workplace conditions for employee health; (2) Machines protection strategies ; (3) Awareness programs and notifications; and (4)Reactions of emergency situations

The R Square of 0.094 meant that 9.4% of the employees Turnover intention can be explained by the predictions of Workplace conditions for employee health, machines protection strategies, awareness programs and notifications, reactions of emergency situations. Model was significant ($p < 0.05$) and it can be used to measure the impact between factors and employees Turnover intention.

Table 4. Coefficient of Regression Analysis Model 01

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.000	.483		4.140	.000
Workplace conditions	.109	.089	.139	1.233	.220
Machine protection strategies	.032	.122	.034	.265	.791
Awareness programs	.066	.171	-.062	-.389	.698
Reaction of emergency	.243	.146	.245	1.671	.098

Source: Survey data (2016)

Beta values show positive influences between workplace conditions for employee health ($\beta = 0.109$), Machines protection strategies ($\beta = 0.032$) Awareness programs and notifications ($\beta = 0.066$), and Reactions of emergency situations ($\beta = 0.243$) with the employees

turnover intention. But the validity of those influence are decided based on the significance value. According to the regression results all variables have significant impact with the employee turnover intention as depicted in Table 4.

It was found that there is a positive relationship between occupational health and safety practices and employee turnover intention in the ABC Apparel solutions limited. The correlation between these variables were .231, .182, .202, .277 respectively, which is significant at 0.01 levels (Refer to the table 3). This correlation was found to be positive as it is above the lower bound of moderate degree strong correlation (0.1). According to the results of simple regression analysis, occupational health and safety practices have a positive impact on employee turnover intention with the strength of b value ($\beta=0.109$), ($\beta=0.032$), ($\beta=0.066$), ($\beta=0.243$) and value of adjusted R square is 0.056, indicating that employee turnover intention explained by 5.6% . According to (Benjamin.o.Alli, 2008) the best source of fundamental principles of occupational health and safety, mentioned that “The promotion of occupational safety and health, as part of an overall improvement in working conditions”. According to (Opatha, 2012) OSH means the group of activities involved in creating, improving and maintaining total health and safety of employees. All of the correlations were positive and of highly significant. Further, the health, safety and well-being of working people are thus pre-requisites for improvements in quality and productivity, and are of the utmost importance for equitable and sustainable socio-economic development (Alli, 2008).

Furthermore, when discussing the level of employee turnover intention of the operational level employees in the sample, it was found that they have a favorable level of employee turnover intention with the mean value of 3.2700 (Refer to the Table 2). Accordingly, it was found that operational level employees in ABC Apparel solutions limited were highly considering with their occupational health and safety practices.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a positive relationship between independent variable (OSH) and employee turnover intention of the operational level employees in ABC Apparel solutions limited. The finding of this study is vital in a theoretical as well as an empirical scenario. Further, this study involves one large apparel sector organizations operational level employees where the size of the sample was limited to 100 participants. Moreover, for further research studies, it is suggested to increase the sample size of the study and the number of apparel firms involved. Though the researcher studied on a selected number of variables that affects the employee turnover intention, there are many other variables that have not been considered in this study. Employee turnover intention has become a crucial and an important issue in the industry as well so when focusing on the future researches the researcher can focus on the other companies of the same industry too. At the same time, the researchers could be done taking two companies of the same industry and comparing and contrasting the results. This would bring perfect results. Not only in the same industry but the researches could carry out comparing two or more companies of the different industries too. Then through that it is possible to find out whether there are any affecting factors for the retention prevailing only in a certain industry alone. The conceptual framework of this study can be discussed and tested for future research on employee turnover intention and health and safety.

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THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON WORK LIFE BALANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This research is based on a problem faced by Sri Lankan IT professionals. In this research, the researcher attempts to find the impact of job satisfaction and employee engagement towards work life balance of IT professionals in Sri Lanka based on five IT companies. The dependent variable of the research is employee work life balance. Employee engagement is the identified independent variable and job satisfaction is the identified mediator of the research. This was a quantitative study with a sample size is 110 using the convenience sampling technique. Standard questionnaires helped to gather a reliable set of data for each variable. Using SPSS package, data were analysed mainly through correlation and regression analysis. The study concludes there is a significant relationship between employee engagement and work life balance partially mediating the job satisfaction of Sri Lankan IT professionals in selected organizations.

Key Words; *Employee engagement, Job satisfaction, Work life balance, IT employees*

INTRODUCTION

There is very little research done on work life balance, job satisfaction and employee engagement of the Sri Lankan IT sector employees. Human Resource Management commonly known as HRM emerged as a discipline only in the early 20th century. This study area has been developed with the objective of creating business value through good practices and strategic management of the workforce (Nadler, 1970). Despite the growth of the discipline, there were many good HR practices continued by the human civilizations even prior to twentieth century. There is a lacuna of academic efforts to scientifically study the above-mentioned HR practices in order to see the applicability of those to address the present HR issues. With the invasion of technology and complex lifestyles of people, Human Resource management crossed the borders which was there in few years back (Page, 2017). With this vast change there are a number of emerging challenges in Human Resource management arena. One of those includes, work life balance of employees in the organization (Kluczyk, 2013).

Work life balance

Work life balance is also known as the WLB in the field of Human Resource Management. Work life balance is defined by a number of human resources guru's and HR researchers in several ways. Some of those definitions are cited in here. According to Clark, Koch and Hill, work life balance means, "equilibrium or maintaining overall sense of harmony in life" (Clarke, 2004). Some HR professionals initially introduced work life balance as the work family conflict, "a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is participation in the work (family) role being made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus, 1985). Simply work life balance can be interpreted as the cognitive condition of mind, which helps handle office work and family life successfully maintaining a lower amount of conflict. According to Healthfield (2018), work life balance helps reduce stress levels of employees. Further he explains, when employees realized they are missing some important part of their lives it will result in unhappiness and stress. It

damages the productivity of the organization. The author suggests super parent meal times as a solution for stress and a way of maintaining work life balance. In super parent meal time, parents have to arrange a family breakfast. According to Healthfield (2018), it will make their children happy and they will realize they are the main concern of their parents. On the other hand, parents also will be relaxed because they started their day with their children. It will reduce their stress levels, it creates work life balance and also on the employee's aspect, their productivity will increase. Finally the organization can achieve their pre desired goals and targets and employees also can achieve their targets with a lesser amount of conflict. It helps enhance the long term success of the organization (Heathfield, 2018). Koubova (2013) conducted a research on employee work life balance and emotional intelligence. In the research, it was found that life experiences of the employees were having influence on the emotional intelligence. Then, it moderates the work life balance of the employees.

Employee engagement is emerging HR topic in the era. According to the business dictionary, employee engagement is defined as, emotional connection which employees have towards their jobs. It further describes if an employee has a strong engagement towards their job, the strength they put on the job also will be higher (WebFinance Inc, 2018). Employee engagement was introduced as a HR concept in 1990 by Khan. According to Khan, employee engagement means, "harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles". He says, engaged employees express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during their performances. (Kahn, 1990). Simply engaged employees can be identified as, those who work beyond the job role and perform their role in excellence.

Job satisfaction is the mediator of this research. Job satisfaction is defined by a number of authors and scholars throughout years. To gain excellent performance from employees, their job satisfaction matters. Job satisfaction is defined by HR person as, "an affective (emotional) reaction to one's job, resulting from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired (expected, deserved, and

so on)” (Cranny, 1992). According to Locke job satisfaction is “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating one’s job values” (Mohamed A. Rageb, 2013). Job satisfaction enhance the employee’s willingness to work at the working place. From the years, in some researches, job satisfaction was explained in a new manner. The research done by Praseeda Menon and Nutankumar Thingujam, (2012) highlighted the relationship in between job satisfaction and the recession that happened in 2008 to 2009, related to IT professionals in India. Their sample size was 221 and were all Indian IT professionals. According to their research, one’s personality matters for their job satisfaction during the past period of recession. Supervisors approach also can be observed, but the most significant fact was individual personality. They argue unique personality of individuals and their job factors can affect more on certain type of industries. Specifically during the rough periods in the economy (Thingujam, 2012). It shows job satisfaction is an individual state of mind which affects their entire lifestyle. In birds eye view, if individuals can develop their personality, other factors, such as work life balance and engagement will create success in their lives.

According to previous research findings and pilot survey there is an impact of employee engagement and job satisfaction on work life balance of IT professionals. Morgansons’ research, states there is a relationship in between employee work life balance and job satisfaction. It was done with 578 office workers who worked in main office, client location, satellite office and home. The researcher has used method of multiple regression analysis to analyze the data. Data was collected from the sample which consist of 578 employees who worked in the above 4 locations. When collecting data the researcher has considered the difference between work life balance support, job satisfaction and inclusion of the employees. According to the research findings, employees work life balance, job satisfaction and inclusion differed according to the working place. But relationship was proven. There were few limitations in the research. As an example, this research design did not allow to manipulate or random assignment. Due to that, extraneous variables effect could not find or forecast from this research (Valerie J Morganson, 2010).

Research indicates that employees with high job satisfaction and high work life balance achieve the highest performance in the organization. Sample of this research consists of 280 young university lectures in Islamabad, Pakistan. To analyse the data, linear regression analysis was used by the researchers. Six hypotheses were tested by this analysis. According to the findings, there is a positive impact of work life balance and family work conflicts on employee performance. This study has its own uniqueness. Because it presented a new opinion through these variables (Aqeel Ahmed Soomro, 2017).

As per the findings of the research study of Beenish Wasay(2013) there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and work life balance of the employees. She reveals employee work life balance issues shows increasing rate because majority of workers in the industry are female employees. Due to that issue there is an increasing trend of issues in employee engagement and work life balance of the employees. Though there is emerging work family policies it is not equal to the work life balance of the employees. Further researcher explains, according to the research findings though there is a connection in between employee engagement and work life balance, employee engagement is not the only factor which effects on work life balance of the employees. Researcher interpret employee work life balance as a win-win situation for employer and employee both. Further he states this situation or strategy helps to balance personal and professional life of the employees. Employee engagement is linked to work life balance of the employees in that stage (Wasay, 2013).

Rapid entry of new concepts of employee engagement during the past few years, re-definition of the Employee-Organization relationship, the characteristics of the employee engagement are the main areas in the research done by Liat Eldor and Eran Vigoda-Gadot (2016). In their research they have succeeded to prove in statistically the Employee-Organization relationship is hinged with the nature employee engagement. Throughout this research the authors have built strong theoretical foundation to the Employee-Organization relationship and statistically proven with the research variables;

Employee Engagement, Psychological Empowerment, Work Centrality. It has further discussed, the importance of the role of an Employee towards successful Employee-Organization relationship, diversified ways and means to maintain & retain the Employee-Organization relationship in the modern complex and competitive corporate world. The researchers have echoed in their research that employee engagement should lead to extract the best out of their personal strength to accomplish vision and mission of an organization. Furthermore, they have well-balanced both parties; Employee and Organization, where organizations should achieve its core organizational goals while fulfilling the aspirations of its employees. Though Employee-Organization relationship represents a mutual engagement, Employee is the most critical party in this win-win situation. The authors have figured out the practical implications of this research. Human Resources practitioners of an organization are solely responsible to maintain and retain the Employee-Organization relationship while executing the concepts of employee engagement by focusing on the characteristics which are directly impact for the active employee engagement towards organizational goals. This research paper has given an excellent foundation for the organizations to open paths for new, innovative practical insights to enhance the employee engagement to strength the Employee-Organization relationship (Vigoda-Gadot, 2016).

Life consists with interpersonal relationships between people who met in day-to-day life. It has many people who are playing their role in family or in work life as parents, spouse, children, siblings, managers, subordinates, colleagues. Life has its own activities like household activities, task assignments, and job completions within agreed timeline, association of different communities, and voluntary activities and so on. Work-Life balance is having the harmony among all parties, while maintaining the stability of each territory. Women have to play more roles in day-to-day life whom devoted her time for unpaid labor & service like child care, domestic work, apart from her career life. The authors have observed that male workers received more spousal support for their work compare to their female counterparts. It is also shown that though there is an increase in numbers of work-life conflict

of men, still women do have more work-life conflict than men do. Balancing the work life while performing the duties related to domestic and social domain is becoming more noticeable issue in the modern world for both men and women. Time is a vital factor when female make their decisions to choose career life over private life which makes a sizable influence to their life course. The authors of this research paper have given an attempt to understand the choices made by female workforce when it comes to distinguish their specific roles in personal and professional life. To have a better understanding of the positive and negative experiences of women having in the said domain is another objective achieved through this research paper. This research was done as a qualitative analysis by including married different aged managerial women where some have kids. This research has also shown how overlapping two worlds, personal and professional and also gives an insight to fulfil personal responsibilities completing the professional tasks assigned by maintaining the consistent work-life balance. The authors have researched the fact that emerging of technology and work-life balance. It is learnt that technology has ruled their lives by taking away their time and attention from other aspects of life outside work. There are some positive characteristics of this research came up with this topic work-life balance. The authors have been able to find out career women who are having more enjoyable life by seeing good out of here. As per their findings in the research, majority of women planned their personal responsibilities during the office hours. Thus they are doing multi-tasking by fulfilling both professional and personal tasks to maintain the consistency in their work-life pattern. Negative perceptions are also identified in this study at the point of professional and personal roles integration. Health related complications due to late meals, lack of sleep, tiredness and exhausting are few negative perceptions identified in the study. Impact on technology plays a vital role in work-life balance. Most of the participants for this study have mentioned the positive side of the technology development. However virtual office concept has ruled the personal life since employees are obliged to do their work all the time with the mobility and accessibility given by the modern technology. This research has also explored the viewpoint of handling the stress and

ability to cope with the situation by standing in the middle of work-home interface (Shaيدا Bobat, 2014).

This study has attempted to answer the following question. Is there an effect of Employee Engagement on Work Life Balance mediating role of Job Satisfaction; of IT professionals in Sri Lanka?

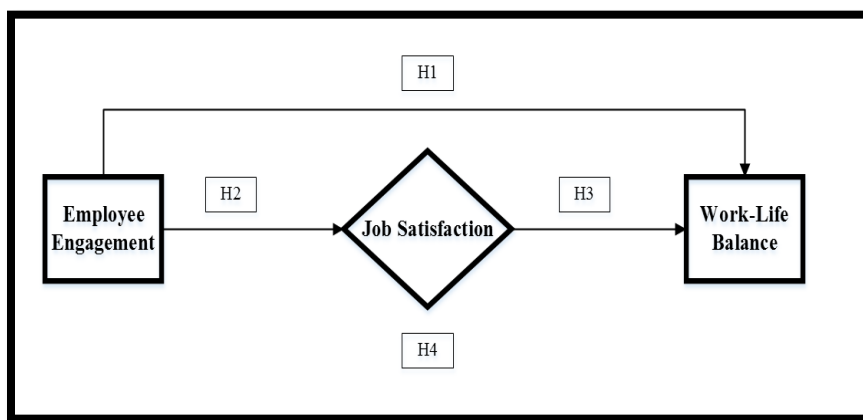


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research

Given below are the major hypotheses of the study.

H1 : There is no relationship between employee engagement and work life balance among the IT professionals in Sri Lanka

H2 : There is no relationship between employee engagement and Job satisfaction among the IT professionals in Sri Lanka

H3 : There is no relationship between the job satisfaction and work life balance among the IT professionals in Sri Lanka

H4 : Job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between employee engagement and work life balance of the IT professionals in Sri Lanka

METHODOLOGY

Population of this research consists of IT professionals from 5 leading companies in Sri Lanka. Those are named as A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5. IT professionals are select among these 5 main professions such as, IT consultants, Software engineers, Project leaders and QA engineers.

Sample of this research is going to select the sample from 4 designations among 5 IT companies in Sri Lanka. In the population there are over 10,000 employees in those 5 companies. To select employees, researcher has used sampling technique. Researcher is using probability sampling method for this research. This research is based on a convenience sampling technique for the research. Therefore, researcher has selected simple random sampling method for the research. Sample size of this research was 110 employees.

Primary method is used to collect specifically research relevant data by the researcher herself. Researcher used *informal interviews* with the IT employees to collect wide area of data regarding the work life balance and other 2 variables. Researcher used standard questionnaires to collect data. All of those standard questions in the questionnaire were developed by human resources professionals and those are tested and approved.

Data analysed using the quantitative method. Quantitative method directly addressed by data collected by questionnaires. Those questionnaires consists of Likert scale type questions. Hypothesis were tested with *ANOVA* with the aid of SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The great majority of respondents (86.3%) were males. And 72.7% of the respondents were married. The spouse of 60% of the respondents were employed. Majority (57.3%) of them were over 36 years and 54.5% of them lived in their own houses. Job satisfaction (JS), Work life balance (WLB) and Employee engagement (EE) were measured using scale questionnaires. The mean values of WLB, JS, and EE were moderate at almost 3. Further, standard deviation of above 3 variables also lies in between -2 and +2. It proves the moderate behavior of 3

variables, used by the researcher to research about the relationship between employee engagement and work life balance mediating job satisfaction of the Sri Lankan IT employees.

Table 1. Validity analysis

	WLB	EE	JS
WLB	35.407	-	-
EE	.740	34.126	
JS	.904	.608	56.925

According to above table, value of AVE in work life balance is 35.407. But squared correlation of employee engagement is 0.740 and job satisfaction is 0.904. AVE value is greater than other values. Due to that, there is discriminant validity in this data set. As same as that, value of AVE in employee engagement is 34.126. But squared correlation of job satisfaction is 0.608. AVE value is greater than squared correlation value. Due to that, there is discriminant validity in this data set. The Cronbach's Alpha values (depicted in Table 2) verified the reliability of scales.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Work Life Balance	.897	24
Employee engagement	.778	5
Job satisfaction	.872	20

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Correlations (N= 110)

		JS Average	WLB Average	EE Average
JS Average	Pearson Correlation	1	.951**	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
WLB Average	Pearson Correlation	.951**	1	.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
EE Average	Pearson Correlation	.780**	.860**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

** . Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the above table the correlation between 3 variables of the research gives a positive value. Therefore can analyse as there is a positive relationship between 3 variables. Correlation in between job satisfaction, work life balance and employee engagement lies in between 0.1 and 1. Specifically those are above 0.5 such as, 1, 0.951, 0.780 and 0.860.

Which means,

- I. changes in employee engagement correlates with the changes in work life balance
- II. changes in job satisfaction correlates with the changes in work life balance
- III. changes in employee engagement correlates with the changes in job satisfaction

The correlation coefficient value in the coefficients table indicates a perfect positive correlation between the variables.

Significant value should be less than 0.01 to accept the alternative hypothesis. Hence it is statistically claimed that all the above-mentioned correlations were significant.

To test the hypotheses of the research through regression, researcher has created 2 models as below,

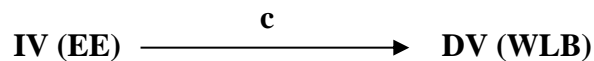


Figure 2. Regression path 1

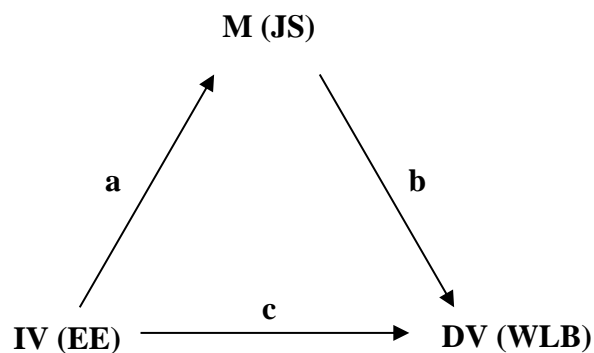


Figure 3. Regression path 2

M – Mediator	(JS) - Job satisfaction
IV - Independent variable	(EE) - Employee engagement
DV - Dependent variable	(WLB) - Work life balance

According to the above structures, researcher has calculated the regression in 3 times and got the below results.

Table 6. Regression Analysis

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Effect	Direct effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	
Regression	WLB<-EE	JS<-EE	WLB<EE,JS	
Independent Variable	EE	EE	EE	
B	0.86	0.78	0.304	0.714
t-value	17.531	12.946	8.002	18.814
p-value	0	0	.000b	
Model summary statistics				
R	.860a	.780a	.969a	
R ²	0.74	0.608	0.94	
Adjusted R ²	0.738	0.604	0.939	
R ²				
F	307.347	167.596	832.866	
F Sig				

Above table summarize the regression analysis of this research and results of a hypothesis test. Further, researcher has done Sobel test to find the significant of the mediator as below.

Table 7. Sobel Test

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	.78	Sobel test: 13.05031099	0.04267485	0
b	.714	Aroian test: 13.04075504	0.04270612	0
s _a	.043	Goodman test: 13.05988798	0.04264355	0
s _b	.038	Reset all	Calculate	

According to the results, mediator is significant in this research.

Further, behavior of mediator can explain as follows,

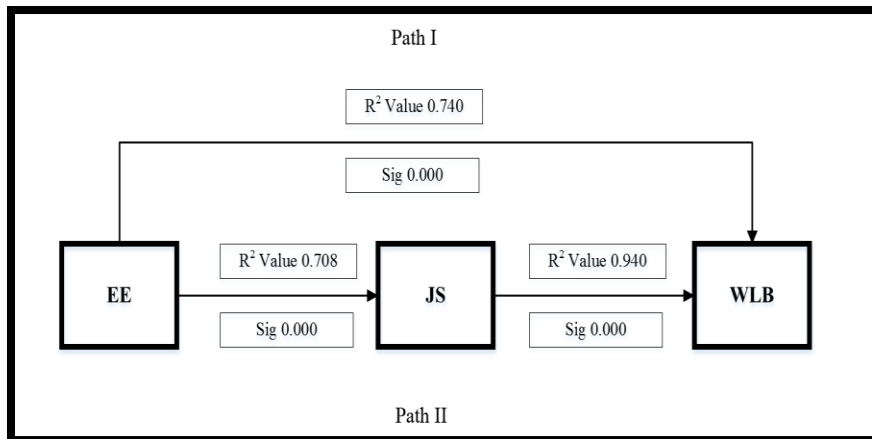


Figure 4. Mediator analysis

According to the path I, direct impact is 0.740. Path II shows indirect impact of the research. It is 0.665 ($0.708 * 0.940$). Due to that calculation, effect from the job satisfaction as a mediator is 0.75 ($0.740 - 0.665$).

With the SPSS analysis, researcher has proved all hypotheses. Specifically, the 4th hypothesis, Job satisfaction is significantly mediates the relationship between employee engagement and work life balance of the IT professionals in Sri Lanka can conclude more over as, job satisfaction is a partial mediator. This research model conclude and impress the importance of the word “**trade-off**”. That means, situational balance of the work life and the family life of the employees. If there is trade-off, both role of IT employees are secured.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the research findings can directly conclude that there is a direct relationship between the independent variable, the mediator and dependent variable of the research. That means, Job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between employee engagement and work life balance of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. This research ends up declaring job satisfaction as a partial mediator in the tested context in the hypothesized model.

Due to their work load, and the way of working, most IT employees miss their families. This creates de-motivation, a monotonous lifestyle, family problems etc. Those directly affect the work progress of the organization. For IT employees, there are a number of events and functions in the organizations. But those are office functions and members of the employee's families do not participate r at these events. The organization can convert those events into family events and enhance the relationship between families.

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UNDERGRADUATES' INTENTION TO APPLY FOR ONLINE JOBS

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ABSTRACT

HR managers should pay close attention to the content or the features of the recruitment advertisements. This study was focused on determining the features that significantly affect the interest of undergraduates in applying for positions and the moderating role of organizational attractiveness. Five hundred and fifty-three (553), final year undergraduates attached to the Commerce and Management Faculty in the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka were selected as the study population with the reasoning fact that they are one layer who steps to the labor market for job seeking. Data were collected through a questionnaire based on the Convenience Sampling Technique. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. Internet has changed the way of conducting recruitments in the organizations from printed media to internet based. Managers should pay more attention on the importance of recruiting through an online job advertisement since it will provide detailed and rich information.

Key words: *Online Jobs, Intention to apply, Undergraduates*

INTRODUCTION

The world of recruitment has an increasing interest in online recruitment where designing an attractive online advertisement has become crucial to attract potential applicants' interest in applying for a particular position. To design an online advertisement that triggers the interests of applicants, recruiters should pay close attention to the content or the features of the advertisement. Thus, this study was focused on determining the features that significantly affect the interest of undergraduates in applying for positions and the moderating role of organizational attractiveness. The process of identifying and attracting best suited employees for the organization is known as recruitment (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). The organizations consistently search to pool the best talent which is referred to as the "war for talent" and the organizations that have more candidate attraction is considered as a strategy to secure the organizational position and image. Talent can be considered as the main vehicle to drive organizational performance. Irreversible conversion from industrial age to information age is the major driving force which drives companies to hunt best talent (Michaels, Jones & Axelrod, 2001).

Attraction is the first stage of recruitment. Intention to Apply can be possibly considered as an attracted applicants' behaviour. Therefore, intention to apply is a strong predictor of understanding an applicants' job choice. Intentions predict actions (Gomes & Neves, 2011). There should be a strategy in an organization to generate applications in order to persuade the most suitable applicants to apply (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Firms use different methods to recruit diversified pool of applicants. Among all of them recruiters pay increasing interest on *online recruitment* to increase efficiency, reduce cost and to reach more candidates (Borstorff et al., 2007; Parry & Tyson, 2008). Furthermore, due to the impact of globalization, Internet is now the widely used medium across the world from 1990s up to now rather than printed and other Medias by both companies (to publish jobs) and job seekers (to find jobs). Online recruitments are carried out by simply publishing an online job advertisement in company web page, through career websites or in social media (Parry & Tyson, 2008). In Sri Lanka

around 8000 graduate students per year enter into the labour market from the streams of Management and Commerce and Oriental Studies (Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003). This study was primarily based on the intention of fourth year management undergraduates as job applicants, who were the future intended joiners to labour force.

Justification of the Study

More than twenty-five online job portals are available in Sri Lanka and e-recruitment is widely used by large Sri Lankan organizations including multinational companies and banks (Weerakoon & Gamage, 2012). But the effect of e-recruitment on the intention to apply is under studied in the Sri Lankan Context (Galhena & Liyanage, 2014). Online job advertisements should be attractive and constructed in a proper manner to be more competitive in recruitment and to attract talented and qualified candidates (De Alwis & Kulasekara, 2015). But more research focus is given to print job advertisements over online recruitment advertising (Ganesa Antony & George, 2018). Therefore, this study was intended to pay more attention to the features of an online job advertisement which is significantly considered by online job applicants when apply for a particular position.

Conceptualization and Objectives of the Study

The conceptual framework was developed based on a recent research conducted by Ganesa et al. in 2018.

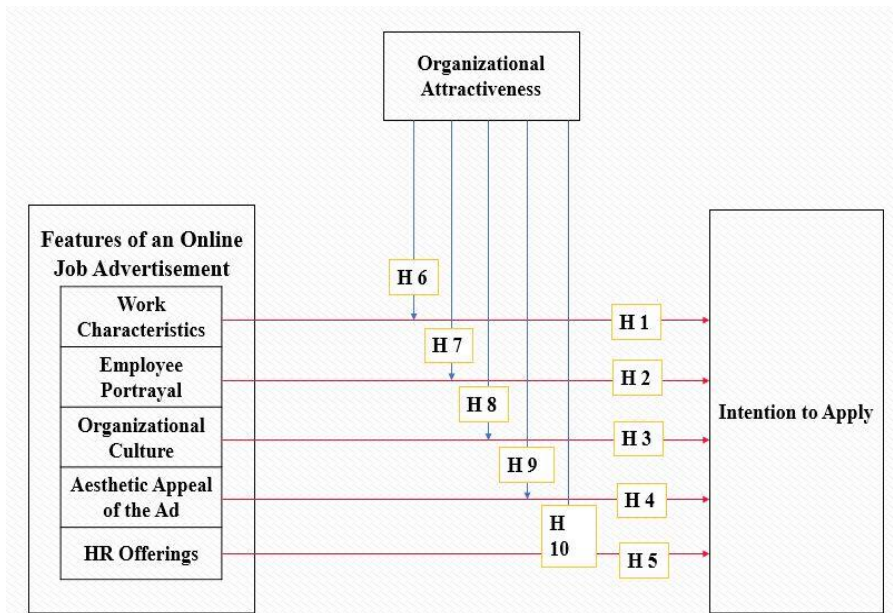


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework of the study

Source: Ganesa, Antony and George (2018)

General Objective

The main purpose of this study was to identify the impact of specific features of an online job advertisement on the intention of application intention that significantly moderated by organizational attractiveness.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study could be identified as follows:

1. To identify the impact of work characteristics on the intention to apply.
2. To justify the impact of employee portrayal in job ad on the intention to apply.
3. To assess the impact of organizational culture on the intention to apply.
4. To assess the impact of aesthetic appeal of the advertisement on the intention to apply.
5. To analyse the impact of human resource offerings on the intention to apply.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, five hundred and fifty-three (553), final year undergraduates attached to the Commerce and Management Faculty in the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka were selected as the study population with the reasoning fact that they are one layer who steps to the labor market for job seeking. Of this population two hundred and seventeen (217) were derived as the sample size based on the Krejcie and Morgan table. However, questionnaires were collected from only 146 undergraduates based on the Convenience Sampling Technique. Data was analyzed using SPSS 23.0. Of the sample, 24.7% of respondents were male and majority of 75.3% were females. Most of the respondents (79.5%) belonged to the age category of 20-24. All the respondents belonged to the 4th academic year of study. Majority of the respondents, which was 34.9% were from Human Resource Management studies.

Table 1. Measurement of variables

Variable		No. of Items	Source	Scale
Independent Variable				
Features of an Online job advertisement				
1) Job and Work Characteristics	5	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	7 point likert scale ranging from highly likely to highly unlikely	
2) Employee Portrayal (Testimonials)	4	Celsi and Gilly (2010)		
3) Organizational Culture	9	Braddy, Meade, Michael and Fleenor (2009)		
4) Aesthetic Appeal of the Ad	3	Chen et al. (2012)		
5) Organizational Attributes (HR offerings)	3	Gomes and Neves (2011)		

Moderating Variable			
Organizational Attractiveness	4	Birgelen, Wetzels and Dolen (2008)	7 point likert scale ranging from completely agree to completely disagree
Dependent Variable			
Intention to apply	4	Birgelen et al. (2008)	7 point likert scale ranging from completely agree to completely disagree

Several limitations were detected in this research study. First, it was used to convenience sampling technique whereby the generalizability of the research findings to the other populations is not rationale. It was selected Commerce and Management undergraduates in the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. In future research studies it is suggested to replicate these findings in other contexts and populations including undergraduates of other streams and graduates. Due to the time limitation 67% subjects out of the sample responded to this study. Therefore, it is proposed to maintain a good respondent's rate. It was tested a new model which was introduced in 2018 with a narrow population. The reliability of the findings was low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean values of variables range from 4.408 to 5.308 and standard deviation ranges from 0.760 to 1.186. From the correlation values, all five features had a positive ($r = .348$, $r = .292$, $r = .665$, $r = .303$ & $r = .630$ respectively) relationship on the intention to apply and it was significant at ($p < 0.01$). Results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	IA (Pearson Coefficient)
FOJA	5.059	0.760	-.787	1.945	.646**
WC	5.136	0.944	-.554	.176	.348**
EP	4.408	1.115	-.294	-.297	.292**
OC	5.179	0.935	-.836	.930	.665**
AA	5.192	1.102	-.745	.542	.303**
HRO	5.308	1.186	-.889	.804	.630**
OA	5.243	1.046	-1.054	1.987	
IA	4.942	0.934	-.164	.536	

Organizational culture and HR offerings had a positive impact ($\beta = .418$ and $\beta = .283$ respectively) on the intention to apply and it was significant at ($p = .000$).

With the presence of organizational attractiveness (moderating variable), the impact created by Work Characteristics, Employee Portrayal, Organizational Culture, Aesthetic Appeal of the ad and HR Offerings on the Intention to Apply was strengthened by 33.5%, 35.4%, 10.5%, 34.8% and 14.8% respectively and it was significant ($p = .000$). All hypotheses assumed based on the moderation effect of Organizational Attractiveness have been accepted proving that Organizational Attractiveness strengthen the impact created by features on intention to apply. Research findings revealed that the factors which mostly influence the intention to apply of Commerce and Management undergraduates in the University of Kelaniya as Organizational Culture ($\beta = 0.418$, $p = 0.000$) and HR Offerings ($\beta = 0.283$, $p = 0.000$) while Organizational Attractiveness is proven to be a moderator which strengthened the impact (positive R square change).

CONCLUSIONS

Internet has changed the way of conducting recruitments in the organizations from printed media to internet based. Managers should pay more attention on the importance of recruiting through an online job advertisement since it will provide detailed and rich information

about the values of the company and the job (Birgelen et al., 2008). More than twenty - five online job portals are available in Sri Lanka. But still there is a vast knowledge gap in Sri Lanka on the usefulness of online recruitment on job seeker's application intention (Galhena & Liyanage, 2014). Therefore, finding the features of an online job advertisement that persuade applicants' intention would contribute to body of knowledge or recruitment literature in Sri Lanka for the reference of future researchers, knowledge seekers, HRD Practitioners and Policy Makers. Constructing a job advertisement in a way in which it would attract the right person to the right job is difficult (De Alwis & Kulasekara, 2015). This study provides a valuable insight to recruiting organizations, industries, and human resource consultants on the elements that should be considered in designing and developing an online job advertisement. It is emphasized the value of designing an online job advertisement with richness of information. Some organizations lack reputation in the industry. Thus, it is focused to benefit those companies that have less publicity compared to well establish companies since the online job advertisement provide more applicant attraction to unknown organizations as well.

It is suggested that in the context of employment in Sri Lanka, if recruiters wish to attract fresh undergraduates to their organizations, they should pay more attention to include statements and graphics in the online advertisements which enhance the culture of the organization and HR offerings. When the job applicant considers the features to be interesting, they perceive the organization as an attractive place to work and thus create intentions to apply. Therefore, it is suggested to extend population in to different sectors and thereby perform a comparative analysis comparing what features are considered by the applicants in different sectors/ departments/ occupations. It is suggested to analyze and explore the content of the advertisement. It is worthwhile to study about job advertisement features that should be considered by recruitment organizations other than the features such as corporate image building statement, location, and person job fit in future research. Study was a cross sectional study where data was collected in a one point of time. From time to time the features considered by job seekers can vary. Thus, it is suggested to

analyze different job advertising components through a longitudinal study.

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THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL FACTORS ON THE MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is another dimension of human behaviour that leads to organizational development. The main aim of this study is to find out the impact of occupational factors on the motivation of employees. There are four specific objectives of this study namely, to determine whether compensation has an impact on employee motivation, to determine whether the provision of training has an impact on employee motivation, to determine whether working condition has an impact on employee motivation and to determine whether recognition has an impact on employee motivation. The study was conducted as a quantitative study with a sample of 100 software engineers in an Information Technology Company Sri Lanka. There is a strong and positive relationship between the Compensation, Training, Working Condition and Recognition with staff motivation depicting that when the organization increases the compensation, training opportunities, working facilities and rewards the staff motivation has also increased significantly.

Key words: Motivation, IT Sector, Motivational factors

INTRODUCTION

The human element of the organization, are those capable of learning, changing, innovating & providing the creative thrust which if properly motivated can ensure the long-term survival of the organization (Bontis *et al*, 1999). Motivation can be defined, as the force that energizes, directs & sustains behaviour (Hunter *et al*, 1990) and according to Sibson (1994) motivation is the driving force which allows a person to take action on his/her desires or goals. The willingness and desire of the workforce should always be there to reach the highest levels of success. Motivation is the key to enhance the willingness and desire of employees to take the organization to victory (Babraa, 2002) and according to many studies it has been identified that occupational factors have a significant impact on employee motivation such as salary, training, favourable employee relations and good working conditions and especially the reward causes motivation of the employee which directly influences performance of the employee (Kalimullah, *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, a good managerial relation and recognition are important factors in fostering employee motivation (Jun *et al.*, 2006).

This study was conducted targeting the tier four Software Engineers of a global information technology service provider, founded almost 22 years ago, in Sri Lanka which is currently headquartered in the United States having delivery centres around the world, supporting over 200 of the world's leading brands by providing innovative solutions that utilize cutting-edge technologies, in order to understand whether these employees are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated with occupational/ job related factors, thus investigating the impact of the occupational factors on employee motivation.

Research Problem

In today's context, most organizations are facing a problem of low productive employees in all the sectors. As per an article titled, 'Why Leaders Need to Embrace Employee Motivation', published in the

Forbes in January 2018, only 2 in 10 employees strongly agree that their performance is managed in a way that motivates them to do outstanding work. Further, because the workplace is evolving and shifting, employees expect, the organization to realize the changing needs & wants employees create a culture where Millennial and members of Generation Z can thrive.

When taking into consideration, the organization selected for the research, the 'Employee Delight Index' (EDI) which is an index used to determine the satisfaction & engagement of all employees within the organization, designed with the objective of managing & improving the workplace for all employees, is not at the expected level. Also, a constant complaint of the Software Engineers working on client projects, is that they are usually unable deliver their end product adhering to the stipulated deadlines which can be considered as a symptom of employee demotivation. Especially, when assessing the causes for the above problem, many reasons were revealed, but the authors have been conducted the study on identifying, the occupational factors that impact employee motivation, which is an important driver for ensuring the completion of projects on time as well as achieving the expected EDI score, every quarter.

Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to find out the impact of occupational factors on the motivation of employees. Specific objectives of the study were to determine whether compensation has an impact on employee motivation, to determine whether the provision of training has an impact on employee motivation, to determine whether working condition has an impact on employee motivation, and to determine whether recognition has an impact on employee motivation.

According to Bruce (1998) in early day's motivation defined as a view derived from Hedonism which is all about finding pleasure and relaxation. There is no common theory that can explain the factors influencing motives of human behaviour at a particular point of time. Anne and Barry (2005) have explained motivation as the amount of

effort that an individual puts into doing something. Intrinsic motivation is another area which would be considered under this review. According to Gobbler and Warnich (2010) intrinsic motivation refers to the pleasure and value associated with the task or activity itself which carried out by an employee. Furthermore, we can describe intrinsic motivation as the motivation that comes from within an individual, through satisfaction or pleasure that he or she gets in accomplishing or may be working on a task. Factors that influence on intrinsic motivation include responsibility, scope to use, freedom to act and develop skills and competencies, interesting work to be done and advancement opportunities.

Extrinsic motivation occurs when things are done to or for people to motivate them. These include rewards, such as incentives, increased pay, praise, or promotion; and punishments, such as disciplinary action, withholding pay, or criticism. This type of motivation typically has an immediate and powerful effect, but it may not last for a long time. (Armstrong, 1988). In a study related to motivation it is critical that we understand and discuss the theories motivation. Here in this study we mainly focus on the content and process theories of motivation. According to Bennet (1995), motivational theories can be divided in to two categories as “content theories” and “process theories”.

Table 1. Theories of Motivation

Type	Theory	Theorist	Summary of the Theory
Content Theory	Maslow's Hierarchy of needs	Abraham Maslow (1943)	There are five levels of human motivation and they tend to satisfy the bottom level needs first and then move in to the next levels. Levels from bottom to top are Physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualizing.(Robert C Beck, 2003)
Content Theory	Herzberg's Two Factor Theory	Frederick Herzberg (1959)	In employee job conditions there are two factors to consider as hygiene factors (Eg - challenging work, recognition, responsibility) and motivational factors (Eg- status, job security, salary, benefits, work conditions, fairness) (Herzberg, F., Mausner, B. & Snyderman,1959).
Process Theory	Vroom's Expectancy Theory	Victor H. Vroom (1964)	This based on employee beliefs and it is the choice of efforts by the employee with the expectation of rewards to the effort they put. (Victor Vroom, 1964).
Process Theory	Equity Theory	J. Stacy Adams (1960)	Equity theory focuses on that human will engage in any action if they feel that there is a benefit for them in return. In other words, an employee will be motivated to do a job or task if he or she can see a clear linkage between the benefits they receive as against the effort they put to complete the task. (Jen Anderson, 2011)
Process Theory	Social learning theory	Albert Bandura (1977)	Emphasizes the importance of internal psychological factors, especially expectancies about the value of goals and the individual's ability to reach them. (Bandura, 1977)

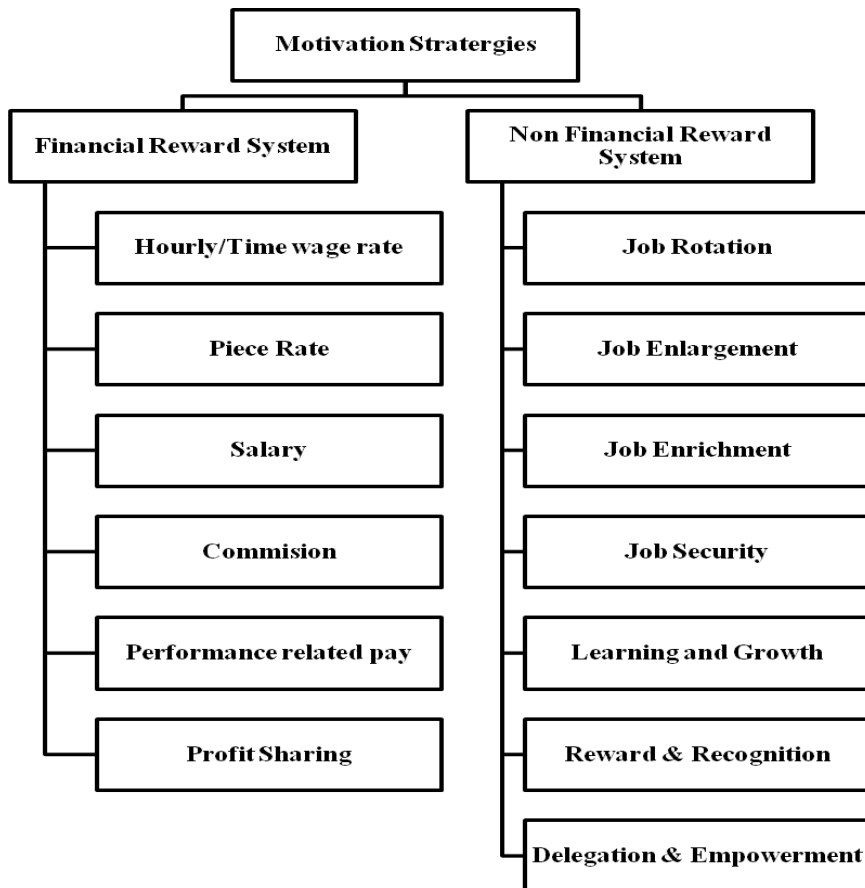


Figure 1. Motivation Factors (Source: Singh, H. (2011). Motivation Strategies)

The above Figure 1 illustrates motivational factors. Motivational factors can be classified into two categories. Financial motivational factors and Non-Financial motivational factors.

Financial Motivational Factors

The wage rate is determined by multiplying the time rate with the number of hours work. A rate is fixed for the production of each unit and the workers' wages therefore depend on the quantity of output. Salary is an annual sum that is usually paid on monthly basis. Commission is frequently used in personal selling, where the sales person is paid a commission or a proportion of sales gained. Performance based pay is a financial reward system for employees

where some or all of their monetary compensation is related to how their performance is assessed relative to stated criteria. Performance related pay can be used in a business context for how an individual, a team or the entire company performs during a given time frame. Profit sharing refers to various incentive plans introduced by businesses that provide direct or indirect payments to employees that depend on company's profitability in addition to employees' regular salary and bonuses. (Investopedia)

Non-Financial Motivational Factors

Job rotation is the movement of employees from one task to another to reduce monotony by increasing variety. (Amstrong, 1988). Job enlargement means combining previously fragmented tasks into one job, again to increase the variety and meaning of repetitive work. (Amstrong, 1988). Job enrichment aims at maximizing the interest and the challenge of work by providing the employee with more variety, responsibility & control (Amstrong, 1988). Job security is the likelihood that an individual will keep his or her job. When an individual has a high level of job security, he/she would have a small chance of becoming jobless. Training and development is the process of ensuring that the organization has the knowledgeable, skilled & engaged workforce it needs (Amstrong, 1988). Organization having good training plans for employees can enhance the performance of employees. Rewards and Recognition can be powerful tools for employee motivation and one method of motivating employees to change work habits and key behaviours at the work place. Deeprose (1994) argued that the motivation of employees and their productivity can be enhanced through providing them effective recognition which ultimately results in improved performance of organizations. Supervisor relationship is the quality and tenor of the relationship between a supervisor and employee. Working environment is critical for employee mental and physical wellbeing. If the working environment is good, safe and supportive employees will work better and productivity will improve. In absence of a good hygienic working condition employees tends to demotivate and leave the organization.

According to many studies it has been identified that occupational factors have a significant impact on employee motivation such as salary, training, favourable employee relations and good working conditions and especially the reward makes motivation of the employee which directly influences performance of the employee. Most of the other motivational theories discuss about the expectations of humans/employees financials and non-financial benefits and their linkages with the motivations.

Conceptual Framework

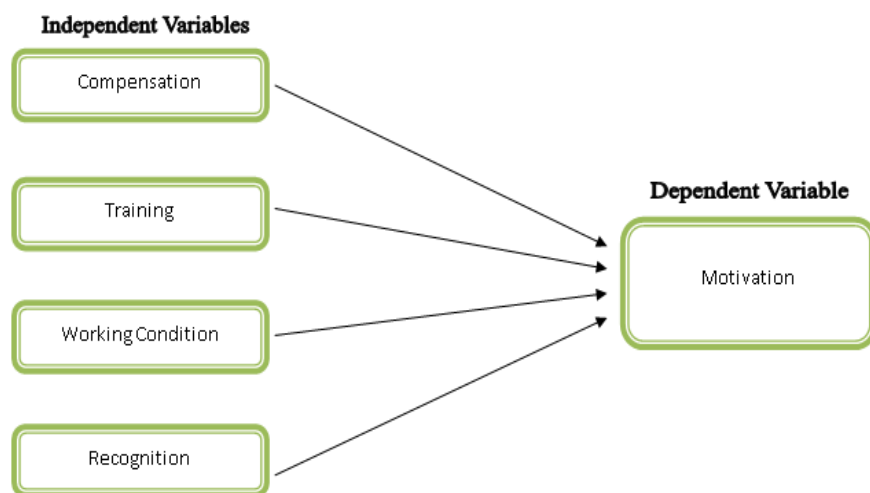


Figure 2 - Conceptual Framework

According to the above conceptual framework the independent variables include both monetary factors and non-monetary factors including 'Compensation', 'Training', 'Working Condition', and 'Recognition' which measures the 'Occupational Factors'. The dependent variable includes 'Staff Motivation'. The following hypothesis were developed to determine the impact of occupational factors on the employee motivation.

H₁: Compensation has an impact on Staff Motivation

H₂: Training has an impact on Staff Motivation

H₃: Working condition has an impact on Staff Motivation

H₄: Recognition has an impact on Staff Motivation

METHODOLOGY

Total employee cadre has 500 Tier 4 Employees as at 1st December 2018. There are 300 Tier 4 Software Engineers (offsite) & 100 Software Engineers (onsite) as the population of the research.

Table 3. Operationalization Plan

Variable	Indicator	Reference	Question Type	Questions
Demographics	Age	Hess & Emery, 2012	Range	Q1
	Service period	Robert C Beck, 2003	Range	Q2
Salary	Fairness	Herzberg <i>et al</i> (1957)	Likert scale	Q4
	Pay vs Workload		Likert scale	Q5
	Market pay	Armstrong, (1988)	Likert scale	Q6
	Personal satisfaction	Herzberg <i>et al</i> (1957)	Likert scale	Q7
	Satisfaction of Colleagues	Maslow (1943) Victor H. Vroom (1964)	Likert scale	Q8
Service Training	Training opportunities	Kalimullah, <i>et al</i> , 2010	Likert scale	Q9
	Personal satisfaction	Nadeem <i>et al</i> , (2014)	Likert scale	Q10
	Needs identification		Likert scale	Q11
	Importance	Boydell, T. H., (1983)	Likert scale	Q12
	Training update	Nadeem <i>et al</i> , (2014) Armstrong, (1988)	Likert scale	Q13
Working condition	Working condition	Herzberg <i>et al</i> (1957)	Likert scale	Q14
	Facilities		Likert scale	Q15
	Safety	Deeproose (1994)	Likert scale	Q16
	Equipment used	Robert C Beck, (2003)	Likert scale	Q17
	Personal satisfaction	Maslow (1943) Entwistle (1987)	Likert scale	Q18
Recognition	Supervisor approach	(Kalimullah, <i>et al</i> , 2010)	Likert scale	Q24
	Reward schemes		Likert scale	Q25
	Fairness	(Jen Anderson, 2011)	Likert scale	Q26
	Recognition process	2011) Herzberg <i>et al</i> (1957)	Likert scale	Q27
	Expectation	(Jen Anderson, 2011) Victor H. Vroom (1964)	Likert scale	Q28

Random sampling was used and around 100 Software Engineers who are offsite (located at the Sri Lankan office premises), belonging to the population, were selected in the sample. Secondary data were collected using historical records & other internal sources of the organization. Primary data gathered through interviews & a survey conducted amongst Software Engineers. Further, historical data on the Employee Delight Index and other important information was collected as secondary data, through the organization's internal network/ intranet. Primary data were collected by conducting a survey research from 100 (T4) Software Engineers who are offsite (located at the Sri Lankan office premises). Operationalization Plan is discussed in table 3 above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is a significant correlation between compensation and the employee motivation and the relationship is a strong positive relationship, as the correlation value is 0.516. Furthermore, this relationship is statistically significance (2-tailed) at 0.000, depicting a high level of accuracy. When considering the relationship between training and employee motivation there is a strong positive relationship as the correlation value is 0.526 under the significant level 0.01. Also, there is a significant correlation between working condition and motivation which is a strong positive relationships the correlation value is 0.597 and this relationship is statistically significance (2-tailed) at 0.000. Moreover, there is a significant correlation between recognition and the employee motivation which is considerably strong and positive as the correlation value is 0.647 and this relationship is statistically significant at level 0.01.

Table 4. *Linear Regression Analysis*

Determinant	Compensation	Training	Working Condition	Recognition
R squared	0.267	0.277	0.356	0.418
F	28.361	29.839	43.109	56.132
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
B constant	1.897	1.256	1.059	0.622
b- constant	0.489	0.584	0.618	0.803

As shown in table 4, the 'R squared' value indicated that 42% of the variance of motivation, is explained through Recognition. The p value of the F statistic (Variation between sample means / Variation within the samples) for each of the independent variables, salary, training, working condition and recognition, is 0.000. A low p-value (< 0.05) indicates that you can reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we can conclude that all the independent variables have a significant impact on employee motivation at 5% significance level. The P value of the F statistic (Variation between sample means / Variation within the samples) for each of the independent variables, salary, training, working condition and recognition, is 0.000. A low p-value (< 0.05) leading to reject the null hypothesis. This represents when the compensation increases by one unit, the staff motivation expected to increase by 1.897 units and when training, working conditions and recognition increase by one unit, the staff motivation is expected to increase by 1.256, 1.059 and 0.622 units respectively. Therefore, concluding that all the independent variables including salary, training, working condition and recognition have a significant impact on employee motivation under the significance level of 0.05 and salaries and training has a high impact on motivation comparing to other variables. 'B' is the intercept of the regression line with the y-axis. In other words it is the value of Y if the value of $X = 0$. 'b-' is the SLOPE of the regression line. Thus this is the amount that the Y variable (dependent) will change for each 1 unit change in the X variable. The 'b-' coefficient measures the degree of change in the outcome variable for every 1-unit of change in the predictor variable, and is measured in units of standard deviation. ' $M = B + b \cdot X$ ' is the sample regression

line. Based on the B constant and b-constant of each of the independent variables, we can conclude the following relationships with the employee motivation, where R is recognition. $M = 0.622 + 0.803R$

Research was carried out among the sample population and a total 80 respondents took part in the same. Based on the demographic data collected, it was identified that more than 52.5% of the respondents are within the age group of 20-25 years and 37.5% of the respondents are within the age group 26-30 years. The balance are varied among 31 to 35 years and above of age. Further, only 22.5% have been in the organization for less than 1 year. 62.5% have been in the same (Tier 4) level between 1 to 3 years which is acceptable depending on the hierarchy classification, while 15% have been in the organization for more than 3 years and are still at the Tier 4 level. Looking at the above findings, we can say that most of the employees in ABC (Pvt) Ltd are young individuals. In nature, this category of employees are always looking for job enrichment and new challenges with high perks. As a result, the tendency of leaving jobs and looking for alternatives could be higher than other age groups. According to Maslow (1943), individuals always seek to satisfy the bottom level of needs which are the physiological needs and then climb to the next level of needs in the hierarchy. These individuals who are young and educated always think of moving on to the next levels as soon as possible. As an overall finding on the above set of analysis between, it is possible to say that there is no significant relationship between the demographic data and motivational factors at ABC (Pvt) Ltd. However, whenever any differences have been identified, recommendations have been made, in lieu of the betterment of ABC (Pvt) Ltd. Based on the findings, recognition was rated the highest in terms of factors affecting motivation, while salary, working conditions & recognition were rated fairly high, on the same grounds. However, we could say that there is plenty of room for improvement pertaining to all the factors, by analysing the feedback from the respondents.

Hypothesis 1, which is salaries has a relationship with employee motivation and was proved with a strong positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.516. The relationship of training with motivation was tested in the second hypothesis and the results (0.526) projected that there is a strong positive relationship with the variables. Hypothesis 3, which is working conditions, has a relationship with employee motivation was also accepted with a strong positive relationship projecting a correlation value of 0.597. The analysis of hypothesis 4 discussed about the relationship between Recognition and Employee Motivation at ABC (Pvt) Ltd and it was proved with a strong positive relationship with a correlation value of 0.628. This relationship was the strongest comparing to other relationships.

The final objective of this research was to suggest recommendations/workable strategies in order to enhance the motivation of Software Engineers at ABC (Pvt) Ltd, by providing an exceptional service to its clients, by maintaining their Client Delight Index (CDI) & Employee Delight Index (EDI) at the expected level. These recommendations have been suggested based on the statistical findings and the conclusions derived at the study. ABC (Pvt) Ltd employees are satisfied with their salaries as there is a significant correlation between salaries and the employee motivation of frontline staff at ABC (Pvt) Ltd, as the correlation value is 0.516, yet they do believe that they don't feel that their pay matches the market pay for the same job they are employed at the organization and that their pay is not in line with their workload. Therefore, the organization should look at doing a revision of their salary scales and see if they can match the market pay for jobs at the same level or justify the reasons for the existing salary scales. Further, other monetary and non-monetary benefits could be emphasised and popularized, in order to avoid employees from worrying about their pay

When training increases by one unit, the staff motivation is expected to increase by 1.256. Based on the analysis of the data collected, it is apparent that a considerable a number of employees believe that a proper training need analysis is not conducted prior to carrying out training programs. Therefore, it is crucial that the organizing pays

attention to this. One actionable plan would be to maintain a skill inventory and ensure that it is up-to-date, at least on a quarterly basis. The organization also needs to ensure their employees are well informed about whatever training programs that are done. The organization should also pay significant attention to grooming the employees who have been in the organization for a considerable number of years, but have not had made career progression and new recruits who join the organization. Training could be linked with the job performance and introduce an evaluation system to measure the training effectiveness and the results of progression. Further, based on the results generated, those who are between 30-35 appear to be the least motivated. The reason for this, may be individuals deciding to get married and starting a family. Therefore individual coaching and other soft-skill trainings, would help employees enjoy a work-life balance.

Working Conditions explained 36% of the variance of motivation. Attention should be given to improve the working conditions of the staff. Based on the data analysed, most employees are not content with the working condition and supportive equipment, which implies that employees believe that working conditions of their organization is not adequate for them to perform their job well. Since ABC (Pvt) Ltd has employees stationed at multiple buildings at the same location, efforts should be made to ensure that the working environment at every building is also maintained evenly in addition to the infrastructure. More attractive working spaces, staff facilities in every building to ensure fun and excitements in the work environment, could easily up lift the working conditions. Furthermore, the organization could run a programme to celebrate birthdays of workers within the premises in a small scale and start a sports session/ compulsory gym session after working hours etc.

Salaries and Training has a high impact on motivation comparing to Recognition and Rewards. It is recommended that ABC (Pvt) Ltd should look at introducing more employee recognition programmes and rewards schemes to motivate staff, in addition to those already in place, such as the display of gamified leader boards, awarding virtual awards through the HRIS system and long service awards. Furthermore, it was understood that employees are not that happy with

the recognition process in place to identify the best performers. If top performers see no differentiation in performance ratings, opportunities and compensation from underperformers, they might get demotivated. Inconsistent evaluation criteria and rewards can lead to a situation such as this. This can be avoided through measuring both the potential and the readiness of individuals through mechanisms such as 360 Appraisals, Psychometric simulations and having a Performance Scorecard and in place for each employee.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a strong and positive relationship between the Compensation, Training, Working Condition and Recognition with staff motivation depicting that when the organization increases the compensation, training opportunities, working facilities and rewards the staff motivation has also increased significantly. The regression analysis suggests that when compensation, training, working conditions and recognition increase by one unit, the staff motivation is expected to increase by 1.897, 1.256, 1.059 and 0.622 units respectively and indicating that above independent variables are having a significant impact on employee motivation. Since the compensation benefits are having a strong positive relationship and high impact on staff motivation, the organization should look at doing a revision of their salary scales and see if they can match the market pay for jobs at the same level or justify the reasons for the existing salary scales. Further, other monetary and non-monetary benefits could be emphasised and popularized, in order to avoid employees from worrying about their pay.

As explained by Amstrong (1988), Motivation is goal-directed behaviour. People are motivated when they expect that a course of action is likely to lead to the attainment of a goal and a valued reward – one that satisfies their needs and wants. Motivation strategies aim to create a working environment and to develop policies and practices that will provide for higher levels of performance from employees. They include the development of total reward systems and performance management processes, the design of intrinsically

motivating jobs and leadership development programmes. This study is bound to benefit the management, to extract the best known motivational factors that support the moral intention of employees to perform, understand which factor highly motivates employees in the IT industry and improve on the motivational aspects that would help enhance the individual performance. It is bound to help organizations with suggestions to cultivate conducive atmospheres and relationships for employees to work under, to foster positive attitudes towards their work. The findings of this study would also benefit scholars as it is a contribution to the body of knowledge in this regard as this is not a fully exploited area of human resource management or any other social science. This would help to enhance understanding and development of relevant theories as well as areas of interest.

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CAREER FACTORS OF NEW ENTRANTS TO A STATE UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There is a big competition to enter into state Universities by the Sri Lankan students. The overall objective of this study was to identify the levels of perceived career skills and capabilities of new entrants to State University education of Sri Lanka. Study was conducted as a case study using a population of 217 students who had just entered into a science based Faculty of an established state sector University in Sri Lanka. The study has found major factors that has contributed to the academic performances and the career choices of new entrants to a science based academic faculty of an established state sector university. Respondents who have attended popular schools for their primary education indicated a positive difference $F(3,210) = 3.37$, $p < 0.05$ in their perception of self-leadership skills. There was no significant difference based on gender in the academic performance of students at the GCE (A/L) examination. However, the self-perceived leadership skills of male students were significantly higher ($t(212) = 2.56$, $p < 0.05$) than their female counterparts. There was no significant difference based on gender (between males and females) in students' perceived skills of being a team member. The self-confidence of new entrants to the university were very high of securing desirable careers after graduation. Further studies on the career progress of graduates have been suggested based on the findings of the study.

Key Words: Career, Undergraduates, New entrants, Academic Performance, Gender

INTRODUCTION

The higher education in Sri Lanka is provided by both the state and private sectors. However, there is a fierce competition to enter into state sector Universities. In order to get in to the state sector universities, students should obtain Z scores from the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A/L) examination. These Z scores should be above the minimum cutoff mark given for each degree programme for each district. Based on this, some similarities could be observed in academic performance of students entering into a particular Faculty of a state university. However, among the students entering into state universities having successful Z scores (above a given level), there is a high variability in their skills related to available careers for graduates. The higher education sector is increasingly attempting to improve not only the technical and subject knowledge but also transferrable skills which are crucial in student's future careers. There is little research conducted on this aspect in Sri Lanka. Rajamuni and Abeygunawardana (2009) found certain factors influencing the performance of students at the GCE (A/L) examination. They found attending tuition class for mathematics in GCE Ordinary Level (O/L) examination, marks of grade 5 scholarship examination, and mother's occupation are influential factors affecting the entry of GCE (A/L) to the physical science stream of University of Colombo in their first attempt. According to Jayarathna (2014) social support is crucial in determining the level of academic engagement of a first-year undergraduates in Sri Lanka. The social support from support from family and friends were significantly affecting the undergraduates' academic engagement level but the social support from a significant other party has no association with academic engagement. It has been further reported that undergraduates perceive that the social support they receive as a factor contributing to their academic performance. Social stress may have a role in reducing the stress of changing and adapting to the University system.

Chathuranga (2016) has found that, both the results of the GCE (O/L) and GCE (A/L) have a positive association with students'

performance, measured by the Grade Percent Average (GPA) at the university. However, Grade 5 examination results do not have such association with the GPA obtained by the respective students. The academic performances (based on their GPA) of third year undergraduates depend on many factors. Academic performances of females were better than that of males'. Also, students who are fluent in English had a higher GPA. Illukkumbura (2016) indicated that the majority (80%) of students who have selected science subjects for GCE (AL) subject streams have selected based on their own preference. Moreover, the study found that students having higher household monthly incomes tend to select science stream. Male students tend to choose commerce or technology streams, while female tend to choose science or arts streams. Study found that some students have avoided science stream because of misguided perceptions such as lack of future opportunities, both in higher studies and employment. In a study conducted by Saseekaran (2013) about the academic performance of science stream GCE (A/L) students. Many factors such as self-study time, interest of students for learning, ability to learn and understand, teaching methodology and use of teaching aids, conducting additional classes after school hours, sufficiency of practical for all the subjects, level of laboratory facilities, level of remedial teaching and level of evaluation affected the academic performance in GCE (A/L) science stream. However, the learning environment, and family income had a weak association with academic performance. Study found that the quality of teaching as the most influential factor followed by evaluation and commitment of students. These three factors accounted for 56% of the variability of the academic performance. Silva and Banneheka (2011) studied about the factors associated with mathematics results at GCE (O/L) Examination. They found that most influential factor was successful completion of school academic exercises. Further, students who do tuition exercises and spend more than seven hours a week do better in mathematics than their counterparts. Students who get help from their older siblings and parents for mathematics did better in GCE (O/L) mathematics. Students from high income families scored more than the others. Academic performance is affected by many factors. Fernando

(2017) reported that students' self-determination, self-motivation, active learning, library usage, time management, ability English knowledge and attendance for lectures could predict students' academic performance. Self-determination is the most influential predictor which explains more than 45% of the variance of the academic performance. These factors altogether account for nearly 70% of the variability of the academic performance.

The overall objective of this study was to identify the levels of perceived career skills and capabilities of new entrants to State University education of Sri Lanka. Findings of this exploratory study help to bridge the gaps in career skills through training programmes developed to address them. Specific Objectives of the study were to discuss the past academic performance of new entrants to State University education of Sri Lanka, to assess the perceived career skills, capabilities and shortcomings of new entrants to State University education of Sri Lanka, and to explore the factors affecting perceived career skills, capabilities and shortcomings of new entrants to State University education of Sri Lanka

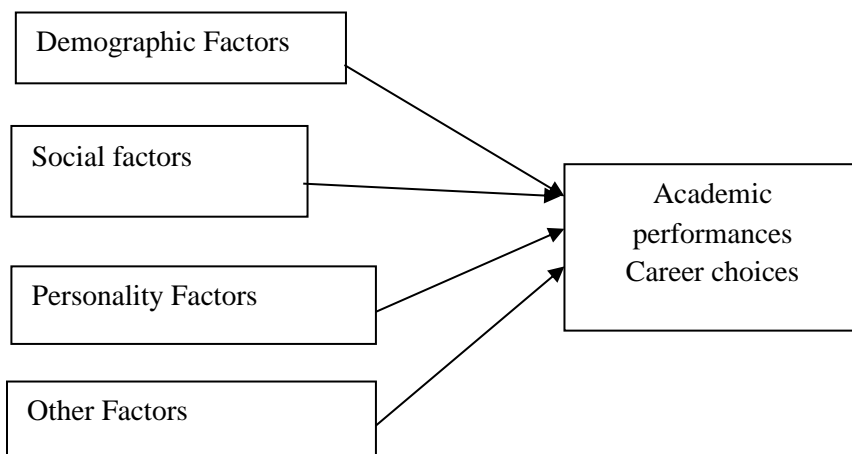


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the Study

The conceptual framework depicted in the figure above has not been tested in this study. Rather, this study serves as an exploration of the

factors indicated in the conceptual framework for the purpose of advanced research in career development of graduates.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to refine and confirm the factors in designing an advanced study to examine the factors contributing to the career development of undergraduates. Thus, the study has been exploratory in nature. Study was conducted as a case study using a population of 217 students who had just entered into a science based Faculty of an established state sector University in Sri Lanka. These students belonged to three specialised degree programmes offered by the same faculty of study. For the purpose of this study all the students were considered as a single group. Data were collected using a questionnaire mainly through the survey method. Questions consisted of actual scenarios, multiple choice questions and open ended questions. Both descriptive and inferential analyses (t-test, ANOVA) were used in data analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used in the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the total number of respondents (217), the vast majority were females (72.8%). Average age of the respondents were 22.5 years (SD= 1.7). The majority of the respondents were Buddhists (86.6%). When considering about the distribution of respondents by the district, highest number of the respondents were from the Kurunegala district (13.8%), Gampaha District (11.1%) and Kandy District (9.7%). Majority of the respondents have passed the Grade five scholarship examination (73.3%). In considering the popularity of the schools that the respondents have attended during their primary education, GCE (O/L) education and GCE (A/L) education, there is an increase of the percentage of respondents who have attended the popular schools. Only 22.1% have attended popular schools during their primary education. It has increased to 60.4% during GCE (O/L) education. Further, 73.7% of the respondents have attended popular schools during GCE (A/L) education. In academic performance of

respondents in GCE (O/L), the grades received by them for mathematics, science and mother tongue (Sinhala or Tamil) were similar having received either, A, B or C grades. The percentages of respondents who obtained Grade A were 85.3%, 84.3%, and 92.6% for Mathematics, Science and Mother Language respectively. However, it was different for English and other subjects. Students (53.5%) have indicated facing GCE (A/L) examination as their greatest challenge. The range of the Z-scores obtained by respondents for GCE (A/L) examination varied from 0.34 to 2.23 with a mean of 1.43 (SD=0.24). Although there was a difference of Z-scores between male (1.47) and female students (1.41), the difference was not statistically significant ($t(167.8) = 1.95, p > 0.05$).

Table 1: Support given by different social groups for the academic performances at GCE (advanced level) examination of the respondents.

Social Group	Mean value of social support received (out of 100)
Teachers	82.8
Schools	67.8
Tuition classes	77.5
Parents	93.2
Other family members	65.2
Relatives	37.9
Friends	54.1

Table 1 shows the support received from various social groups for respondent's academic performance at GCE (A/L) examination. The highest support was given by parents whereas the lowest level support had been given by the relatives. Students have received more support from tuition classes than schools.

Life and Career Related Factors

There were diverse set of responses perceived by the students as their greatest strengths. Self-confidence (12.4%) and aesthetic abilities/skills (11.5%) were the common strengths of the respondents. The next most common greatest strength was not giving up (5.5%). There were very diverse set of weaknesses perceived by the respondents. Quick temperedness was the most common weakness (16%). Being sensitive and emotional (12%) and overthinking (11.5%) were the other common weakness of the respondents. Students have identified their weakness in the use of English language (15.7%) as the biggest barrier at present. Another 12.4% respondents have indicated financial problems their current biggest barrier. Parents were the most influential people (78.3%) in respondents' lives. Their mother was the most influential person (40.6%) for these newly selected undergraduates. The best achievement the majority (77.9%) of the respondents have made so far was getting selected to the University. Nearly two thirds of the respondents (66.4%) aspired be a doctor in childhood, whereas 6.5% wanted to be teachers during childhood. None of the other professions reached 4%. However, as new entrants to the University, the dream job of the majority was to become a University Teacher (21.7%), followed by managerial position (16.6%). Also, 13.8% respondents wanted become researchers. On average, they recorded a confidence level of a mean value 83.7 (out of 100, SD=16.1) of securing a desirable job after graduation. More than half of the respondents (52.5%) seek to join the government sector, and 34.4% expected to be employed in the private sector. Only 6.0% of the respondents want to be self-employed. The vast majority of the respondents (95.9%) had entered the University based on their self-interest and conviction, not due to external influences. Respondents did not perceive romantic relationships as a disturbance to academic performance (40.0 out of 100, SD=30.6). The majority (44.2%) of the respondents consider that their life partners should be graduates, whereas 11.5% don not consider that as important. One third of the respondents (33.6%) were willing to migrate after graduation, whereas majority (56.2%) consider migration as only another viable option. Only 10% of the respondents had no plans of migrating. This is an

important factor that needs to be focussed in curriculum development and national education sector reforms.

Furthermore, the leadership skills of students were assessed based on the popularity of the schools they have attended for primary education or after the grade fifth scholarship examination. Respondents who have attended a popular school (mean leadership skills =66.77), not so popular school (mean leadership skills=64.88), and a non-popular school (mean leadership skills =57.20) for their primary education indicated differences in perception of self-leadership skills. There difference in their self-perceived leadership skills were significant (Mean values) $F(3,210) = 3.37, p < 0.05$. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests showed that, the difference was between the leadership skills of respondents who attended popular school and non-popular schools. There were no significant difference between other comparisons. Perceived group working skills were not different based on the type of school the respondents have attended for their primary education. Furthermore, neither leadership skills, nor teamwork skills were different based on the type of school attended by the respondents for their GCE (O/L) or GCE (A/L) education. The findings indicate the influence of primary education on students' perception of their leadership skills. Those who had primary education in popular schools had better opportunities in developing leadership skills throughout their school life. This could have an impact on the perception of undergraduates of their leadership skills, which could impact on their effectiveness in chosen careers. There have been similar findings in some of the studies conducted in other countries (Gregar & Jayawardena, 2014).

In terms of team working skills, respondents believe that they were better skilled to be team members (mean=78.7 out of 100, SD=15.5) than being a leader (mean=62.6 out of 100, SD=19.6). Moreover, the self-perceived leadership skills of male students (68.05) were significantly higher (than that of female (60.5) students ($t(212) = 2.56, p < 0.05$). This difference of leadership skills could be attributed to the different gender role expectations from the society. There was no such gender effect (between males and females) for students' perceived

skills of being a team member. Research has found that the teamwork of university students is an influential factor for the career progress of them in organizations (Jayawardena & Gregar, 2016). However, maintaining healthy levels of team working skills among undergraduates (and graduates) needs to be addressed through a different study.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has found the major factors that have contributed to the academic performances and the career choices of new entrants to a science based academic faculty in an established state sector university. Respondents who have attended popular schools from their primary education have indicated a positive difference in their perception of self-leadership skills. There was no significant difference based on gender in the academic performance of students at the GCE (A/L) examination. However, the self-perceived leadership skills of male students were significantly higher than their female counterparts. This difference of leadership skills could be attributed to the different gender role expectations by the society. There was no significant difference based on gender (between males and females) in students' perceived skills of being a team member. The self-confidence of new entrants to the university were very high of securing desirable careers after their graduation from the university.

The above findings warrants further examination and introspection. They cannot be generalized and need to be investigated throughout the higher education system. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended to have special attention to improve leadership skills of female students, and those entering from less privileged backgrounds to the state University system. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies throughout the undergraduate life of students, belonging to different faculties of study in the higher education system, at regular intervals.

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