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Editors' Note

Presenting the inaugural issue of the annual research publication of the Department of Management Studies of the Open University, Sri Lanka, "Management Issues" gives us utmost pleasure and satisfaction. Disseminating knowledge of research in the discipline of management is the main purpose of this effort. More importantly, this will pave the way for the participants of the master programme conducted by the Department of Management Studies to publish their research work. This will further help to enhance conceptual and empirical knowledge of those who show keen interest in areas of Management studies.

Only the printed version of the "Management Issues" will be available initially. The intention is to insert the freely accessible online version into the university website in the future, with a view to providing the widest possible accessibility to the public.

Finally we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to MBA graduates whose research articles have been selected for the publication and also their supervisors. We also thank the praise worthy contribution made by the academic staff of the Department of Language studies for language editing.

L.P.S Gamini
Chairperson
Editorial Board

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS OF SRI LANKA: ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

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INTRODUCTION

Quality of care has become an area which is a widely spoken, but mainly as a subjective concept (Donabedian, 1966). Maintaining quality and safety in health care sector is of paramount importance as this will reduce the cost of care, prevent adverse healthcare outcomes, enhance overall quality of care provided to the patient and maintain public confidence in the health sector.

Sri Lanka is a country known for providing cost effective and free healthcare services to the patient. In Sri Lanka the government renders health care on primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The patient's entry to the system is at the primary level by a clinic or Community Health Center (CHC). Divisional hospitals function at a primary level. Patients are referred to secondary level if they need surgical or more advanced medical care. Teaching hospitals function as tertiary care units. Referrals to tertiary level are done from secondary level if specialist care is needed. However, quality and safety in hospitals in Sri Lanka are not optimal and need to be improved.

Ensuring quality of care and safety of patients and providers of care have become the prime objective of the National Health System. The Health Master Plan (2007) emphasized the need to make public hospitals more efficient and to ensure a more responsive service to the consumers. Taking this into consideration, the Ministry of Health established the Directorate of Healthcare Quality and Safety.

In 1989, quality was introduced in Sri Lankan health sector. Since then several failed attempts were made to sustain and improve the quality in healthcare. In year 2000 again a formal quality assurance programme was initiated at Castle Street Hospital for Women. Since year 2004, the programme was expanded to other healthcare institutions. Later it was identified that in some healthcare institutions the quality assurance programme could not be sustained or failed. This was due to no formal knowledge of the factors that influence the quality of healthcare given by healthcare institutions in Sri Lanka. Hence it is important to find out the enablers and barriers of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) programme in Sri Lankan health sector. Therefore before quality can be managed, an in-depth study should be done to investigate enablers and barriers that influence the quality of care rendered. The objective of the study is to examine the Factors Affecting Continuous Quality Improvement Programme in Government Hospitals of Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

A hospital based cross sectional descriptive study, was carried out. In year 2014, out of 42 line ministry hospitals, in 16 hospitals functional Quality Management Units (QMUs) were established. Therefore for this study, all these 16 hospitals were selected.

The study consisted with Medical Doctors, Nursing Category Staff; and Professionals supplementary to Medicine. Hence using standard formula to collect sample size was used and it was found to be 384. A non response rate of 10% was assumed and further 38 were added to the minimum sample and the sample size was determined to be 422 in this study. Stratified sampling method was used to select the samples from the sampling population for the study.

To measure the Factors Affecting CQI, a self administered questionnaire was used to obtain data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section dealt with the perception of the Quality Management Unit. The second section was on the section of attitude of the employee on certain selected aspects Continuous Quality Improvement. The third section was on socio-economic characteristics. This section comprised six questions on socio-economic characteristics. Upon completion of data collection, statistical analyses were completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) computer program to determine and measure frequencies and central tendencies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The total of 378 participants were selected out of 422 participants, of which 43 (11.3 %) of PSM category staff, 237 (62.7%) of Nursing Category staff, and 87 (23.1%) the Medical Doctors. Two hundred and sixty six (70.4%) of the sample were female. Majority of the study sample (80.7%) were 35 or less than 35 years of age. The distribution of respondents according to the period of service in the hospital was divided in to two groups: Five years or less than five years of service (71.1%) and more than five (28.9%).

Even though a fully functioning Quality Management Unit (QMU) was established a year ago, the data shows that 54 (14.2%) of the study sample are not aware of the presence of Quality Management Unit in their hospital. Percentages of positive and negative perceptions of participants, on staff perception of QMU were calculated along with mean and standard deviation. Positive attitudes were defined as having mean scale scores of ≥ 3.5 , the equivalent of somewhat agree or agree or strongly agree on the Likert scale used for the response options. The mean value obtained for the statements "QMU is essential", is 4.40, "Having a QMU is useful", is 4.37 and "QMU is a wasteful exercise", is 1.937. This shows that the importance given by the staff on quality related activities in hospitals.

It is interesting to note that 20 (5.3%) of study sample participated in the Quality Improvement Programme. This is mainly due to majority of staff assumes that QMU is responsible for all the quality related activities. Any QMU's role is to facilitate the quality improvement activities in the hospitals and each unit should take responsibility of the quality related activities. Of the independent variables, commitment received by the top management has the highest mean value followed by the physical resources in Government Hospitals. The high value of standard deviation infers that there are variations in responses.

Correlation between influencing factors and CQI implementation were calculated using Pearson correlation. All the correlations between independent and

dependent variables were significant. CQI Implementation programme shows highest correlation with Monitoring System (0.524), and lowest with teamwork (0.225). The analysis was further carried out using Multiple Regression Analysis. R² of 0.346 indicates that 34.6% of the dependent variable can be explained by this multiple regression model. It indicates some other important variables should be included in this model.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of CQI Programme Implementation

Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	% Positive Response
CQI Programme Implementation	3.24	0.46	43.6
Top Management Commitment	3.51	0.77	52.1
Training	3.15	0.73	41.1
Team Work	3.05	0.802	37.4
Physical Resources	3.23	0.67	42.2
Monitoring System	3.14	0.71	41.8

Analysis of data reveals that top management commitment has the highest mean value (3.51±0.77) when compared with the other independent variables. Its correlation with the CQI Programme Implementation is 0.387 and it is statistically significant. This indicates that the top management should involve actively in the quality improvement programme. On the other hand, the independent variable of physical resources received the second highest mean value of 3.23±0.67 and its correlation with the CQI Programme Implementation is 0.462 which is statistically significant.

Table 2: Correlation between CQI and Factors Affecting CQI Implementation

Factors Affecting CQI Implementation (n=378)	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2 tailed)
Top Management Commitment	0.387	0.000
Training	0.443	0.001
Team Work	0.225	0.001
Physical Resources	0.462	0.000
Monitoring System	0.524	0.001

Monitoring system received the mean value of 3.14±0.71. Its correlation with the CQI Programme Implementation is 0.524 and it is statistically significant. When compared with the other independent variables, monitoring system has the highest correlation with the CQI implementation programme. This indicates that the higher priority has been given to the monitoring system for the quality improvement programme.

The study finds that continuous training has a mean value of 3.15±0.73. Its correlation with the CQI Programme Implementation is 0.443 and it is statistically significant. Even though continuous training on health care quality and safety plays a crucial role, the participants generally not value the training programmes when compared

with the monitoring system and physical resources. However, teamwork has the lowest mean (3.05 ± 0.802) when compared with the other independent variables. Its correlation with the CQI Programme Implementation is 0.227 and it is statistically significant. This correlation too is the lowest when compared with the correlation of the CQI programme implementation with other independent variables.

When the CQI programme implementation was analyzed gender wise female participants had a mean (3.19 ± 0.671) more than the male participants (2.99 ± 0.78) on top management commitment. Anyhow male participants showed a higher correlation (0.612) than the female participants (0.445). Here too, among male and female participants of the study, when compared with the other independent variables, monitoring system has the highest correlation with the CQI implementation programme. This confirms importance given to the monitoring system for the quality improvement programme by the study population. Even though the study was carried out systematically after reviewing literatures on Continuous Quality Improvement in health sector, few limitations have been identified.

CONCLUSION

The study found out that there are no significant factors affecting CQI programme implementation between selected 16 government hospitals in Sri Lanka. The important factors contributing to the CQI implementation were monitoring system, physical resources and training. According to the study teamwork is less impotent for the CQI implementation in the government hospitals. The study further indicates that monitoring system and physical structure had the highest correlation with CQI implementation programme. It is noteworthy to observe that teamwork has the lowest correlation with the CQI implementation programme.

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SAVE EXECUTIVES: RETENTION OF PLANTING EXECUTIVES IN REGIONAL PLANTATION COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

Plantation sector plays an important role in the economy of Sri Lanka and has been the back bone of the economy until recent past. The higher contribution to the GDP from agriculture sector has now been replaced by the service and industrial sectors. The reduction of the contributions to the GDP from the plantation sector was caused by many factors. The exodus of planters and the industry's inability to attract young talented youth are two of the major contributory factors for poor performance of the plantation sector.

Manager's role in the plantation working environment has been challenged internally and externally due to the complex nature of the business. Whilst the cost of production steadily increases, the net sales average of the product has not improved as expected or doesn't correspond with the increasing in production cost. Hence it is a challenging task to maintain the plantations as viable units. As a result, many experienced planting executives decision to leave the industry every year, is a major issue for the corporate management. Plantation Managers could be considered as business leaders as they are responsible for the management of the estates. In order to make a significant difference a business leaders should provide the conditions and the environment which is most conducive to the people to perform their task. "The job of management is to make human strength effective and human weaknesses irrelevant. People need to know what their organization stands for and is trying to accomplish. The first thing is a clear mission. The second thing is responsibility for results, which means appraisal and review. And the third thing is continuous learning. That's the purpose of any organization." Peter F. Drucker (1996).

In today's modern working environment it's not the wages that keep employees from walking out the door, the company's attitude to its staff can be more important, Larry Schlesinger (2000). If your staff are resolving to find new jobs shouldn't you be resolving to keep them? Retaining talented, productive people has emerged as the business world's key issue, and there's now plenty of evidence to suggest that while everyone wants to be paid the going rate, financial incentives are not the be-all and end-all.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Exodus of planters at the prime age of planting and inability of the sector to attract talented youth is a major issue that has existed for many years. Whilst there are many push factors for the planters to leave the industry and change employment within the sector, there are many pull factors from outside the plantation sector to attract them for many managerial positions.

Despite the fact that the problem of retention of the planting executives has been identified over and over again, no remedial action has been taken so far. As per the latest statistics from Planter's association, sixty percent of the resignation during the last five years also was in the 31-45 year age group is an indication that retention of experience planting executives is a major challenge faced by the industry and the Regional Planation Companies. The RPC's continued to face challenges to retain their cream.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Numerous researchers have carried out studies on plantation sector and the challenges faced by the Regional Planation Companies (RPC's), the workers, environment changes, plant related issues, contribution to the GDP from the sector etc. However, even though the exodus of planting executives at the prime age of their career is one of the major problems faced by the sector, little or no studies have been carried out to identify the factors affecting the retention of planting executives in the Regional Planation Companies in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the relationship between the management practices carried out by the RPC's, mainly internal controllable factors, where the RPC's could take corrective measures, if required, in order to address one of the major issues faced by the RPC's, the retention of planting executives.

METHODOLOGY

Out of twenty RPC's in Sri Lanka five RPC's were selected to cover and different agro climatic regions of NuwaraEliya, Nawalapitiya, Awisaawella, Ratnapura, Galle and Matara. Executives responsible for managing an individual estate and those who left before retirement in the selected RPC's during last five years are considered for this study. There are two categories of planting executives in an estate, namely Managers/ Superintendents and Assistant Managers/ Superintendents. A questionnaire consists of 37 questions was designed in a four point Likert scale to measure the identified factors of job itself, direct manager, work life balance, rewards and recognitions and career development affecting the retention on planting executives, 4 for strongly agree, and 1 for strongly disagree.

The base on the literature that factors effecting the retention of planting executives are influenced by five internal factors. The factors are job itself, direct manager, work life balance, rewards and recognition and career development identified as independent variables and retention of planting executives as the dependent variable.

H 1: Job itself, will have an effect on the retention of planting executives

H 2: Direct manager will have an effect on the retention of planting executives

H 3: Work family balance will have an effect on the retention of planting executives

H 4: Rewards and recognition will have an effect on the retention of planting executives

H 5: Career development will have an effect on the retention of planting executives

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicates that majority of the planting executives are from the age group of 31 – 40 years. Only three are above fifty years of age. There is a significant difference between the age and the position. The education qualification and position has no significant difference as the most of the planting executives have done diplomas and certificate courses. This gives an indication that there is an opportunity that could be extended to the planting executives in the RPC’s, like to enhance their knowledge and wish to acquire academic qualification. As per the analysis fifty percent of the diplomas are related to HR and ICT. Though HR and ICT are required to manage the plantations, it is an indication of the planning executive’s intention to leave irrespective of the fact that whether they hold managerial position.

The reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach’s α coefficient was calculated to find the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient recorded as Job itself (0.865), Direct Manager (0.926), Work life balance (0.619), Rewards (0.834), Career development (0.716), and Intention to Leave (0.865) which all variables have more than 0.7, except the work life balance which is the lowest (0.619) however since the coefficient is more than 0.6 the questioner is considered as valid and reliable.

Table 1: Correlations between the Independent and Dependent Variables

		Job Itself	Direct Manager	Work Life Balance	Rewards	Career Develop ment
Retention of Planting executes	Pearson Correlation	0.873	0.811	0.752	0.725	0.852
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Survey data

As per the hypotheses, it was found that job itself, direct manager, work life balance, rewards and recognition and career development have significant and positive relationships with retention of planting executives at 0.5 level (Table 1). Out of five variables job itself, direct manager and career development had higher correlation than work life balance and rewards and recognition. The findings confirm the theoretical arguments explained in the literature review. The summary of multiple regression models on retention of planting executives in the Regional Planation Companies shows that R^2 is 0.813. It indicates that 81.3% of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable in the multiple regression model. Although there is an overall positive correlation between the identified factors of the entire study group, the correlation between the two groups, The Managers and the Assistant Managers have significant difference.

When an organization starts to lose significant numbers of senior employees, it is usually indicative of even more serious organizational problems. This is the problem faced by the RPC’s as most of the planting executives leave the industry at the prime age

of planting. The study reveals that most of the planting executives leave their RPC's when they have certain years of experience. Some conditions, which are immediate prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions. There are voluntary turnover (separation) and involuntary turnover (termination). Turnover may be profitable when poor performing employees leave the company. What hurts the most is when good employees quit. The organizations should differentiate short-term from long-term employees. Commitment is one of the strongest influence on desire to stay. When employees are proud of their company and shared its ideals and values, they wanted to stay. The commitment should be from both employee and the employer.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was limited to investigating the impact of five internal factors job itself, direct manager, work life balance, rewards and recognition and career development on retention of planting executives in the Regional Planation Companies in Sri Lanka. The researcher is of the view, though there are internal and external pull and push factors that have an effect on the retention of planting executives, whilst external pull factors are common to all RPC's and at times un controllable, the internal push factors are well within the control of the RPC's management. Hence if the RPC's could address the issues highlighted in the study they could take preventive measures to retain the planting executives in the RPC's. The findings of this research study, both on the theoretical level and practical level could be used to do further studies by the respective RPC's in order to see that the identified factors need improvements in their respective RPC's. Further some of the good HRM practices carried out in the identified RPC's could be bench marked to reduce or eliminate the impact on exodus of planting executives in their respective RPC's.

The RPC's should seriously look at different requirements at different life stages of their planting executives in order to see how best they could meet the aspiration and the expectations. Especially the age group of forty two to forty eight in the stage four as per the literature review. As per the planation industry expert's comments, the problem of retention remains with the same age group. Developing employees covers all efforts to foster learning, which happens on the job every day. RPC's should pay more emphasis to develop the planting executives for the benefit of the RPC and planting executives. The plantation industry should move from the present unsustainable wage system to a win-win system of 'guaranteed livelihoods' which has already yielded successful results at several plantations for the industry to survive.

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: USE OF POWER AND ITS IMPACT.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of economy of Sri Lanka, private commercial banks hold a key position in the sector of banking with a majority of the stake and more number of banks, precisely against the few state banks in the country. Among the Sri Lankan service sector, finance sector contributes 9% to the economy and within the finance sector commercial banks' contribution to the assets is 48.2% (Central Bank of Sri Lanka annual report, 2013). Commercial banks do not have to comparatively set the standards and benchmark for quality of services and introduction of new products and technology due to the intense competition among them. The increasing number of commercial banks have created a highly competitive environment among them. The rivalry and competition are ever increasing and with the barriers to exit there is no way out except facing the evolving challenges. Therefore it is not just the mere survival and it is all about being competitive, innovative and moreover competent in the tasks undertake.

In order to face the challenges of competition and be successful, the private commercial banks should have inner organizational strength and people are a key factor and an asset to it. The possession of a highly committed workforce in the organization is beneficial to this environment. Due to the competition numerous opportunities are created for bankers at present and moving from one bank to another has become a trend. The organizational commitment from employees and the loyalty are deteriorating as in a trend where the people move from one bank to another for various reasons. The changes in attitudes towards their employers, commitment and responsibility are some of the qualities which have deteriorated over the years. Long term employment concept is declining and is replaced with a short term benefit based employment. The employees are blamed for not performing satisfactorily, for not having the desired commitment towards the organization and also lack of efficiency at work, but the causes for these are rarely addressed or investigated.

Managers use their power and authority on employees to get tasks fulfilled and motivate them to be committed to the work and to the organization. Power is one of the major concepts in any organization. It can be an extremely important tool in the success or failure of an organization. The term power often evokes mixed and passionate reactions with many observers viewing power as a sinister force. The ways and means of using power will have negative or positive impact on the organizational commitment of employees (Nadim Jahangir et al, 2014). Even though there may be a temporary improvement in commitment with the use of power, in the long run the real impact on the commitment of employees can be vice versa. Therefore the influence of managers' power can either be negative or positive in generating commitment in employees towards their organization.

The use of power has a major effect on the decisions made by the employees whether to stay in or move out. Brass and Barkhard (1993) argued that power depends on the ability of the person to use it and that ability depends on the personal attributes and strategies of the power holder. This means that the use of power depends on the person's capabilities of using it. Hence, willingness to stay in an organization will also be depending on the power holder's ability of using the desired power base in an appropriate way in order to motivate their subordinate and retaining them.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study investigates manager's use of power and its relationship to organizational commitment and any other potential factors influencing the relationship in a selected private commercial bank in Sri Lanka. The relationship between these variables will be reviewed by using literature from various scholars and studies done by previous researches to arrive at a conclusion.

METHODOLOGY

Structured questionnaire was used to collect information. After obtaining the approval from the relevant authority in the bank the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the employees of the selected branches of the bank through the local courier service. The questionnaire was given to the second person in charge of the branch (below to the manger) to the tellers in the bank. 115 questionnaires were distributed to the 13 selected branches. The sample size of the previous researches was ranging from 100-500. The majority of the extended studies have a sample size of 100 plus. (Rahim 1989, Rahim & Buntzman 1989, Mossholder et al.1998)

The respondents were instructed to either courier the hard copy of the questions or to fax. They were allowed to scan and resend, since the facilities were available. They were also given the freedom to ask for a soft copy and reply through the local e-mail network. All the questionnaires distributed were numbered and recorded branch wise. Each branch has a non-managerial staff of eight. After the questionnaires were sent the researcher made an arrangement with one employee of each branch to coordinate the process and return the questionnaires during the stipulated time frame of one week. The researcher follows up with the coordinating person of each branch and managed to collect 104 questionnaires, within a period of thirty days. The respondents who delayed in responding were personally contacted through the coordinator and encouraged to respond. The responding rate was 90%.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to assess the reliability of all constructs; Mangers' use of power, employees organizational commitment and demographic variables. The value of Alpha ranges from 0 to 1. The nearer the value of Alpha to 1, the better the reliability. If either the value is low or there are too few items or there is very little commonality among the items (Churchill, 1979). Both dependent and independent variables are reliable as the values of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for most of the constructs are above 0.70, except continuance commitment (Cronbach's Alpha 0.58). For the early stages of a research, Nunnally (1978) suggested that the reliability of .50-0.60 is sufficient, although coefficient of 0.7 or above is desirable (Hair. et al.1998). Hence the alpha value of 0.58 for continuance commitment is acceptable.

The descriptive statistics of different power bases has been calculated to identify the employee’s perception of manager’s use of power. It also describes employees organizational commitment in three components; affective, continuance and normative. The calculated mean value of all power uses above 3.00 indicates that the employee’s perception of manager’s use of power is high. The highest mean value was 3.94 which was related to expert power. It is mainly because of the nature of the industry, where the skills of the younger employees are developed through seeing and observing the supervisors and with their guidance. Descriptive analysis of data also shows that all three commitment categories are having mean values over 3, which suggests that the employees of the particular bank are relatively committed. Variables of affective commitment (3.43), continuance commitment (3.14) and normative commitment (3.34) fall more into agreed category.

Hence, with the purpose of exploring the possible association between independent and dependent variables, the correlation analysis has been performed. The reported correlation coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Table1: Coefficients of Correlation

	AC	CC	NC
Reward power(RP)	.137	.090	.270**
Coercive power(CP)	-.442**	-.059	-.210*
Legitimate power(LP)	.223*	.077	.323**
Expert power(EP)	.321**	.091	.125
Referent power(RFP)	.263**	-.049	.007
Informational power(IP)	.249*	.140	.063

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

When exploring the data in Table 1, Pearson correlation coefficient between reward power and normative commitment is 0.270 which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance (2 tailed). However the data reveals that there is no significant relationship between reward power and other two dependent variables i.e affective and continuous commitment. Coercive power is having a negative relationship with all three types of commitment variables. The correlation coefficients for affective and normative commitment are significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 level respectively. Thus this result supports the view that the managers’ power uses in way of punishment and other forcing methods will not increase the commitment levels of the employees and it will only have a negative impact.

Legitimate power shows a positive relationship with organizational commitment. Legitimate power and affective commitment are positively correlated with a correlation coefficient of 0.223 and with normative commitment with a correlation coefficient of 0.323. In both, the correlation coefficients are significant at the 0.01 level of significance (2 tailed). The research by Zahara Ramzini et.al (2003) identified a significant relationship between legitimate power and organizational commitment in a

sports federation where the work is based on written instructions. Similarly banks are also operated on rigid and formal rules due to their nature of business and therefore the relationship between commitment and legitimate power are also positive even though it is not significant as Ramizini's research. The empirical results also depict the correlation coefficients for expert power ($\rho=0.321$) and referent power ($\rho=0.263$) against affective commitment is significant at 0.01 level while that of informational power is significant at 0.05 level. Accordingly, these results are consistent with the study carried out by Ali Mollahosseni et.al (2004) which states that there is a positive relationship between referent and expertise power bases.

CONCLUSIONS

From this research carried out at the selected local commercial bank, the most interesting finding was that coercive power is negatively affecting on employee organizational commitment. Hence, the managers of the bank as well as the management should be cautious of using punishment as a method to get people committed to their jobs. The other power sources have shown positive relationships, which suggest that the bank can educate their managers with regard to their management skills and provide them an idea how the subordinates react to these different types of power uses in order to change the approach towards employees for better results. It is also important that the management of the bank consider more on improving the expertise of the managers, their informational capabilities and the knowledge in their related work through training or other knowledge sharing sessions. It is also vital for the management of the bank to explore the other causes related to employee commitment and study further on those variables together with use of power by the managers, for improvement of their employee's commitment towards organization.

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BRAND AWARENESS: THE IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES.

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INTRODUCTION

In the current commercial world, every organization gives high priority to satisfy their customer expectations. Satisfied customers will stay with organizations for a long period of time. Organizations give promises or create expectations through their marketing mix. If the customers feel that the product is of high quality, they will consistently buy the product or they will be loyal to the brand. Promotion is one of the key factors in the marketing mix and plays a key role towards market success. Promotion is a tool to inform, persuade, remind and communicate with customers, create awareness on a product, stimulate interest to purchase the product and give feedback to providers about their experience. What is important is the combination of the different channels that can be used to communicate the promotional message to the customers. The channels to be used are advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relation and personal selling. There are a number of factors influencing the choice of a brand. According to marketing literature, the brand choice is the function of 4 P's (Product, place, promotion and price) as well as buyers' characteristics.

Promotion can influence the consumers at any stage of the consumer purchasing process. It is the term given to the collection of methods by which an organization attempts to communicate either directly or indirectly with its market. Roman & Cooper (2004) say that advertising creates awareness, communicates attributes and benefits, reminds and refreshes to ensure top of mind awareness. They also highlight that a brand is in the consumer's consideration set. Therefore, it generates repeat purchase and over time contributes to loyalty and the franchise of a brand.

Kotler & Armstrong (2006) say that sales promotion is a stimulus that is offered from time to time and encourage publicity that will lead to action for purchase of a certain product. Sales promotion techniques are techniques that immediately try to affect customers' buying behavior. Research is telling that sales promotion activities should be done infrequently, when the customers do not expect it.

According to Brassington & Pettitt (2000) the essence of public relations (PR) is to look after the nature and quality of the relationship between the organization and its different public and to create a mutual understanding. PR covers a range of activities, for example the creation and maintenance of corporate identity and image; charitable involvement, such as sponsorship, and community initiatives; media relation for the spreading of good news, as well as for crises management, such as damage limitation.

Moreover, an organization can attend trade exhibitions to create stronger relationships with key suppliers and customers as well as enhancing the organization's presence and reputation within the market. According to Brassington & Pettitt (2000), direct marketing is an interactive system of marketing, using one or more advertising media to achieve measurable response anywhere, forming a basis for creating and further

developing an on-going direct relationship between an organization and its customers. To be able to create and sustain quality relationships with sometimes hundreds or even thousands of individual customers, an organization needs to have as much information as possible about each one, and needs to be able to access, manipulate and analyze that information. Thus, the database is crucial to the process of building the relationship.

The seed paddy industry has emerged as an important component for productive agriculture in Sri Lanka. However inadequate rice seed supply has led to encourage private seed producers and farmers to produce their own seeds in addition to the seeds produced by the Department of Agriculture. However for last 20 years most of the private companies have not been able to position as a reputed brand in seed market although they promote their brands more than the Department of Agriculture.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of promotional strategies on brand awareness of seed paddy brands in Sri Lanka. Based on the issue the researcher addressed to what extent the promotional strategies impact on brand awareness of seed paddy.

METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework of this study is primarily based on the study done by Chieng Fayrene Y.L. and Goi Chai Lee, (2011) on brand equity and customer based brand equity respectively. According to Chieng Fayrene Y.L. and Goi Chai Lee, (2011), the construction of customer based brand equity were brand awareness, association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework of this study only focuses on the relationship between promotional mix strategy and brand awareness. The research identified the promotional strategies as independent variables and brand awareness was considered as the dependent variable. Brand Awareness is the capacity of consumers to recognize or remember a brand and there is a link between the brand and the product class, but the link does not have to be strong. Brand Awareness is a process from where the consumers have put the brand on a higher rank, the brand has become the “top of mind” (Aakar, 1991).

The data required for the study was collected from primary and secondary sources. The structured questionnaire was developed using five points Likert scaling system to collect data and 100 farmers were randomly selected from Anuradapura, Polonnaruwa and Matale districts for this study. The pre-testing was conducted to validate the questionnaire through consultation with experts. The questionnaire was divided into the following categories which were developed based upon the theoretical framework. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of four multiple choice questions to gather general information of respondents, such as age, gender, education and method of transportation used for the transportation of seed paddy. In the second part of the questionnaire, six questions were developed to understand the awareness of seed paddy produced by the Department of Agriculture and twelve questions were developed to identify the awareness towards promotional mix strategies of Department of Agriculture. The Third part of the questionnaire had included six questions on awareness of private label seed paddy and twelve questions on awareness towards promotional mix strategies of private label brands.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Coefficient of correlation is used to find out the relationship between the promotional strategies and brand awareness of seed paddy brands. In addition, to confirm accuracy of the results, regression analysis is also used.

Table 1: Summary of Correlation Analysis.

Concept	Brand Awareness of Department of Agriculture	Brand Awareness of Private label
Promotional strategies	-0.59	0.734**
Advertising	-0.588	0.765**
Sales promotion	0.209**	0.386**
Public Relation	0.514**	0.777**
Direct Marketing	-0.181	0.173**

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

Overall, the value of correlation coefficient of promotional strategies and brand awareness of Department of Agriculture seed paddy is -0.59 indicating that the promotional strategies are not of use for brands produced by the government. Nevertheless, the value of correlation coefficient of promotional strategies and brand awareness of private label seed paddy is 0.734. This indicates that if the farmers using private labeled brands are aware of the brand, that awareness was strongly correlated with the promotional strategies. Co-efficient of determination (R square) also expressed that 82.5% of awareness is explained by promotional strategies which is significant at 1% level of significance.

The coefficient of correlation of 0.514 between public relations and awareness of the brand of the Department of Agriculture indicate that public relations have been effective in making the farmers aware of the brand of Department of Agriculture. Although manufacturers of private label brands focus on many promotional strategies the public relations have been more effective in creating awareness about their brands among farmers. It is revealed by the coefficient of correlation of 0.777 between public relations and awareness of the brand. Sales promotion has been more effective in creating farmers awareness of the seed paddy of the Department of agriculture while it has been a less effective promotional strategy in making farmers aware of the seed paddy of the private labeled brands. The reason for this relationship may be that the Department of Agriculture engages in providing them with free samples to make them aware of the brand whereas the private label brands rarely practice it. Awareness of private label brands can also be increased through advertising. It is explained by the coefficient of correlation of 0.765 between advertising and the awareness of private label brands. Finally the present study indicates that promotional strategies can be used to create awareness of private label seed paddy brands in Sri Lanka and advertisements and public relations are the most effective strategies for creating awareness. The Department of Agriculture can make the farmers aware of its brands through sales promotion and public relations.

CONCLUSION

In today's competitive world it is necessary for every organization to build brand awareness. According to above results public relation activities were mostly affected on brand awareness of seed paddy brands. Therefore companies can improve public relation activities through sponsorships, field trails, field demonstrations, samples and field days since they allow the purchases which should be used as a tool to increase better awareness of their product. Companies should also improve advertising intensity for better brand awareness.

Marketers need to continuously improve their marketing programs to attract and retain consumers. Marketers have to launch consumer retention program because the cost of recruiting a new customer is high. Promotion is the most efficient strategy in attracting brand switchers. Thus, marketers have to implement the efficient promotion strategy. Marketer should evaluate the current situation in regular periods to ensure the efficient use of promotional strategies. Marketer should keep the customer in first place and attract the switching customer from its competitors. At the same time they need non users as users. In the case of customers of seed paddy, the farmers and public relations can be used as a promotional tool.

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**WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON SERVICE DELIVERY:
A STUDY ON A PRIVATE SECTOR BANK IN SRI LANKA**

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INTRODUCTION

Banking sector is an important sector for economic activities of any country. In Sri Lanka, there are state and the private sector-based banks. The commercial banks alone represent 58% of total market share in the financial sector of the country according to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) statistics. Banking industry is highly competitive and vulnerable to new changes happening in the economy. The industry is a key sector of the economy in the country. The banking sector accounted for 70% financial sector assets. The six largest banks enjoy 64% sector assets, 74% sector loans and 68% sector deposits at end of year 2010. Foreign ownership is low, at the rate of 12%. The three large state-owned banks accounted for 52% of total banking system deposits at end of the year 2010. The composition of capital is of relatively high quality, with core capital accounting for 87.5% of the total capital base. Sri Lankan commercial banks alone share a percentage of 48.2% in finance sector assets according to CBSL report in 2013.

Sri Lankan banks have increased their counter-opening hours to provide better service to its customers and to remain competitive. Further, many banks have commenced weekend banking activities in their branch premises to provide better service to their customers. New concepts such as “night banking” and “24 hour banking” were also launched by some banks. “Palm top banking” is a new concept where banks come to the doorstep of customers to collect cash. Such new technologies have smashed the traditional boundaries of banking in the country. Therefore, it’s important to study about work-life balance of private sector bankers and their service delivery.

The changes in business activities bring change in culture and perception of employees. Businesses are facing increasing necessity to raise efficiency and become more responsive to customers and employees. The long working hours, work pressure, high demanding jobs, use of sophisticated technology made it difficult for employees to keep a balance between their job and work commitments (Nadeem and Abbas 2009). Today’s workers are no longer considering just only the remuneration and promotional prospects in employment. Job seekers increasingly make employment decisions on how well their current or potential workplace can support a balance between personal lives and paid occupation (Tanvi and Fatama 2012).

What looks like work-life balance to one person may differ for another because individuals have different goals, values and definitions of success. (Weiss, 2006). A person plays different roles in a span of life, which work (worker, employer) and non-work (father, spouse, friend, sibling, etc). Work Life Conflict exists when time and energy demands to satisfy one role make it difficult to participate in other (Duxbury et al., 2001). Work-Life balance is a concept that supports the effort of employees to split their time and energy between work and other important aspects of their lives. Work-Life

balance is a daily effort to take time for family, community participation, personal growth and other personnel activities in addition to the demand of work place (Susan 2014)

Customer satisfaction is a post-purchase judgment by the customer. One of the most popular definitions of customer satisfaction is that customer satisfaction is the judgment borne out of the comparison of pre-purchase expectations with post-purchase evaluation of a product or service experience (Oliver, 1997). Service quality has been defined as an attitude or global judgment about the superiority of a service (Robinson 1999). The service quality is important because of increased competition and helps to get greater understanding of customers (William 2009). Therefore it is essential to measure service quality to get a better understanding of service quality delivered by organization (Thahir & Abubakar 2007).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to understand the relationship between Work-Life balance of private sector bankers and service delivery provided by bankers which affect customer satisfaction. Further, it identifies the most significant factor which determined the relationship between work-life balance and the service delivery of the private commercial bankers. It also provides recommendation to the bank management about how to address any issue which will affect its service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is an attempt to conceptualize the various factors that influence the quality of work-life balance and their effect on service delivery in Sri Lankan private banking sectors. On the basis of the literature review, the independent variable and the dependent variable identified as follows.

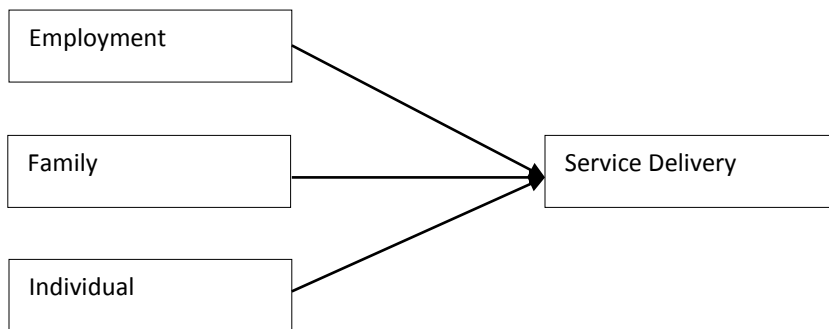


Figure I: Conceptualized Model

The questionnaire consists of two main parts. The first part consists of the items measuring the demographic details such as Gender, Age, Experience, Qualification etc. The second part involves questions designed to obtain information related to work-life balance and service delivery to be used for data analysis. All employees serving at the organization for at least three months (03) were identified from the human resources database and a sample of 100 banking employees has been randomly selected for this

study. This sample approximately represents at least 10% of the entire organization which will provide a clear picture about entire population as a whole. Eighty six individuals responded to us from the above sample and respondent size has been accepted as a good sample. The five point Likert scale was used to measure the dimensions. Pilot survey was performed with few selected respondents to see the feasibility of the questioners. Quantitative data analytical techniques used for analytical purpose to collect data for this research study. Statistical analysis tools such SPSS were used in this exercise.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the Bankers are analyzed using descriptive statistics. The age analysis provided that 67% of the respondents were within the age limit of 20-30 years and 30% of the respondents were within the age limit of 30-40 years and only 2% of the sample belong to young adults, less than 20 years. In the selected sample, 52.3% of the respondents were female and 47.3% of the respondents were male staff members. Almost half of the respondents (48.9%) had less than five years of banking experience in their career. 16.3% of respondents had less than one year experience in the bank. 23.3% of the respondents possessed experience for 6 -10 years' in banking.

Regarding educational qualifications, one third of the respondents (30.2%) had Advanced Level qualification, which is the entry level criteria for any bank. 3.5% of the respondents had post-graduate qualification, which is a low percentage. Apart from these two segments, all other respondents had Diploma, Degree or Professional qualification. This means that most of the bankers are highly qualified. Most of the respondents belonged to non-executive grade which represent 57% of the total sample. Executive level staff represents 36% percentage from the sample population and only 7% belongs to the managerial level. Most of the individuals work less than 10 hours per day. 43% of the respondents work 9-10 hours and 32.6% of the respondents work 8-9 hours per day. Only 4.7% of the sample work more than 10 hours per day. The reliability of a measure can be established by testing for both consistency and stability. A Cronbach's alpha value closer to 1 indicates a higher level of internal consistency reliability of the measure of a concept. However, if an adapted scale is used in a different context, or a new scale is used for the first time, threshold value of .60 for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is accepted. A Cronbach's alpha value of Employment (0.784), Family (0.719), Individual (0.608), and Service Quality (0.884) which are at accepted level.

Employment issues of an organization are measured using seven indicators, namely: Remuneration, Accommodation, Training and Development, Job Rotation, Career Advancement, Supervisory Leadership and Work environment. Family issues of the private sector commercial bankers have been taken as the second variable which has an effect on work-life balance. These family issues were tested using two sub indicators which are Marriage /Family Life and Elder care. Individual factors have been taken as the third variable which affects work-life balance of the private sector commercial bankers in the country. Under this variable, a questionnaire was prepared to test sub-indicators such as workaholic peer relationship and alcoholism. Service deliveries of private sector commercial bankers were done by utilizing five variables. Those variables are Reliability

of the Employee, Responsiveness of the Employee, Courtesy of the Employee, Credibility of the Staff Member, and Communication Skills of the Employee.

The research study attempted to explore the relationship between the work life balance and service delivery of private commercial bankers in Sri Lanka. The results of the study indicate that the components of work life balance are positively related to the service delivery. The results showed that employment has positive relationship with service delivery followed by family factors but not significant, the individual factor has negative relationship with service delivery and not significant. Therefore, the findings not supported the research hypothesis of the study. The regression analysis results showed that R²value is 0.330 which indicates that 33% of the variation in service delivery of private sector commercial bankers is explained by the identified independent variables. Overall there exists an association between employment issues, Family issues, and Individual issues with service delivery of the private commercial banks in Sri Lanka.

Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Zero order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.176	.535		9.678	.000					
Employement	.147	.099	.164	1.490	.140	.159	.162	.162	.983	1.017
Family	.013	.050	.029	.260	.795	.020	.029	.028	.971	1.030
Individual	-.017	.053	-.036	-.326	.745	-.011	-.036	-.036	.956	1.046

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

Considering the relationship among work-life balance and service delivery, the above table shows that significant values are more than 0.05. Therefore, these hypotheses were not accepted but overall, there is a strong relationship between work-life balance and service delivery.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study is, investigating about the relationship among work life balance of private sector commercial bankers in the country its effects on service delivery. Further to identify the most significant factor which effect both work life balance and the service delivery of the private commercial bankers in Sri Lanka. There are positive relationships available with Work life balance and the Service delivery among private commercial bankers in Sri Lanka. The employment related issues are the mostly effecting factor for the service delivery, Training and Development indicate that which has positive correlation than all other attributes. Further HRM should focus on Job

rotation and Developing Career advancement Opportunities for the staff members as both these variables have a positive correlation with Service delivery. Even if there are studies which have found a strong correlation between subjective and objective measures of Work Life balance and service delivery, there can still be possibility that some of the subjective responses may not reflect the realistic view of Work life balance and Service delivery. This research further can be extended to cover the large scale privately own commercial bank and even combining both government and private commercial banks in the country which will provide more realistic picture.

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HOW CUSTOMERS PERCEIVE SERVICE QUALITY? PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

Primary health care service is the basic level of health care that include programs directed at the promotion of health, early diagnosis of disease or disability, and prevention of disease. Primary health care is provided in an ambulatory facility to a limited number of people, often those living in a particular geographic area. Typically this acts as the first contact and principal point of continuing care for patients within a health care system, and coordinates other specialist care that the patient may need. Primary health care services in Sri Lanka are mainly provided through a well-organized curative and preventive health network through Medical Officers of Health (MOH) working across the country.

The preventive care in Sri Lanka considerably depends on the grass root level of public health carried out by Public Health Midwives and Public Health Inspectors (PHM & PHI), working under Medical Officers of Health (MOH) serving across the country. Client satisfaction is of prime importance as a measure of the quality of medical services because it gives information on the provider's success at meeting those client values and expectations, matters for which the client has the ultimate authority. The measurement of satisfaction is, therefore, an important tool for research, administration, and planning.

Customer satisfaction is a measurement of how pleased customers are with a particular product or service. It is seen as a key performance indicator within any business. Providing satisfaction to customers is an intuitively sensible route to running a profitable business. Important thing to remember is that even public health workers need to be concerned about the customer satisfaction with the service that they deliver. But we have not been very good at measuring whether or not primary health care providers are doing the right job in delivering satisfaction to their customers.

Patients' perceptions about primary health services seem to have been largely ignored by health care providers in Sri Lanka. Those perceptions, especially about service quality, might shape confidence and subsequent behaviors with regard to choice and usage of the available health care facilities.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to measure satisfaction of patients utilizing primary health care in Sri Lanka. Findings and conclusions of this research can be used to improve primary health care services. This could also help in improving employees' performance at the workplace and establishing a good image.

METHODOLOGY

In medical care literature, perceptions are defined as patients' beliefs concerning the medical services received or experienced. Expectations are defined as desires or want

of the patients. Expressing it differently, it is what they feel as an ideal standard of services the physician should offer. These expectations may be based, in part or total, on past relevant experiences, including those gathered vicariously.

The interactive nature of medical services indicates a need to examine the perceptions of both parties involved in the service encounter. Overall, primary health care providers perceptions most directly affect the design and delivery of the services offered, whereas clients perceptions more directly determine evaluation of the service delivered. Hence, both parties are very important and must be considered, if a more thorough understanding of service quality is to be gained. Potential gaps that relate to expected and experienced service and represent both sides of the service exchange should have a significant impact on the service evaluation.

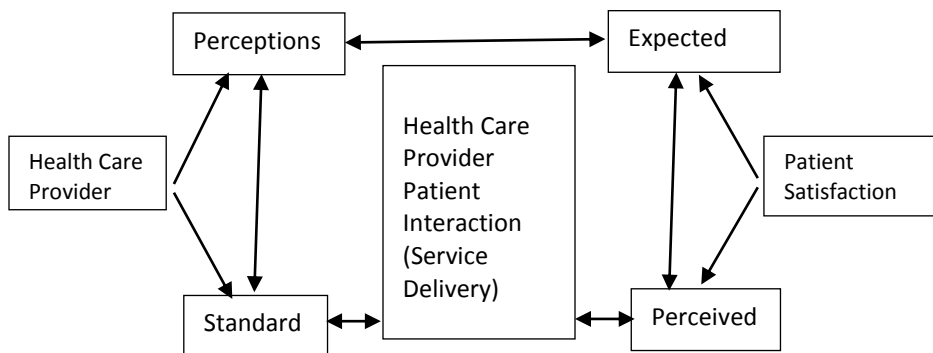


Figure1: Health care service delivery

The key determinants of patient satisfactions were determined through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A included demographic factors while section B tested the expectations and perceptions of the patients. All items were measured using a five-point likert scale with answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A total of 215 questionnaires were distributed and 156 responses were received. After the exclusion of 39 incomplete questionnaires 117 usable respondents were analysed in the study. The collected data was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques have been used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of demographic variables shows that majority of customers visiting MOH clinics are female (80%). They are either pregnant mothers who come to well women clinic or mothers that come with their children for immunization clinics. Two third of respondents belong to 26- 35 years age category which indicates that majority of the pregnant women are in healthy physiological age group for successful pregnancy thus, they bare many babies. Remaining women above 35 years of age usually attends to well women Clinics at MOH office. Out of all respondents only 5.1% had education up to grade 8. Out of the rest, 65.8% are qualified up to Advanced Level or higher. This indicates that respondents have enough education to read a simple structured questionnaire in native (Sinhala) language and answer it.

Table 1: Expected and Actual Mean Value of Tangibility

	Mean valve		P value
	Expected	Received	
Excellent MOH clinics will have modern looking equipment.	5.95	5.25	.000
The physical facilities at excellent MOH clinics will be visually appealing.	5.99	5.65	.005
Employees at excellent MOH clinics will be neat in appearance.	6.29	5.98	.001
Materials associated with the service will be visually appealing at an excellent MOH clinics.	6.30	5.92	.000

Table 2: Expected and Actual Mean Value of Empathy

	Mean valve		P value
	Expected	Received	
Excellent MOH clinics will give customers individual attention.	5.91	5.47	.001
Excellent MOH clinics will have operating hours convenient to all customers.	5.88	5.67	.087
Excellent MOH clinics will have employees who give customers personal attention.	5.39	4.98	.026
Excellent MOH clinics will have their customer's best interests at heart.	5.96	5.61	.001
The employees of excellent MOH clinics will understand the specific needs of their customers.	5.96	5.62	.004

In order to measure the reliability of items of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. And based on the result of this test, and all the values being over 0.60, the reliability of various parts of questionnaire is confirmed. Independent samples t-test of the respondents revealed that in tangibles dimensions of service quality have a significant effect on perceived service quality. The gap between expected and received mean value for all tangibility dimension is significant at 1% level. This could be interpreted as: facilities are not up to date; appealing as well as the hygiene of the MOH clinics is not appreciable to customers. In addition to this, empathy dimension of service quality also has significant difference between expected and perceived clinical service quality. The importance of empathy in influencing satisfaction suggested that customer relationship management strategy should focus on improving in-depth understanding of customer motivation and lifestyle factors. However, significant difference was not found for reliability, responsiveness and assurance dimensions of service quality.

CONCLUSION

This study is aimed at assessing how customers perceive service quality at the Pitakotte MOH area and to find out the level of customer (patients) satisfaction. It could be stated that patients perceive services at the MOH clinic to be lower than what they expected from the MOH clinical services. In this study results revealed that in tangible dimension and empathy dimension of service quality have a significant difference between expected and perceived clinical service quality. Majority of the previous studies also reveals that consumer level of expectations are always, in most cases higher than what they received which is justifiable by the axiom that expectations tend to be ideal and in most of the cases will deviate from reality. This makes it difficult to actually conclude that MOH clinic customers are satisfied with the service that they received. With respect to the results, the SERVQUAL model could be termed as not appropriate or not the best to be used as a measuring instrument for service quality at the MOH although this instrument has been applied in other health care services survey with positive results. However, the results are dependent on several different issues for instance, the sample size, the chosen sample population, the chosen case, the time of the research and other factors.

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**MANAGING TIME AND KNOWLEDGE: THE ROLE OF LINE
MANAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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INTRODUCTION

Due to globalisation, technological advancement and scarcity of resources, the current business environment goes through many challenges and uncertainties. In this climate of affairs, as a response to rapid changes, organisations have shifted their focus on human resources in view of human capital investment and management. As a result, organisations place heavy emphasis on effective performance management that contributes to sustaining competitive advantage of organisations. 'Performance management aims to improve strategic focus and organisational effectiveness through continuously securing improvements in the performance of individuals and teams' Philpott and Sheppard (1992) Armstrong, (2010).

In the organisation under study, there is evidence that defining performance deliverables smartly (Specific, Measurable, Agreeable/agreed Relevant/ Realistic Timely/Time-bound) needs to be improved. There is also evidence that mid-year assessment of performance of the majority of staff requires attention and improvement. There have been instances that learning and development objectives/activities which are mandatory for all staff have not been defined for the relevant performance year. Similarly, having defined the deliverables and/or the learning and development activities, there are concerns that necessary support and guidance have not been provided by some line managers to achieve these deliverables, objectives and activities. In some cases there is no attempt to seek feedback from the relevant feedback providers which is also mandatory according to the required standards.

The competency and skills gaps of line managers, time constraints due to short-term demands, lack of understanding of their own role as well as not recognizing or rewarding for taking responsibility for a development role, and not having an employee development oriented organizational culture are major obstacles that obstruct in effectively implementing performance management. Ellinger and Keller (2003) and Armstrong (2010)

Furthermore, there are concerns from a few staff that performance is assessed and performance evaluations are being written and finalised without formal review meetings and discussions with staff. Additionally, there are concerns of the quality of line manager comments in the narratives of the performance evaluations which are a key source to ascertain the track record of a staff member which directly impacts on their career development and progression. A lack of line manager's responsibility and commitment towards submitting evidence for the performance moderation process is another concern that some staff have for fair assessment of their performance. The on-going bi-yearly global staff survey results and the analysis of distribution of performance ratings on a yearly basis indicate a low percentage of addressing poor performance effectively by line managers.

According to context detailed above, it is apparent that there are key reasons and issues in time constraints, and a lack of skills and knowledge in effectively implementing performance management system by line managers, given the country context of operating within stringent resource constraints and allocations due to global, regional and country budgets decreasing steadily year-on-year.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The problem focuses on finding out the lapses and constraints on the part of line managers in effectively implementing the performance management system despite global, regional and country processes and guidance being available widely. Analysing the above context, in all probability, it is visible that time management, performance management skills and knowledge of performance management on part of line managers is the core of the problem identification.

The key objectives of the research are to 1) ascertain the impact of different reasons/aspects of the role of line management in effectively implementing the performance management system and 2) find out possible pragmatic solutions in addressing the issues within the current context and during the foreseeable future of the organisation.

METHODOLOGY

Given the time frame of the study, a quantitative cross-sectional study design has been used. This study design falls into the category of 'retrospective' method as the respondents are encouraged to base responses on their past experience mainly to find the solutions for the current situation. Given the nature of the research study, this study can be classified as 'experimental' on the assumption of a cause-and-effect relationship based on developing and testing three hypotheses.

***H1:** Time management by line managers will have a direct impact on their role of implementing performance management effectively.*

***H2:** Performance management skills of line managers will have a direct impact on their role of implementing performance management effectively.*

***H3:** Knowledge of performance management of line managers will have a direct impact on their role of implementing performance management effectively.*

In summary, the construction of the above hypotheses was based on the independent variables as time management, performance management skills, and knowledge on performance management of line managers comprise the role of line managers. The dependent variable is defined as 'effective performance management'.

The responses were collected from thirty five line managers (90% of the population) using a method of attitudinal scale (multiple 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") comprising the on-line questionnaire. The statistical procedures using the application 'Survey Monkey' is used for demographic analysis. The preliminary and hypotheses analysis is carried out using the application 'SPSS' (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to analyses correlation coefficients.

The technique of ‘Content Analysis’ (i.e. analysing the content) has been carried out to arrive at the main themes that surface using the respondents’ data for the last question where they were requested to share their views openly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In answering the research question on the key reasons preventing line managers in positively engaging with performance management, this research study has evidently proved the main reasons to be ineffective time management, lack of capability in performance management skills and lack of knowledge in performance management on the part of the line managers.

The key highlights of the demographic analysis reveal that 34% of the respondents have only up to one year experience in line management. This is a crucial indicator that the said line managers require learning and development in improving their performance management skills and enhancing their knowledge in performance management in the role of line management. The demographic analysis also revealed that the majority i.e. 43% of line managers fall into the category of ‘junior management’ who are key employees responsible in operational delivery of the organisation. The results indicates 66% female respondents which is expected as 75% of the total population comprises of female line managers although at senior management level it is of equal representation (50%).

It is noted that 12 out of 14 managers in the age range of 35-44, have line management experience on a range of 7 to 12 years. Therefore it is inferred that managers of the age group of 35-44 years fall into the category of a group who has most number of years of line management experience in keeping with their role of line management in implementing performance management. It is 35% of the total population and above 40% of the respondents. The data were screened to ensure the reliability of the instrument; Cronbach Alpha was used. The results showed that time management had a coefficient of 0.865, performance management skills of 0.912, performance management knowledge of 0.793, and performance management effectiveness of 0.860. All constructs exceeded the suggested value 0.6 therefore, on the basis of reliability test, it was assumed that the scales used in this research are reliable to capture the constructs.

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive and Correlation Analysis.

Variables	Mean	SD	PM Effectiveness
Time Management	3.296	0.702	.492(**) 0.009
PM Skills	3.851	0.395	.646(**) 0.000
PM Knowledge	3.612	0.415	.504(**) 0.006
PM Effectiveness	3.729	0.482	

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

The Table 1 showed that there is a significant relationship between performance management system and performance management effectiveness. We found that the performance management skills has the strongest coefficient of 0.646, $p < 0.01$; followed by performance management knowledge with an impact coefficient of 0.504, $p < 0.01$; and the time management has the coefficient of 0.492, $p < 0.01$ being significant. As a results of R Square at 0.558 (55.8%) reveals that almost 56% of the variation in average effectiveness of performance management can be explained by variability in time management, performance management skills and the knowledge of performance management of line managers. The results provide support for the hypotheses as the correlation coefficient was positive and significant indicating that the existence of strong relationship between time, skills and knowledge on performance management and effective performance management.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the research study confirm the hypotheses on the variables (time management, performance management skills and knowledge of performance management of line managers) having a positive significance and impact on effective implementation of performance management which is supported by empirical evidence cited by existing literature.

Managers allocating and spending quality time on primary retention drivers such as discussions on targets, goals and achievements, setting a clear direction, encouragement and facilitation of employee development and caring and giving attention, praise and recognition can be sustained by effective performance management. Major opportunities for employment engagement and retention are being lost if organisations do not spend sufficient quality time on these activities. It is apparent that coaching and employee development which are critical components instrumental in implementing performance management, are vital for effective change management and sustaining competitive advantage of an organisation.

Line management skills, specifically on line manager capability on goal setting, performance evaluation, giving and receiving feedback including effective listening skills, performance learning and development of staff, empowering staff, effective management of poor and under performance and recognition and rewards which were indicators of this variable proving a positively significant impact on effectively implementing performance management.

In relevance to line manager knowledge of performance management the indicators included aspects specific to the organisation under study and the existing literature already available on understanding of objectives, purpose and benefits of performance management, clarify on performance management cycle and relevant time frames applicable for implementation.

Given the country context, these findings; specifically on indicators of variables provides a base to explore attainable pragmatic solutions to the problem identification in this study. It also paves the way for further investigation and research on further clarification of the key constraints that line managers' face in the current context of

effective implementation of performance management and finding solutions at a country level and possibly regional basis to address the situation.

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**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
INDUSTRY: THE CASE IN LEADING IT FIRM IN SRI LANKA.**

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INTRODUCTION

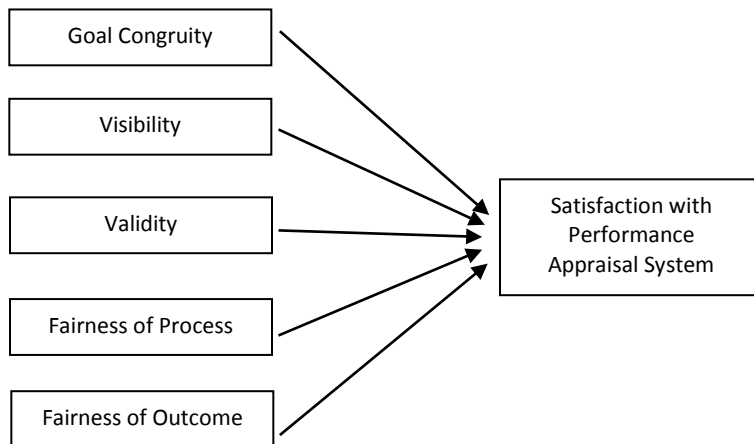
The key success factor in information technology sector organizations has been the innovation of their knowledge workers. Therefore retaining the knowledge workers by continuously motivating them is very important in the competitive information technology sector in Sri Lanka. Employees as well as managers in these organizations are highly educated. Therefore the need of having an effective performance appraisal system was mandatory (Simmons & Iles, 2009). Performance appraisal systems were the major force in making innovations and change efforts successful (Lawler III, 2013). Not having a proper performance appraisal system for evaluating employee satisfaction and negative perception or dissatisfaction on fairness and effectiveness of performance appraisal system are the major issues associated with information technology sector in Sri Lanka .

Therefore this research mainly focused on examining a framework of evaluating employee satisfaction with performance appraisal system. While examining the framework, an emphasis will be given to the perception of fairness of outcome of performance appraisal system as well.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to examine the factors (Validity, Fairness, Process, and Goal Congruity) that influence on satisfaction of performance appraisal system.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the study



METHODOLOGY

Since the study has given special reference to Navantis IT Pvt Ltd, the questionnaire was distributed to all 149 employees –the entire population, while personal interviews were conducted with some selected staff members attached to the HR department. This has given the opportunity in getting responses from all the employees and from management who were responsible in setting annual goals and objectives as well. A digitized questionnaire was sent via email to all employees at Navantis. However from 149 employees, 78employees have responded to the questionnaire. From the entire population of the target audience 52 percent responded, showing a considerable coverage of the population.

Each response was individually assessed to ensure data validity and integrity. Incomplete responses were followed up with the relevant respondents and it helped to complete questionnaires in many instances. Descriptive statistics has been used to analyze profiles of respondents. Upon receiving the target number of responses, the detailed analysis started with checking the reliability of data through Cronbach’s alpha and frequency distributions of each variable. Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis have been used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to measure the reliability of items of the questionnaire Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was used. Based on the result of this test, and all the values being over 0.7, the reliability of various parts of questionnaire is confirmed.

Table 1: The reliability of Variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System	0.871	7
Goal Congruity	0.849	5
Visibility	0.841	5
Validity	0.848	5
Fairness of Process	0.869	5
Fairness of Outcome	0.946	3

After testing the reliability of responses on variables, correlation of each independent variable with dependent variable has been analyzed. All independent variables (Goal Congruity, Visibility, Validity, Fairness of Outcome and Fairness of Process) have shown significant positive correlation to the dependent variable – which is the Satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System. Multiple regression analysis has been used to ascertain the causal relationship between satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System and above independents variables. The F value of the regression model is 68.878 which is significant at 01 percent level of significance and support the reliability of explanatory power of the model.

Table 2: ANOVA Analysis

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.592	5	6.118	68.878	.000 ^b
Residual	6.396	72	.089		
Total	36.987	77			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System

b. Predictors: (Constant), Fairness of Outcome, Goal Congruity, Fairness of Process, Visibility, Validity

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.198	.193		1.028	.307		
Goal Congruity	.127	.081	.130	1.564	.122	.347	2.885
Visibility	.086	.074	.098	1.162	.249	.341	2.937
Validity	.465	.082	.483	5.673	.000	.332	3.013
Fairness of Process	.216	.077	.230	2.819	.006	.361	2.771
Fairness of Outcome	.085	.054	.111	1.560	.123	.477	2.098

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System

The R² value of the model is 0.827. It indicates that 82.7% of variation in Satisfaction with Performance Appraisal System is explained by the five independent variables. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF value) is calculated to test the multicollinearity of the independents variables in the model. All calculated VIF values are well below 05 and tolerance values of each independent variable are greater than 0.2. This statistics implies that there is no multicollinearity within the data.

Based on significance of the regression coefficients, only the variables Validity and Fairness of Process have been accepted from the model as the highly significant variables in depicting the satisfaction with performance appraisal system. This indicates that the higher the level of perceived fairness and validity of performance appraisal process, the higher the satisfaction with performance appraisal system. This results shows that fairness of the process and validity of the process contributes most to the overall perception of satisfaction, which should be considered by management at the PAS design stage.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, the satisfaction with current performance appraisal system in the selected organization has been successfully evaluated. It has also helped in identifying the most contributing factors on satisfaction with performance appraisal system. The study has also helped the organization in getting feedback from employees including both appraisers and employees on their experience and perception on performance appraisal system.

A number of managerial and research implications on performance management can be derived from this study, as the outcome has shown that a majority of information sector employees are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their current performance management system. Therefore Human Resource teams in similar organizations could use the findings of this study in capitalizing on their initiatives on implementing a more effective and efficient performance appraisal system that would undoubtedly help in overcoming the dissatisfaction expressed by the employees on their current performance appraisal system, thus minimizing the employee turnover.

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**THE STYLE OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT OF RUBBER REGIONAL PLANTATION COMPANIES OF
SRI LANKA.**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main problems faced by the rubber plantations managed by Regional Plantations Companies (RPC) today is the short supply of experienced and skilled rubber harvesters. This negatively affects the financial performance of the estate/company through low worker and land productivity as well as shorter replanting cycles. The plantations managed by RPCs lose from 12.6 kgs. to 223.5 kgs. of rubber crop per hectare of land annually, due to absenteeism, as such, having to hire casual workers, mostly semi or unskilled (Rodrigo, et al., 2004). Studies revealed that 12 % of rubber harvesters are generally absent every day and 37 % of harvesters employed in the plantation sector are not skilled (Rodrigo, 2006). Plantation managers are compelled to employ casual or substitute harvesters in order to minimise loss of crop due to tapping blocks getting vacant, as a result of absenteeism. Casual or substitute harvesters are mostly semi-skilled and lower-skilled in tapping which leads to both, high bark consumption and lower crop. The yields obtained by unskilled harvesters are generally 25% less than those of skilled harvesters (Nugawela, et. al 2001). Absenteeism also can be considered as a problem in the sector as the current rate of absenteeism in RPCs managed Rubber Plantations stood at an average of 20% as at 2013.

Employee Engagement (EE) is about the psychological perception of an employee about the organisation and its leadership. According to a research conducted by Gallup in 2013, high levels of EE, is positively correlated to minimising absenteeism. According to Kohli (2013), “High attrition and absenteeism among Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector employees are alarming indicators of a disengaged workforce”. Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people (Newstrom & Keith, 2002) and the first major study of leadership styles was performed in 1939 by Kurt Lewin (Lippit & White, 1939). Building on the work of the Ohio State and Michigan Studies Blake, R.; Mouton, J. (1964), the University of Texas proposed a two dimensional theory called the “grid”.

The two dimensions are task and relationship orientation. Task-oriented leadership is a style in which the leader is focused on the tasks that need to be performed in order to meet a certain production goal. Task-oriented leaders are generally more concerned with producing a step-by-step solution for a given problem or goal, strictly making sure that in reaching target outcomes, the deadlines are met. Relationship-oriented leaders emphasize communication within the group, show trust and confidence in group members, and show appreciation for the work done. The model has five of its leadership styles such as Impoverished (the least concern for people and for production), Authoritative (more concern on production not people), Country Club (the most concern for people), Team leadership (stress high production and employee satisfaction equally) and middle of the road (has a balanced concern for both production and people) Styles. Each axis on the

grid is a 9 point scale with 1 meaning low concern and 9 meaning high concern (Northouse, 2010). Perrin (2003), suggests the benefits of EE studies as abilities to tap the potential of the organisation to become a “great place to work” through building trust in colleagues and ensuring employee pride and enjoyment. Segmentation is the key to managing employee commitment and productivity. According to the study, great managers are the key to achieving an engaged workforce, and they have highly effective leadership styles and they are somewhat closer to 9.9 quadrant of Blake & Mouton Leadership Style Grid.

This research therefore is an attempt to undertake an empirical study on the leadership style of the managers and its impact on the level of EE of their rubber harvesters. Available literature supports the direct inverse relationship between EE and absenteeism. (CLC, 2004) This research will address indirectly the knowledge gap between absenteeism and leadership style of the supervisor (manager).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

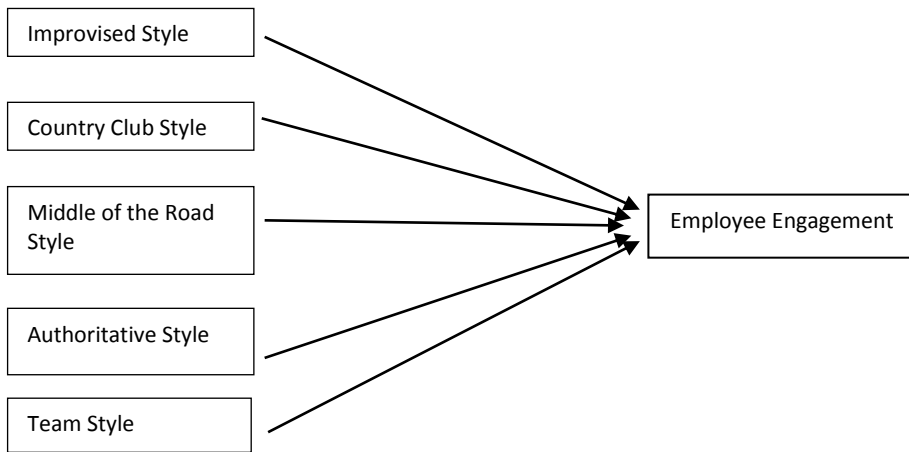
Rubber Plantations managed by the RPCs have a serious issue with absenteeism that affects profitability and sustainability. This was an issue for the plantations for a longer period of time. Contribution to the GDP by the rubber plantations in 2014 is around 0.2% (current prices) (Census-Statistics, 2014). Rubber industry alone employs about 250,000 individuals which is about 2.6% of the national workforce. (Central Bank, 2013). However, productivity of rubber plantations managed by RPCs hasn't increased concurrently and significantly in spite of the increase in wages by 355% since 2004 (2004 -2015). It's becoming more profitable to import rubber latex from large scale producers rather than using our own latex which is not becoming cost competitive in the global market place.

1. To identify the different leadership styles adopted by the rubber estate managers of RPCs in Sri Lanka.
2. To analyse the relationship between the leadership styles of managers and Employee Engagement of rubber harvesters of RPCs of Sri Lanka.
3. To identify the most influencing leadership style on Employee Engagement of rubber harvesters of RPC managed rubber plantations of Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

Thirteen rubber plantations managed by six leading RPCs participated in the survey. One questionnaire with two parts was used. The questionnaires were in both Sinhala and in Tamil languages. The first part was to measure Employee Engagement and the second part was to measure the style of the leadership of the manager. The questionnaire used to get feedback was tested in Rubber Plantations of Lalan Agri Division (LAD) for validation purposes before using the same in the other RPCs. The leadership style was tested through the Blake & Mouton (Djordjevic, et al., 2013) employee's questionnaire (Vision-Council, 2013). The level of engagement of the rubber harvesters was measured through a separate engagement questionnaire (Armstrong, 2009). Data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis method. The following conceptual research framework was defined, based on the theoretical explanations with regard to the concepts emerging from the literature survey.

Figure 1: Research Framework.



Research design provides a full systematic direction for a research study by establishing the link between the study, research questions, data collected and the conclusions drawn from the collected data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Based on assumed causal relationship given in the conceptual model, the following hypotheses have been formulated for testing. The researcher used stratified random sampling method and was able to sample 37% of the total harvester population. During the sampling, age and gender was also considered to represent the actual scenario in rubber Plantations managed by RPCs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There is a significant difference with the number of participants with the age group less than 20 years which is 2%, and this needs to be studied further to ascertain the causal factors, but it is a fact that the younger generation does not like to join plantation related manual grade activities. Of the total sample of harvesters 54% were of the age category 31- 50. Almost 32% of the sample was males and 68% females. This tallied with the overall gender representation of RPC rubber plantations. There have been 75% Sinhalese and 25% Tamils in the sample.

Five clearly identifiable leadership styles were found. In the quadrants of the Grid they fell into two main leadership styles such as “Middle of the Road” and “Team”. None of the styles surfaced was precisely fitting into the most ideal standard of either the Team or the Middle of the Road type as prescribed by Blake & Mouton. Instead, the styles surfaced were in respective quadrants. Therefore, we named the five styles after the first five letters of English alphabet (A, B, C, D and E). Of these five styles relationship orientation was always slightly higher than the task orientations. This could be due to the general nature of dominance of trade unionism in the plantations. However, the

corresponding task orienteers had distinct variances. Highest level of engagement was observed under style C with a mean value of EE of 4.3. (Figure: 3).The style C represented the highest level of maturity under Team Leadership Style. Meanwhile, styles B and D recorded the lowest mean value of engagement at 2.4 and 2.1 respectively. Style B represented Middle of the Road Leadership Style and style D the lowest level of maturity under Team Leadership Style. Styles A and E recorded a mean value of engagement of 3.6 under each category. Both A and E styles fell between the most mature type of Team Leadership Style and most immature stage of Team Leadership, as such, could be considered as a middle level of leadership maturity, as per the findings of this survey.

Three levels of engagement were also evident as discussed above. Highly Engaged under C leadership style which is about 27%, Semi Engaged under A and E styles, 45%, and Poorly Engaged under B and D styles is about 28%.

Table 1: Level of Employee Engagement of Leadership Styles

Leadership category	No. of employees	Mean Value
A (7,6)	304	3.6140
B (6,5)	96	2.3944
C (8,7)	119	4.2815
D (6,6)	50	2.1636
E (7,7)	68	3.6185

Source: survey data.

The following table shows: The highest level of engagement was found under C leadership style. Highly Engaged C leadership style= 27% of the total sample, engaged A & E leadership style = 45% of the total sample and less engaged B & D leadership styles = 28% of the total sample (Absenteeism was around 20% in RPC rubber harvesters).

It was proven that fifth hypothesis was supported by the results of the survey. Higher the team style of the leadership, higher the EE. Finally, it paved the way for further research on this subject, in order to justify the results applicable to rubber plantations managed by RPCs in Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

Although five leadership styles were distinctly identified under Blake & Mouton Grid (1964), only two leadership styles were mainly visible in this study. It was also revealed that more mature team leadership style has the highest impact on EE of the rubber harvesters. The researcher recommends coaching the managers of the plantations to improve their level of leadership that supports Employee Engagement. The Blake and Mouton Leadership Model had been effectively used in most parts of the world to improve the levels of leadership of the managers and to resolve conflicts as well. However, increasing HRM practices as an overall measure in the plantations industry is advocated to improve the level of EE, especially, when recruiting employees to

managerial level positions in RPCs, it is important to determine the caliber of managers they need to deploy, in order to obtain the optimum engagement levels from their employees to achieve the competitive advantage. More importantly, when absenteeism is not managed well, it can lead to many negative organizational outcomes including fragmentation of the large land bases without remaining them as plantations. It also contributes to the knowledge of the Human Resource Management applicable to the rubber plantations industry managed by RPCs to retain managers, who possess leadership styles most appropriate to improve the engagement levels of rubber harvesters working in these plantations. Although, the focus was the rubber harvesters, the other categories of employees are also bound to be benefitted out of these findings. The Human Resource Departments of RPCs can work with the managers of plantations to find ways and means of further improving Employee Engagement levels.

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EMPLOYABILITY OF WOMEN GRADUATES OF TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN TVET SECTOR OF SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

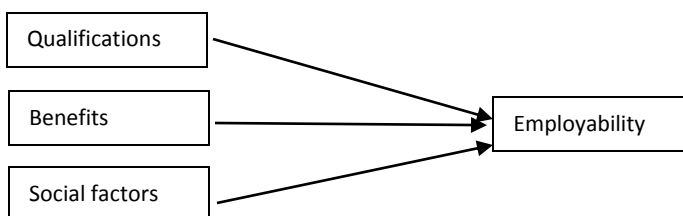
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as ‘study of technologies and related sciences, and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations’ is highly recognized as a way of expanding opportunities for youth employment. However, a significant rate of un-employability is identified among Sri Lankan TVET graduates in the recent past. According to a previous study, out of 4686 certificate holders from various training providers in TVET sector in Sri Lanka, 52.5% were unemployed (Jayathilaka *et.al*, 2013). In addition, un-employability in Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) has been recorded as 33.9%, while 28.2% in National Apprenticeship & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) and 62.7 % in Vocational Training Authority (VTA) (Chandrasiri, 2010). Percentage of un-employability in TVET sector was as high as 65.2% for women while it was 44.2% for men. Nevertheless, about 53% of female TVET graduates waited more than 2 years prior to employment (Jayathilaka, *et.al*, 2013). Generally, there are evidences for high un-employability among women population in Sri Lanka too (LABORSTA, 2014, Gunathilake *et.al*, 2010).Consequently, importance of carrying out further studies on level and pattern of un-employability of those passed out of vocational training has been identified (Anon., 2008).Higher un-employability among women graduates, coincidentally with a higher enrollment of women in TVET in recent years highlights an urgent need for investigation of this issue in order to minimize negative influences on TVET sector.

It is revealed that generic skills of the graduates, industrial training, attitude of the employers, graduates and the teachers influence on employability while job satisfaction, job security and salary play an important role in continuing with the first job of university graduates of Sri Lanka. (Perera & Perera, 2009). Previous studies also stated that female college students face difficulties in finding employment because of their working ability, different employment ideas and physiological factors, (Zhao and Zhan, 2011). Since, most of the women participate their employment during their reproductive years and as primary caretakers of the family, women’s participation in the labor market has bound by most of the responsibilities at the home (United Nations, 2010). In addition, when there are workplace practices such as very long office hours, requiring workers to commute long distances, and availability for shift work which are hard to balance with family life, most often mothers of families with young children who need affordable childcare are less likely to seek a job (OECD, 2012). So this study was carried out with two objectives, first is to identify the reasons for low employability of women graduates of technical colleges in TVET sector of Sri Lanka and the second is to identify the modifications required to increase the employability of women.

METHODOLOGY

Population for the study was all the female students passed out from Technical Colleges in DTET in Sri Lanka in four years;2009-2012. The sample was 190 female students passed out from Dambulla Technical College from four courses; National Diploma in Agriculture, National Certificate in Accounting Technicians, National Certificate in Engineering Draughtsman-ship and National Certificate in Shorthand, Typing & Computing, considering their high female enrollment and representation of two different course durations (1 & 2 years) with four different subject areas of the economy (Agriculture, Accounting, Engineering, and Commerce). Administration of postal questionnaire was used to gather primary data, using mostly structured type questions to explore the un-employability. Though the core issue of this study was to investigate the low employability, in developing the conceptual model (Figure 01), the factors influencing the employability were investigated. Factors in independent variable were quantified by Likert scale. There were nine independent variables identified (Table 01) and one dependent variable operationalized to quantify.

Figure 01: Conceptual model for the study



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Percentage of responses was about 38.94%. Though the percentage of employability was high (63.6 %), 36.4 % of un-employability among women graduates passed out after a vocational training is not a desirable outcome. Low employability was prominent among the students who have followed the National Certificate in Shorthand & Typing course where nearly half of the population (53%) was unemployed. More than 30 % of employed has had a lagging period of 6-12 months or more than 12 months. In addition, there was about 40 % of un-employability, even 3 and 4 years after their passing out. These results confirmed the low employability condition among women graduates studied. In accordance with study of correlations between variables, reliability was checked by the value of Cronbach's Alpha and it was 0.748 (n=10). Since the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, it is proved that the variables and the wording are accepted.

Table 01: Summary of Correlations Analysis.

Factors investigated	Pearson's Correlation values
Qualifications acquired by technical education	0.824 (**)
-Influence of academic knowledge	0.810(**)
- Influence of technical skill	0.765(**)
Benefits expect from employer	0.113
-Adequacy of salary	0.076
-Availability of transport facilities	0.023
-Availability of accommodation facilities	-0.114
-Opportunities for Higher Education	0.354(**)
Social Factors affecting job selection	0.121
-Closeness of residence to work place	0.011
-Being a bachelor	-0.055
-Availability of conducive working time	0.345(**)

(**)- Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Academic qualifications and employability: According to responses, effect of qualifications; the level of contribution of academic knowledge and skills obtained from their technical education for the successfulness at the interviews and to carry out their work in occupation showed a positive strong correlation between academic qualifications and employability (0.824) which is significant ($p < 0.001$). Pearson correlation value 0.810 for academic knowledge acquired and 0.765 for skill gained by the technical course (Table 01) confirmed the significant influence of knowledge and skills on employability. Additionally, most of the women technical college graduates (83.0 %) had used their knowledge of computer literacy for the work at their occupation, but 59.6 % of them had obtained their computer literacy from Institutes other than technical college. Information on application of English at working environment showed that, 53.2% of passed out females, should apply English in their work at a level higher than average. Those findings highlight the necessity of studying current status of IT and English language on TVET graduates. The higher un-employability among women graduates in National certificate in Shorthand, Typing & Computing should be further inquired with respect to this appropriateness of the academic prospects. The correct decisions should be taken in order to minimize the intake if there is a shortage in opportunities in labor market or this course should be replaced by appropriate computer courses with respect to the requirement of current job market.

Benefits expecting from employer and employability: There was no positive correlation observed between benefits expecting from employer & employability and it was a weak (0.113) relationship (Table 01). Therefore, this study revealed that there is no significant relationship between benefits given by employer and employability of women TVET graduates. Out of four variables evaluated, adequate salary was also not significantly correlated (0.076) with employability (Table 01). In addition, 70.2 % of employed population believes that their present salary is satisfactory. The Pearson correlation value for the relationship between availability of transport facilities or official

vehicles and employability (0.023) confirms the lack of significant relationship between them. Similarly, as the Pearson's correlation value (-0.114) between employer provided accommodation and employability (Table 01) there was no significant relationship between those factors too. However, opportunities for higher education which was a variable studied as a benefit has given a significant correlation with a Pearson correlation value of 0.354 compared to other three factors (Table 01). This suggests further revising of the curriculum of technical education considering the entrance for higher studies for TVET graduates. Upgrading of the most demanding courses for above aspect will mitigate the low employability of technical college graduates too. From the courses used for this study, National Diploma in Agriculture, has the highest higher education opportunities while National certificate in Shorthand, Typing & Computing having the lowest opportunities.

Social factors and employability: Relationship of social factors with employability showed a weak correlation (0.121) Thus, no significant relationship found between social factors and employability. Since there was no strong relationship observed between closeness to working place from the residence, with a low correlation (0.011), it is not a prioritized factor that considered by women technical college graduates when they are selecting their occupation . Being a bachelor also had a negative relationship with a correlation of -0.055. The reason for this response may be the young age category of the studied group which ranged from 20- 34 years and higher percentage (78.4 %) of the women graduates was unmarried. As the favorable working time is a factor considered by most of candidates while selecting their job, women technical college graduates have also responded positively on this variable when selecting their job. There is a significant correlation between conducive working time and employability but the correlation value was fair (0.345).

CONCLUSIONS

According to results, though there is a high percentage (63.5 %) of employability observed, with the 36.4 % of un-employability, higher lagging period, un-employability status prevailing for 3 to 4 years after passing out, there is a problem of low employability among women technical college graduates. The highest un-employability (53%) was reported by women graduates in National Certificate in Shorthand, Typing & Computing course. There was a strong positive correlation (0.824, $P < 0.001$) between employability and qualifications; both knowledge and skills obtained from technical course. Though influence of benefits expecting from employers and social factors had weak positive relationship, the two variables, working time (0.345, $P < 0.001$) and opportunities for higher education (0.354, $P < 0.001$) showed significant correlations with employability of women technical college graduates. Enhancement of knowledge in English language and computer literacy of technical college graduates during their technical education should be a compulsory event. Upgrading of curriculum should also be based on development of core skills and knowledge of technical college graduates. The technical courses that create higher education opportunities for technical college graduates should be identified, upgraded or introduced. Further detailed studies to find out the reasons for un-employability of technical college graduates are essential considering both male and female populations, highly demanding technical courses and other regions of the country.

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