

THE EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION IN SELECTED STATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The work environment of the employees is one of the most important set of factors that impacts on job satisfaction of them. Generally, state sector organizations in Sri Lanka pay less attention to work setup and job satisfaction of their employees. The study examined the effect of job context on work-related attitudes of the employees who work in selected state sector organizations in Jaffna District. A self-administrated questionnaire was designed with a five-point Likert scale, to obtain the required data from the respondents. A sample of 300 employees for the study was selected from divisional and district secretariats using a systematic random sampling technique. The descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The results showed that the work environment significantly effects on job satisfaction of the employees in district and divisional secretariats. The study reveals that among all components of the work environment, work aides have a strong impact on job satisfaction of the employees.

Keywords: job satisfaction, state sector, work aides and work environment

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are in today's commercial world face several challenges due to the lower level of job satisfaction of the employees as it causes various effects on growth and competitiveness. It is necessary to create a positive feeling in the minds of the employees towards the organizations as it affects the overall performance of them. Job satisfaction has been a research theme of many researchers for many decades. Generally, state sector organizations in the developing countries pay less attention to working conditions of the employees, as the results of it, employees experience a lower level of facet satisfaction on their job, which ultimately

affects the performance of the organization. The work environment of organizations consists of two major components: such as material and behavioral components. Material components of the work setting refer to all the physical aspects of the work environment, including work aides, layout, rules and regulations, hierarchy and availability of resources.

On the other hand, the behavioral aspect refers to the relationship between coworkers as well as superiors and employees. State sector organizations in Sri Lanka employed a large number of employees in all the managerial and non-managerial levels. The developing nature of the country and lower level of the standard of living of people force the government of Sri Lanka to invest more money on non-recurrent expenditure especially, free education, health and food subsidy consume a large portion of the investment. Therefore, resource allocation for state sector organizations seems inadequate to meet all the demands of the employees. Organization structure and bureaucratic set cause delay in decision - making. On the other hand, recruitment, transfer, promotion and performance appraisal are ineffective and cause many employees related issues in the organizations.

Local administration of Sri Lanka is being executed through two channels, such as central government and provincial government. Administration of central government at the district level runs through District and Divisional secretariats and they implement productivity programs to improve labour productivity. However, to enhance the productivity of employees, organizations need to pay attention on all the factors that determine productivity. Work environment and job satisfaction of the employees is crucial among them as they can affect not only the productivity of the work and the performance of the employee but also beneficiaries in the community. On the other hand, the government mechanism involves a more significant number of human resources and causes for a higher level of expenditure; it is necessary to study the level of job satisfaction of state sector employees and its connection with the work environment. A unique approach is needed as the existing setup does not resolve the employees' related problems.

There were many studies carried out by Sri Lankan authors on job satisfaction and its' determinants like demographic factors (Wickramasinghe, 2007; Jayathilaka, 2014; Shanthakumary, 2017; Weerasinghe, Senawirathna, & Dedunu, 2017); leadership style, (Shanthakumary,2017); rewards, (Sankalpana & Jayasekara,2016), job characteristics

(Shanthakumary, 2011); work-life balance (Weerasooriyaarachchi, 2016). On the other hand, researchers studied the influence of work environment on different outcome variables: performance (Samson, Waiganjo & Koima, 2015; Nanzushi, 2015; Hamid & Hassan, 2015); intention to quit (Markey, Revensewood & Webber, 2012); job satisfaction (Bakotić & Babić, 2013; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017).

However, there is no study carried out by researchers to evaluate the impact of work environment on work-related outcomes, including job satisfaction of state sector employees in Jaffna district as it employed a substantial percentage of human resources. Notably, the impact of work environment on job satisfaction of employees who work in central administration in Jaffna district rarely studied by researchers. The present study will increase the stock of existing knowledge by examining the impact of the work environment on job satisfaction of the said employees. Further, it will support authorities to understand the importance of the work environment to create a positive mindset among the employees.

Problem Statement

Even though the work environment influences employees' job satisfaction, there are still some challenges in developing a conducive work environment in the state sector as the dependency of the sector on the government expenditure for physical resources and lack of suitable leadership to motivate and mold behavior of the employees. Though facet satisfaction may be at a moderate or lower level, public sector employees in the country most willing to continue their present job or within the sector due to the job security, social security system and the privileges given to the employees. Previous Sri Lankan researchers like Jayathilaka (2014) found work environment such as supervision, policies and administrations, resources and technology did not influence job satisfaction of the employees in selected public sector organizations. In contrast, Kularathna & Perera (2016) found health and safety factor including work environment, personal equipment policies, procedures and laws determine job satisfaction of employees. Herath & Wijerathna (2019) found that the work environment has a negative impact on job satisfaction. Since. The mixture of finding received by previous authors in different industries, the present study tries to find out the connection between work environment and job satisfaction of employees who have responsibility for the wellbeing of the people in the district. Further, all the social development programmes of the government of Sri Lanka are mostly implemented by them. Thus the work environment of the employees

and their job satisfaction is essential for effective implementation of social development programmes.

Objectives of the study

The study aims;

- to examine the effect of the work environment on job satisfaction of the employees in the state sector in Jaffna district, Sri Lanka.
- to analyze the major factors in the work environment which have a high impact on job satisfaction of employees in public administration of Jaffna district.

Research Question

Does the work environment effect the job satisfaction of employees in the state sector in Jaffna district?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work environment refers to the physical location of work, rules and regulations, resources, culture, the relationship between coworkers and superiors, which influence the way of doing the job (Heath, 2006). Yusuf and Metiboba, (2012) cited in Oludeyi (2015) pointed out that there are three broad categories in the work environment consisting of technical, human and organizational environments. The technical environment covers all sorts of physical infrastructures, tool and equipment. The human environment refers to the relationship between coworkers, employer and employees and interpersonal connection in the organization, whereas organizational environment relates to the items relates to the management of the organization such as procedure, rules and values. It is evident that the work environment influences attitude and behavior of the employees and subsequently affect the overall success or effectiveness of the organization.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is defined as the positive feeling of individuals towards a job or facet of the job (Smith, Kendall, and Hulin, 1969). Malek (2009) stated that the work environment is one of the most significant predictors of job satisfaction. A risky work environment is a reason for negative perception towards the job that decreases the level of satisfaction of individuals. The unsafe work setting is the root for higher stress work stress as it is a threat for the life of the workers and negatively affects job satisfaction. Subsequently, it causes to intention to quit from the organization. However, Ismail et al. (2010) stated that

workplace influence on employees' work behavior and afterward its effects on the wellbeing of the employees and goal attainment of organizations.

Dole and Schroeder. (2001), stated that the satisfaction of employees about their physical environment is essential to increase work-related outcomes of them. This is a general thought of practitioners of human resource management is 'satisfied employees are productive employees.'

Muhammad, Shafiq-ur- Rehman, and Ahmed (2015) examined the impact of the work environment, including freedom, relationship with coworkers, the relationship between employer and employees, job involvement and management policies on job satisfaction of teachers in Private Universities in Pakistan. They found that the work environment significantly effects job satisfaction, whereas the relationship between employer and employees has a greater effect on job satisfaction than other factors.

A research carried out by Bakotić and Babić (2013) revealed that the type of working condition is differently associated with the level of job satisfaction. People who work in a difficult work environment experienced a lower level of job satisfaction than a normal work environment.

A study on the effect of work environment on job satisfaction and productivity found that the work environment has a significant impact on job satisfaction of employees who work in a garment factory. Among the factors contributing to building a conducive work environment such as working conditions, remuneration, job security and stability, the fairness of treatment, and training and development, job security has a greater impact on job satisfaction of factory workers in middle and lower-level employee (Sukdeo, 2017).

Tio (2014) examined to what extent the work environment effects on job satisfaction of employees using multiple regression with support of the data collected from 74 employees. The study found that work environments such as physical/technical environment, human environment and organizational environment of employees effect differently on job satisfaction of the employees. Among the environmental work factors, the human environment has a greater impact than a physical or technical environment. At the same time, Bhanu and Sai babu (2018) identified that the work environment and stress determined job satisfaction of employees in the IT sector. However, Hamid and Hassan (2015) conducted a similar type of study among Malaysian Civil servants and found a weak relationship between work environment and job performance (Job satisfaction).

Some of the Sri Lankan researchers also studied the association of work environment with job satisfaction. Amarasena (2019) found that the work environment of academic staff in public universities affects job satisfaction. Herath & Wijerathna (2019) stated that Air Hostesses' work environment and their job satisfaction are positively correlated to each other. In contrast, Ranaweera & Si Li (2018) was against the others as they found that there was no significant relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

The following model exhibits the relationship between predictor/s and outcome variables. According to the existing literature, majority of the research papers (Bakotić and Babić, 2013; Jayathilaka, 2014; Mum et al., 2017; & Salunke, 2015) indicated organizational policies, supervisory support, the physical environment and job aides as the significant factors that are determining job satisfaction of employees.

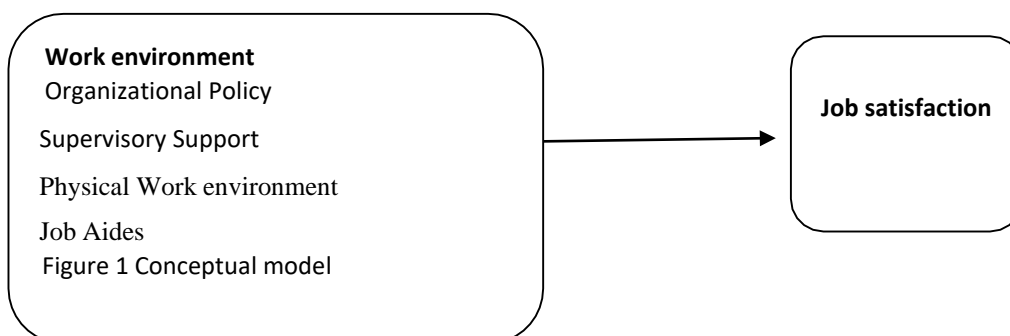


Figure: Conceptual framework

Hypotheses of the study

The study considered the work environment and its components such as organizational policy, supervisory support, physical work environment and job aides as the determinants of job satisfaction of the employees. Many previous research studies examined similar types of hypotheses. Sukdeo (2017), Bangwal and Tiwari (2019), Mum et al., (2017), Salunke (2015) examined the impact of the work environment and its different components on Job satisfaction. The following hypotheses were formulated for the study based on the literature.

H₁: Work environment has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction of employees.

H_{1a}: Organizational policy has significant positive effect on job satisfaction

H_{1b}: Supervisor support has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction

H_{1c}: Physical work environment has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction

H_{1d}: Job aides have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction

Research Method

It was a survey type study and conducted using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Jaffna District has been divided into 15 divisional Secretariats, consists of staff grade officers, head of the departments, development officers, Public management assistant and office assistants. A sample of 300 respondents has been selected from the public administration sector, such as divisional and district secretariats in Jaffna district using a systematic random sampling technique. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data.

Reliability and Validity

All the values of Cronbach's alpha are between 0.824 – 0.929. According to Cronbach's Alpha rule of thumb, the cut off value is 0.6 or above reflects good reliability (Hair et al., 2014). Whereas KMO values show the data set is appropriate for factor analysis as all the values are meritorious (0.8 or above) and marvelous (0.9 or above). It was decided to retain the item, which has a commonality value of 0.5. The items that have a commonality value of less than 0.5 were removed from the data set. Final reliability values the items retained, KMO values and the level of significance are given in the following table.

Table 01: Reliability of the Scale

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items	KMO	Approx. Chi-Square	Sig
Work environment	0.870	32			
Organizational Policy	0.837	8	0.838	826.549	0.000
Supervisor Support	0.929	8	0.919	1694.909	0.000
Physical Environment	0.824	8	0.888	1098.903	0.000
Job Aides	0.890	8	0.886	1197.651	0.000
Job Satisfaction	0.911	10	0.909	1596.758	0.000

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the respondents, 40% were male and 60% were female and the majority of them were married people (74.3%). Age-wise classification shows that approximately 53% percent of employees were in the 31-40 age group and 43% of employees possess work tenure of 3-5 years. A considerable percentage of respondents (51%) were bachelor degree holders, whereas they are mostly development officers (41.3%). It is noticeable that a significant percentage of respondents (56%) earn a salary of Rs 16,000 - 24,000. The following table clearly shows demographic factors of the respondents.

Table 02: Summary of Personal Demographic Variables

Personal Demographic Variables	No. of employees	Percentage
Gender		
• Male	120	40.0
• Female	180	60
Age		
• Below 21	1	.3
• 21-30	52	17.3
• 31-40	158	52.7
• 41-50	72	24.0
• 51-60	17	5.7
Marital Status		
• Single	77	25.7
• Married	223	74.3
Educational Qualification		
• G.C.E Ordinary Level	15	5.0
• G.C.E Advanced Level	79	26.3
• Diploma	19	6.3
• Bachelor Degree	153	51.0
• Master Degree	34	11.3
Designation		

• Head of the department	44	14.7
• Development officer	124	41.3
• Public Management Assistant	64	21.3
• Other officer category	36	12.0
• Office Employee Service	32	10.7
Working Experience		
• Below 3 years	31	10.3
• 3-5 years	129	43.0
• 6-10 years	32	10.7
• Above 10 years	108	36.0
Basic Salary		
• Below 16000	24	8.0
• 16000 - 24000	167	55.7
• 24001 - 30000	67	22.3
• Above 30000	42	14.0

Source: Survey Data

Hypotheses Testing

Regression Analysis for examining the effect of work environment on job Satisfaction

Table 03: Summary of the Regression analysis

	Predictors	Outcome variable	Beta	t	r ²	F	Sig
H ₁	Work environment	Job Satisfaction	0.280	20.210	.578	408.448	0.000
H _{1a}	Organizational Policy	Job Satisfaction	0.703	11.554	.307	133.488	0.000
H _{1b}	Supervisory Support	Job Satisfaction	0.641	13.042	.361	170.084	0.000
H _{1c}	Physical Environment	Job Satisfaction	0.674	11.535	.306	133.051	0.000

H _{1d}	Job Aides	Job Satisfaction	0.909	19.012	.547	361.451	0.000
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All the hypotheses

were tested using regression analysis and F values were found as significant as they are below the 0.05 significant level. In the above table, r^2 value shows what the percentage of changes that occurred in job satisfaction by the work environment and its components is. The first row of the table shows the effect of the work environment on job satisfaction and the remaining rows dealt with components of the work environment. According to the first row of the table, 57.8% of the variations in Job satisfaction is explained by the work environment. If the Work environment increases by 1 unit, Job satisfaction will increase by 0.280 units. Therefore, H₁ is supported by the results.

Based on the result given in the above table, r^2 value for organizational policy and job satisfaction was 0.307. it denotes that the organizational policy explains 31% of the variations in job satisfaction and the remaining 69% of the variance in job satisfaction is due to other variables. The beta coefficient suggests that every one unit increase in organizational policy would increase 0.703 units in job satisfaction. Therefore, H_{1a} is supported.

The r^2 value of 0.361 denotes that 36% of variations in Job satisfaction is explained by supervisory support and the remaining 69% of the variance in job satisfaction is related to other variables. The beta coefficient suggests that every one unit increase in supervisory support will increase job satisfaction by 0.64 units. Therefore, the hypothesis (H_{1b}) is accepted.

The analysis of the extent to which physical environment of the organizations predicts the job satisfaction shows that the R^2 value of 0.306 explains 31% of the variations in job satisfaction is explained by the physical environment of the work and remaining 69% of the variance in job satisfaction is caused by the other variables. The beta coefficient suggests that every one unit increase in the physical environment, job satisfaction will increase by 0.67 units. Therefore, H_{1c} is supported by the obtained results.

The fifth hypothesis of the study examined the effect of job aides on job satisfaction and the results revealed that 54.7% of changes in job satisfaction are explained by job aides provided to the employees. Beta value of 0.909-point outs that one-unit change in job aides would cause

0.909 change in job satisfaction of the employees. Therefore, H_{1d} is also supported by the results.

FINDINGS

According to the statistical analysis of the study, the work environment positively affects the level of job satisfaction of employees in District and Divisional secretariats in Jaffna District. Further, the results show that the work aide is the primary determining factor of job satisfaction as it has a greater impact on it than all other components of the work environment. The organizational policy is also having a strong effect on the level of satisfaction of the employees on their job. Supervisory support and physical environment have a lower effect on job satisfaction of the employees and their score beta values of 0.641(supervisory support) and 0.674(physical environment). These findings are similar to the findings of some of the Sri Lankan researchers like Jayathilaka (2014); Amarasena (2019 & Herath & Wijerathna (2019) whereas it confirms the findings of Sukdeo (2017), Bangwal & Tiwari (2019), Mum et al., (2017) and Salunke (2015).

Since the employees experience satisfaction on various facets of the job, they would have a positive attitude towards the job and the organization. It relates to many positive outcomes including the lower level of repetition and failures, absenteeism, a higher level of commitment, loyalty, willingness to being a citizen of the organization, compliance to the rules and regulations, accepting more responsibility, meeting the deadlines, less intention to quit from the organization and being innovative. Positive attitude towards job and organization would increase the quality of the output and customer satisfaction also. Since the work environment is conducive for innovation, it will strengthen the competitive stance of the organization. In addition to the competitive advantage, individual employees related factors such as stress level, performance and feel of comfortability would be favorable to the organization, Therefore, the work environment is an essential predictor of employees' job satisfaction. The study recommends the managers to provide necessary work aides and support to the employees to resolve work-related problems to receive a better outcome from them.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the study indicates that favorable work environment is necessary to promote job satisfaction among the employees. Work aides, supervisory support, organizational policy, and physical environment positively influence on employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations in the state sector need to concentrate more on creating a conducive work environment to improve the level of job satisfaction as it directly affects the performance of the employees and the organization. Employees in the public sector are criticized for their

work-related attitudes and the negligence of the clients' satisfaction. Although the previous findings confirmed that the overall level of job satisfaction is at the desired level, the levels of facet satisfaction vary among the factors.

Moreover, Sri Lankan researchers identified that the work environment plays vital role in determining job satisfaction (Jayathilaka ,2014; Amarasena 2019 & Herath & Wijerathna, 2019). Therefore, the results of this study imply that a greater understanding of employee job satisfaction might be gained by investigating the influence of the work environment. The present study identified 58% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by the work environment. Therefore, this study implies the need for further investigation of other factors that are influencing job satisfaction of employees who responsible for the central administration of the district.

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