# Impact on Attitudinal factors, Occupational Stress, and HRM Competencies on Job Performance of HR Managers in Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

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#### Abstract

On the scenario of continuous discussions on corporate social responsibility, human involvement is yet to be considered as a significant organizational element in the apparel industry at present. There are several human resources problems such as high labour turnover and absenteeism, which have made a huge barricade to minimize the effort of the achieving organizational objectives in the apparel industry. The HR Manager, who is accountable to manage human beings, has a significant role to play in maintaining the highest labour productivity. However the available literature does not provide empirical substantiate the effort of evidence to attitudinal factors in performance of HR Managers in this industry. Therefore, this study empirically investigated five attitudinal variables, which could influence on the job performance of the HR Managers in the apparel industry. The data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 173 HR Managers in the apparel industry by administrating a structured questionnaire, which consisted of 110 questions/statements with five scales. The data analyses included the bivariate and multivariate analyses. The findings of the study are that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and HRM competencies were positively correlated with job performance and, occupational stress was negatively correlated with job performance of the HR Manager. However, a strong positive significant relationship exists between job satisfaction and job performance. On the multiple regression analysis, 84% of the variance in the job performance of HR Managers has been accounted for by the four independent variables jointly. It is concluded that the above five attitudinal factors, especially job satisfaction should be considered to enhance the performance of HR Managers in this industry.

Key words: HR competency, Human resource manager, Job involvement, Job performance, Job satisfaction, Occupational stress, Organizational commitment

## Research Background

As a pivotal role of transferring business strategies into tactical decisions, any individual personnel or HR director, manager or officer will play any of the roles that will be dependent partly on the type and structure of the organization, its culture and the environment in which it exists (Armstrong, 1996).

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Therefore, unique talents among employees, including superior performance, high productivity, flexibility, innovation, and the ability to deliver high level of personal customer service are ways in which people provide a critical ingredient in developing an organization competitive position (Armstrong, 1996). Over the last two decades, as others attest, the HRM model, both among the its advocated and its detractors, came to represent one of the most contentious signifiers in the managerial disclosure (Storey, 1989).

Therefore, the HR Managers' job performance as a responsible person of managing HR Division in an organization is mainly important to keep the workforce of the organization in the organizational strategic direction/track. Then the superb HR practices in an organization are always created through the performance of HR Manager.

## **Problem**

According to Kelegama & Epaarachi in 2003, the labor cost in apparel sector in Sri Lanka was 15.5% of output in 1998 (Kelegama & Epaarachi, 2003). There were few factors for low productivity of the sector, which are; poor working condition, poor incentive for workers, high labor turnover and absenteeism, inadequate human resource development, strained employer-employee dialogue, restrictive labor regulations, low investment in technology, slow turn-around time, no garment factory standardization, and lack of professionalism in the industry (Kelegama & Epaarachi, 2003). Among above factors of low productivity in the garment sector, the first six factors were highly craggy with the HRM practices of the sector.

In many factories, especially those belonging to the small and medium category, hazardous factory layout with cramped workspace for the workers are not conductive to improving output. According to Kelegama & Epaarachi in 2003, some factories lack basic facilities such as canteens, toilets, etc., and in many cases, regular breaks for using these facilities were not provided. The harassment, especially sexual harassment for female workers, longer working hours, no extra payment for additional hours, continuous working in both shifts, and required to work night shifts are the factors of poor working conditions provided by the garment company for their employees as per views of Kelegama & Epaarachi in 2003.

In most factories, allowances are not linked to productivity, and in the cases where productivity payments are made, they are in fact only flat-rate allowances rather than incentive systems (Kelegama & Epaarachi, 2003). According to the data about absenteeism and turnover, the garment sector has recorded average labor turnover rates of around 55% per annum, with the highest rate of 60% being recorded for factories in the Western province. The average absenteeism of the industry is 7.4% per month, with the highest rate of 12% being recorded for factories in the Northern province. According to Kelegama & Epaarachi (2003), the reasons for high turnover and absenteeism are due to poor working environment, worker stress, and poor social image of factory workers. There is little emphasis placed on the importance of training and its role in improving productivity by factory owners/managers. Often, managers

do not view training as an investment and are unwilling to incur expenditure on it (Kelegama & Epaarachi, 2003).

The person who is responsible for managing human beings in the sector is also very imperative, because he or she has to have a strong power to control the human beings toward organizational success in short term as well as in long term. The manager of managing human beings in an organization has been affected by many factors to determine his or her performance. Among those, as same as all other workers in an organization, the job satisfaction (Locke, 1976: Mitchell & Larson, 1987: Luthan, 1992: Robbins, 2003) may be a major root to determine the degree of HR Managers' effort in an organization. In addition to the job satisfaction, and job involvement (Moorhead & Griffin, 1999 and Robbins, 1996), organizational commitments (Luthan, 1992: Stress, 1997: Moorhead & Griffin, 1999: Rao, 1999) are two important attitudinal factors to determine the job performance of the workers. Therefore job involvement and organizational commitment are two major attitudinal factors of HR Manager to keep his or her job performance in an organization. Occupational stress (Umstot, 1984: Chandan, 1994: Moorhead & Griffin, 1999) and competencies of employee (Rao, 1999) are another two independent human element that can highly impact to determine the job performance of workers. Therefore, the HR Manager in garment industry should tolerate the stress and enhance the HR competencies to do his or her job successfully.

As explained above, the current awful nature of human utilization in apparel industry may be the basis of HR Manager's performance as a major factor or as a minor factor. In other way the performance of HR Manager may be determined by degree of his or her job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, occupational stress and HR competencies. Here, the researcher attempts to find out impact of the attitudinal and other factors (occupational stress and HR Competencies) on determining the job performance of the HR Managers in the Apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

As above cited, the attitudinal factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, & job involvement, and non – attitudinal factors such as occupational stress and HRM competencies, are very important factors that determine the job performance of an individual in the organizational context. But the importance of each variable to the job performance of an employee may differ. The theoretical and empirical evidence elucidates the different factors for job performance of an employee. It seems that there is a gap in the empirical knowledge available, especially in Sri Lanka with regarded to the impact of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, occupational stress, and HRM competencies on the job performance of human resource managers from the perception of human resource managers. This gap exists especially in the Sri Lankan Apparel industry. Therefore, the research problem addressed under this study is to investigate the extent to which job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, organizational stress, and HRM competencies affect job performance of HR Managers in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

Materials/Literature Review

According to Brayfield & Crockett in 1955, Vroom in 1964, Organ in 1977, Abedel-Halim in 1980, Parasuraman & Futrell in 1983, Rao in 1999, Robbins in 2003, AL-Badayneh & Sonnad [On line<sup>4</sup>] [31/08/2004], Lawler and Porter's in 1967 (AL-Badayneh & Sonnad [On line<sup>4</sup>] [31/08/2004]), Steers in 1981, etc stressed that there is a positive relationship between the job satisfaction and the Job Performance. Based on the above evidences, it is hypothesized that the job satisfaction of the HR mangers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka has a positive relation with their Job Performance.

According to Kiesler and Sakumura in 1966, Mowday, Porter and Steers in 1982, Randall in 1987, Mitchell & Larson in 1987, Robbins in 1996, Luthan in 1992, Meyer and Allen in 1994, Strees in 1997, Moorhead & Griffin in 1999, Rao in 1999, Foong, & Loke, [On line<sup>8</sup>] [31/08/2004], and Orpen and Pool [On line<sup>6</sup>] [31/08/2004]), there is a relationship between the organizational commitment and the job performance of the employee. Based on these evidences, it is hypothesized that Organizational commitment of HR managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka has a positive relationship with their job performance.

According to Lodahl and Kejner in 1965, Sekaran & Mowday in 1981, Jewel in 1985, Sekaran in 1989, and Robbins in 1996, there is a relationship between the job involvement and the job performance. Based on above evidences, it is hypothesised that the job involvement of the HR manager in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka is positively related to their job performance.

According to Umstot in 1984, Altman, Valenzi, and Hodetts in 1985, Greer & Castro in 1986, Motowidlo & Packard in 1986, Sullivan, Bhaget in 1992, Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman in 1992, Chandan in 1994, Moorhead & Griffin in 1999, and Griffin in 1999, there is a relationship between the occupational stress and the job performance of the employee. Based on these arguments, there is a moderate level relationship between the occupational stress of the HR managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka and their job performance.

According to Fernie, Metcalf and Woodland in 1994, Bratton & Gold in 1994, Kanfer in 1994, Huselid in 1995, Armstrong in 1996, Guest and Hoque in (Armstrong, 1996), Guest in 1997, Kanfer, in 1994, Guest in 1997, Brockbanck and Ulrich in 2002, Boselie and Paauwe [On line<sup>1</sup>][31/08/2004]), there is a relationship between the HR managers competencies and the job performance. Based on these arguments and empirical studies, a hypothesis, - there is appositive relationship between the competencies of the HR managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka and their job performance was developed.

# Research Methodology

The survey was carried out among the sample of 173 HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The unit of analysis was at individual level (HR Manager). The selection of sample of HR Managers was carried out on a stratified sampling allowing representation from different strata of HR Managers. To collect the primary data required for the study a set of questionnaire was distributed among them. This questionnaire consisted of 113 question statements. Among the all question

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statements, 110 were designed with 5-point Likert scales to measure the variables and dimensions in the research model. The external and internal reliability of the question statements were placed in the range of 0.625 to 0.994 and 0.6249 to 0.9944 respectively. The content validity of the instruments was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables using the available literature. Data collected from primary (questionnaire) source were analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS version 13.0 for validity, reliability, and relationship testing. The data analysis included bivariate and multivariate analyses.

## Results

According to bivariate analysis, Pearson's Correlation between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, occupational stress, HR competency with job performance of the HR managers in the apparel industry are 0.898, 0.201, 0.390, -0.121, and 0.342 respectively and those are significant at 0.000.

The multicollinearity test was carried out to find out any significant strong correlation between the independent variables (see table 01).

Table 01: The results of Multicollinearity Diagnostic test

	JS	OC	JI	OS	HRC
JS	-	0.138	0.246	-0.025	0.252
OC	0.138	436	0.275	-0.091	0.075
JI	0.246	0.275	-	0.010	0.380
OS	-0.025	-0.091	0.010	-	-0.153
HRC	0.252	0.075	0.380	-0.153	-

According to Multicollinearity diagnostic test, all independent variables are weakly correlated with each other. Hence, as there as no correlation coefficients as strong as 0.9 and above among the independent variables, it is statistically evident that no multicollinearity exists among the independent variables.

The results of regression the four independent variables (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and HRM Competency) against the dependent variable (job satisfaction) are 0.918 of multiple R, 0.843 of R Squire, 0.841 of Adjusted R Squire, 0.1208 of Standard error of the Estimate, 511.762 of F value and 0.000 of Significant F. A stepwise regression was done in order to find out the extent of contribution of each variable to R Square value or the total explanatory power of the regression model. As shown in the table 02, the results of stepwise regression indicate that there were four predictor variables that could significantly contribute to the R Square value.

Table 02: Stepwise multiple regression analysis: Predictors of job performance

Variables	JS	JI	HRC
R Square	0.806	0.837	0.841
R Square change	0.806	0.031	0.016
Adjusted R Square	0.806	0.836	0.840
Beta	0.902	0.158	0.03914
F	1606.063	987.613	676.858
Significant F	0.000	0.000	0.002
Significant F Change	0.000	0.000	0.000

The result of the stepwise multiple regression analysis indicates that job satisfaction has the highest beta value of 0.902 and contributed 80.6% ( $R^2 = 0.806$ ) to the variance of job performance. Job involvement has the beta value of 0.158 and contributed 83.7% to the variance of job performance. HRM competencies have the beta value of 0.0391 and contributed to the variance of job performance is 84.1%.

### Discussion

According to the data analysis, followings are the major findings of the study.

- According to the results of Pearson's Product Movement correlation (0.898) and simple regression analysis (beta = 0.902), there is a positive and strong relationship between job satisfaction and job performance of HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- According to the results of Pearson's Product Movement correlation (0.201) and simple regression analysis (beta = 0.102) there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job performance of HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- According to the results of Pearson's Product Movement correlation (0.390) and simple regression analysis (beta = 0.342) there is a positive relationship between job involvement and job performance of HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- According to the results of Pearson's Product Movement correlation (-0.121) and simple regression analysis (beta = -0.00709) there is a negative relationship between organizational stress and job performance of HR Manager in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
- According to the results of Pearson's Product Movement correlation (0.342) and simple regression analysis (beta = 0.191) there is a positive relationship between HR Competency and job performance of HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

According to the results of the multiple regression for aggregate effect of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and HR competencies on job performance of HR managers, the R Square ( $R^2$ ) coefficient is 0.843, which is significant at 1% (Sig. F = 0.000), suggesting that the four independent variables have significantly explained 84.3% of the variables in job performance. Hence, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and HR Competency of the

HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka together will significantly explain the variance in their job performance.

## Conclusion, Recommendations, Implications and Further Studies

According to the findings, it is substantiated that there is a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance of the HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Although independent variables are not significantly multicollinear, the independent variables except job satisfaction were less predictor of the job performance of the HR Managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

The findings of this research study shall be important on the theoretical as well as practical scenario. As this research model proves to be an explanatory model of job performance, the findings of study are important to improve job performance of HR Managers to this industry. As a major way of enhancing the job performance of HR Managers in the Apparel industry, the programs relating to the enhancement of the job satisfaction of the HR Managers are to be implemented successfully. Pay (Price and Mueller in 1986: Moorhead and Griffin in 1999), promotion (opportunities) (Price and Mueller in 1986: Moorhead and Griffin in 1999), work itself (Price and Mueller, 1986: Moorhead and Griffin, 1999), mentally challenging work (Locke, 1976), equitable rewards (Locke, 1976), supportive working conditions (Locke, 1976), policies and procedures (Moorhead and Griffin, 1999) coworkers (Locke, 1976: Price and Mueller, 1986: Moorhead and Griffin, 1999), and supervisors (Price and Mueller, 1986: Moorhead and Griffin, 1999) needs (Moorhead and Griffin, 1999), aspirations (Moorhead and Griffin, 1999), and institutional benefits (Moorhead and Griffin, 1999) are the few ways of upgrading the job satisfaction of a worker. The top management of the organizations in the Apparel industry should consider these factors and enhance the job satisfaction of the HR Managers to gain maximum contribution to achieve the organizational objectives.

The researcher believes that the important independent variables that may account for the unexplained variable in the job performance of HR Manager may be the other variables, such as mental and physical ability, person energy level, personality dimensions (dependability, self – confidence), (Gordon, 1993), group, norms, organizational culture, (Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman, 1992) and so on.

Further research studies are suggested to carry out to find out the effects of theses factors on job performance of HR Managers in apparel industry in Sri Lanka. In the context of researching the effort of these variables on the job performance, essentially future researchers may have to encounter serious difficulties in measuring the variables, as there is no measurement instruments correctly developed.

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