

## **Factors Influencing the Job Satisfaction of Development Officers' in Government of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

*Every organization attempts to continue maintaining high skill labour force within the organization as the management of any organization clearly has identified the value of the human resource. Therefore, they try to maximize the job satisfaction level of employees to minimize the labour turnover. The objectives of the study were to measure the job satisfaction level of development officers, determine the factors affecting the job satisfaction level of Development officers in their employment position and compare the job satisfaction level between male and female Development Officers in Sri Lanka. A sample of the study was selected from five government ministries. Although job satisfaction level of development officers proved to have been above the middle-level, it's essential to note that it should advance further with special reference to male development officers. Seventynine percent of development officers' satisfaction depends on selected factors, namely; working environment, relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisors, freedom at workplace, career advancement of development officers and basic salary. Among the selected independent factors, working environment has shown the highest significant positive influence on employee satisfaction. Since policymakers must take necessary steps to develop a favorable working environment to encourage the development officers.*

**Keywords:** *Job satisfaction, government development officers, labour turnover, working environment, government ministries.*

## **Introduction**

Human resource is considered as the most significant factor in every organization; because the organization's productivity mainly depends on the effectiveness of their competent employees. The organization can replace physical resources such as machines and equipment, but it is difficult to replace skilled and qualified employees at short notice without an impact on the performance of the organization. Moreover, the replacement of skilled and qualified workforce is a difficult and time-consuming process. Therefore, a major responsibility of the top management is to retain the qualified employees within the organization. In order to achieve such objectives, the top management has to improve job satisfaction among employees and provide a conducive environment with positive attitudes.

The key objective of promoting children for higher education is to ensure their employability (Perera, 2006) Accordingly, almost all Sri Lankan families are having the greater aspiration of providing university education for their children as a secured path of higher employability (Perera, 2008). Graduates are considered as one of the most important human capital in a country with higher social reputation. They are expected to work in a middle or top management level providing services to society in various ways.

Jobs are available either in government sector or non-government organizations or in private sector institutions in Sri Lankan job market for graduate employees. Most of the graduates prefer to have a government sector job mainly due to job security, allowances, and other benefits like pension and so on. In addition, also some of the graduates feel job security

in the government sector. The availability of jobs for graduates in the government sector institutions in Sri Lanka heavily depends on the state policies adopted by the particular political party which is in power. Pensionable jobs are rare in the current job market, and jobs available are challenging, need to be self-motivated to gain more benefits and to reach a higher position especially in the private sector. Sri Lankan society also generally expects that graduates must have high and reputable occupations. Such norms and values in the society discourage graduates to start a job at a lower level in private sector.

Employee satisfaction is an important factor for all organizations. Employee satisfaction have been recognized to have a major impact on many economic and social phenomena, researchers have reported that a number of different factors can influence employee dissatisfaction with their workspaces (Aboobacker Jahufer, 2015). It is generally understood that unfavourable conditions of office environment can have negative influences on employees' satisfaction. Regardless of the discipline, job satisfaction is a frequently studied subject in work and organizational literature. This is mainly due to the fact that many experts believe that job satisfaction trends can affect labour market behaviour and influence work productivity, work effort, employee absenteeism and especially staff turnover. Moreover, job satisfaction is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being (Diaz-Serrano, 2005), as well as a good predictor of intentions or decisions of employees to leave a job (Gazioglu, 2006). Over the years, many studies have attempted to categorize and find out the factors that affect job satisfaction (Abdullah et al., 2011) and found out that wages as the main factor for job satisfaction. But certain other factors such as the promotion, recognition of work and employee's loyalty

has also been considered. In addition, salaries and incentives are the most important determinant of job satisfaction (Calisir et al., 2010). Ali and Ahmed (2009) conclude that due to the changes in reward or recognition programs, there will be a corresponding change in work motivation and satisfaction; this means that if there is a greater focus on remuneration and recognition. Due to the increasing inflation people tend to find more payable employment. When considering the Sri Lankan context, it is obvious that government sector employees have to wait for a long time from their first employment to have a considerable amount of basic salary compare to the private sector. It is problematic that Sri Lankan government and relevant authorities have already identified the gap between the employers and the graduates. On the other hand, it is actually necessary to find out whether this gap exists in Sri Lankan job market, and if so, how significant the gap is. This research is conducted in order to find out the gap between graduate government employees' expectation on their employment and expectation of government authorities of Sri Lanka and to formulate recommendations for stakeholders. Graduates are working under different job titles in different ministries although only development officers have been selected for the study.

It was the general understanding that the implementation of Graduate Employment scheme was aimed mainly (a) to obtain the contribution of educated youth for development programmes in the country (b) provision of employment opportunities for unemployed graduates.

It is observed that success of this scheme was discussed at various forums. Most of the critiques are aimed at selection process – ie. Not giving proper attention to areas of specialization /qualifications when appointing candidates for respective posts. Some of the other areas under discussion

were, future promotional prospects, remuneration, job recognition, job satisfaction and so on. However, there are no specific evidence or research findings to support above. Therefore, it is timely to conduct a detailed study on their job satisfaction.

### **Problem Statement**

Development officer position in the government of Sri Lanka was created under two main objectives, namely to find a solution for unemployment problem of degree holders and to obtain their maximum contribution for development activities in the country. A recent study carried out by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka has revealed that Government of Sri Lanka has recruited 40,810 graduates as Development Officers for the first time in the year 2012 representing all 25 districts. However, in a study, it was found out that, there were 96 resignations recorded and 1,580 officers had joined other positions in state sector organizations. Furthermore, based on preliminary discussions that have been conducted with development officers and higher officials about the job satisfaction level of the development officer position, it is observed that a majority of them were with the view of leaving their positions due to the dissatisfaction of employment resulted from various reasons. This statistics signifies that within such a short period of time 4% of above number had left their employment for some unknown reasons. Hence, there appears to be a serious problem of retaining recruited development officer employees within the Government sector Institutions.

### **Objectives of the study**

Based on the above research problem the researcher has developed following research objectives

To investigate the job satisfaction level of the development officers appointed by government of Sri Lanka

To compare the job satisfaction level between male and female development officers in Sri Lanka

To determine the factors affecting the job satisfaction level of development officers in their employment position

## **Methodology**

There are around 40,810 development officers, and as it is a difficult task to interview all development officers in Sri Lanka, six hundred & fifty (650) development officers were selected from five government organizations, namely; Mahaweli Authority, Ministry of Health, Divisional Secretariats, Irrigation Department and Ministry of Agriculture. Discussions were held with development officers & heads of government organizations to get a fair understanding of the study and information was collected based on available and up dated records. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire included questions on general information of respondents. The second part of the questionnaire included questions relating to employee satisfaction and five factors affecting job satisfaction. Descriptive analysis is utilized to explore the demographic pattern of the respondents and level of satisfaction. Exploratory factor analysis was used for measuring the construct validity of the questionnaire. Moreover, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were utilized to analysis relationship among the variables.

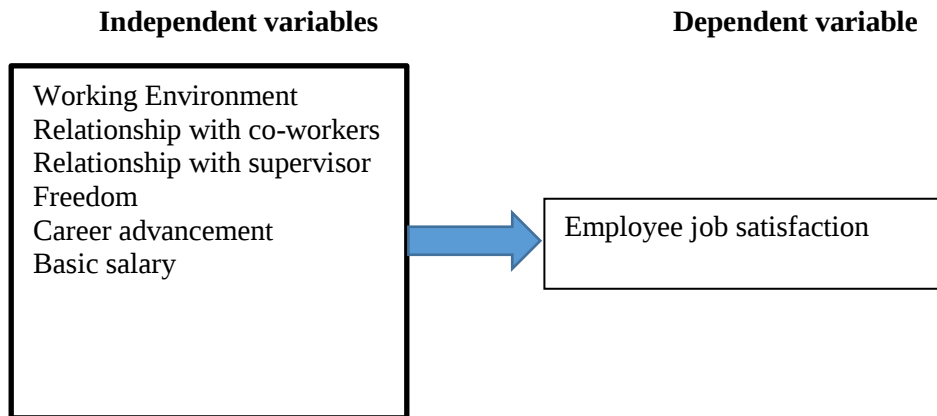


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Following hypotheses were developed by the researcher.

### **Working environment**

The work environment is correspondingly significant or indeed appropriate when the considered job satisfaction and also affects the welfare of employees (Aryee et al., 2002).

**H<sub>1</sub> The working environment positively affects the development officer's job satisfaction level**

### **Relationship with co-workers**

Employees in friendship tend to engage in altruistic behaviours by providing co-workers with help, guide, advice, feedback, recommendation, or information on various work-related matters (Berman et al., 2002).

**H<sub>2</sub> The co-workers positively affect the development officers job satisfaction level**

**Relationship with Supervisors**

The relationship between supervisor and employee and job satisfaction is a subject of debate in organizations, and this leads to studies being done to measure the exact influence of the relationship and how it affects the organizations (Petersitzke 2008).

**H<sub>3</sub> Relationship with supervisors positively affects job satisfaction of Development Officers.****Freedom/ autonomy**

Autonomy in the workplace refers to how much freedom employees have while working. Research shows that when employees are given the freedom associated with autonomy, job satisfaction rises (Walley et al., 1974).

**H<sub>4</sub> Freedom/ autonomy positively affect job satisfaction of Development Officers****Career advancement**

Career development performs in the workplace support organization attract and retain high performing employees (Kappia, et al., 2007; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Researchers found that employees are more likely to stay if offered the opportunity to develop.

**H<sub>5</sub> Career Advancement positively affects job satisfaction of Development Officer.****Basic salary**

Brown et al., (2007) mentioned that the level of the salary is a secondary variable that cannot stand alone and its influence may be limited when the work quality is unsatisfactory. A study conducted by Brown and his colleagues supports this notion.

**H<sub>6</sub> Basic salary positively affects job satisfaction of Development Officer.**

**Gender and satisfaction level**

Significant satisfaction differences found between the gender, qualifications, experience, job characteristics and job satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2010).

**H7 Satisfaction level of male Development Officers are equal to female Development Officers****Result and discussion**

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were female employees, and 33% were male respondents male. Sixty-eight present respondents were married developing officers. The majority was married (68%) and most had bachelor degrees (84%). Rest of respondents had completed their master degrees, and many of the respondents mentioned that they are following masters. According to the age distribution of respondents represents age group 18-27 age category represented 20% employees, 28-37 age category comprised of 45% of employees were representing the highest number of employees in this category. Age category 38-47 is the category which consists with the lowest number of employees in the sample, and it was 15% selected employees. That implies there is a lower amount of employees in this category. In the sample which was selected from the development officers, a representation of 20% employees was in the age category 48-57. The significant incident which was recorded in this distribution was, there were no employees to represent the age category more than 57 years old.

**Analysis of Validity and Reliability**

Reliability analysis was employed to determine whether the summated scale score made were sufficient and reliable. Moreover, Haire et al. (1998) noted that general acceptable lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is

0.70. Reliability of each variable was tested, and the results were tabulated below accordingly for each. Table 1 shows the result of the reliability test.

Table 1: Reliability statistics of Variables

| Variable                     | Cronbach's alpha |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Working Environment          | 0.744            |
| Relationship with co-workers | 0.913            |
| Freedom/Autonomy             | 0.838            |
| Career Advancement           | 0.832            |
| Salary                       | 0.876            |
| Employee Satisfaction        | 0.832            |

### Level of job satisfaction

The first objective of the research is to measure the current Job satisfaction level of the Development Officer employees with their employment at government organizations. Table 2 shows the relevant descriptive statistics values of mean, median and standard deviation of the selected sample. Job satisfaction level of employees was showing a mean value of 2.765, and also the standard deviations of job variables showed a value of 0.5022.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Variables

| Variable                              | Mean  | Std Dev | Median |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|--------|
| Job satisfaction level of development | 2.765 | 0.5022  | 2.750  |

### Job satisfaction level between male and female:

The researcher has identified that the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective of the research is to compare the job satisfaction level between male and female development officers.

Table 3: Job satisfaction level between male and female

|        | Mean of Satisfaction Level |
|--------|----------------------------|
| Female | 2.916                      |
| Male   | 2.692                      |

When considering the job satisfaction level of employees, female development officers seem to be more satisfied than male employees even though they are under moderate satisfied level when consider as a whole. As above table number 02 shows comparatively female development officers were satisfied higher than male development officers. According to the table number 02 result, alternative hypothesis seven ( $H_7$ ) (The satisfaction level of male Development Officers are equal to female Development Officers) is accepted.

Accordingly, it was found out that 48% of satisfaction level was shown by male employees while female employees or development officers have 52% of satisfaction level. By this result, it is proven that the job satisfaction level of female development officers is not equal to male development officers.

#### **Factors affecting the job satisfaction**

The coefficient of determination (R Square) generally measures the goodness fit of the regression line to the set of data. It describes that R Square value of the model measures the proportion or percentage of total variation in dependent variable which is explained by the independent variables. Multiple regression R square value was 0.787. In accordance with that, it can be concluded 79% of total variation of employee satisfaction level development officers is explained by work environment, relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisors, freedom at work place, career advancement of development officers and basic salary.

On the other hand, approximately 22% of total variation in the employee satisfaction in government development officers is unexplained by above mention six independent variables. Therefore it seems that the model was fitted appropriately as the explained variation is higher than the unexplained variation.

The above mentioned six factors, impact in different ways on the levels of satisfaction of development officers. Influence of proposed independent variables and employee satisfaction is given in the co-efficient values which were derived from multiple regression analysis result in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of independent variables on the dependent variable. According to the multiple regression results, selected six factors affected by the level of satisfaction of development officers. The multiple regression function co-efficient values show different values; it means selected factors' effect on employee satisfaction in a dissimilar manner. The working environment has shown the significant effect on employee satisfaction with co-efficient value is 0.383. Therefore, working environment of development officers is able to play substantial role in the degree of employee satisfaction. On the other hand, Freedom, Career advancement, Basic salary, Relationship with co-workers and Relationship with Supervisors can significantly effect to the employee satisfaction level.

## **Summary and conclusion**

Sixty-seven percent of the sample represented female development officers, and the remaining amount of development officers represent the male developing officers. Moreover, Eighty-four percent of development officers hold a bachelor degree and others have higher degrees. The

satisfaction level of female employees comparatively more satisfied than the male employees as they are generally under moderately satisfied level when considered as a whole. Seventy-nine percent of development officers' satisfaction depends on selected factors namely work environment, relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisors, freedom at work place, career advancement of development officers and basic salary. Among these factors working environment highly affected the satisfaction level of development officers. Relationship with Supervisors shows the lowest effect on employee satisfaction among the selected factors. Moreover rest of 21% of development officers' satisfaction level depends on other factors. These findings also serve as foundation knowledge for developing strategies to enhance job satisfaction among developing officers.

Policymakers must pay attention to improve employee satisfaction level to minimize labour turnover, for this purpose developing the auspicious working environment is very important to minimize the development officer's turnover because it highly influences the level of development officer's satisfaction. Moreover, the satisfaction level of male development officers is comparatively lower than women development officers since policymakers must pay special attention to improve the male development officers' satisfaction. Future researchers have to ensure the result with the massive sample with other factors that may influence development officers' employee satisfaction.

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