Quality of Work Life, Personality, Organizational Commitment, Performance Appraisal and Job Performance: Research Gaps

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Abstract:

The overall purpose of this research paper is to unearth current research gaps in relation to five variables i.e. quality of work life, personality, organizational commitment, performance appraisal and job performance for future systematic empirical investigations. Nine research gaps related to these variables have been identified through a desk research study. The conceptual confusion is one of the research gaps and it relates to quality of work life as well as job performance. Formulating working definitions for both constructs have the potential of minimizing the existing confusion and disagreement. Different types of relationships among the variables were identified and consequently those variables were labelled as independent, dependent, mediating and moderating variables. Finally a nomological network providing associations among the five variables was developed. The literature survey, logical arguments and general system theory provide a solid foundation for the developed frame work. Furthermore, the developed nomological network was proposed to be tested empirically in the research setting of Station Masters of Railway Department, Sri Lanka.

Key Words: Job Performance; Organizational Commitment; Performance Appraisal System; Personality; Quality of Work Life

1. Introduction

At present, researchers have paid more attention towards the employees who work in organizations and their perception related to the existing management practices followed by organizations. Both the organization and employee can be considered as dual sides of the same coin. Lawler (2005) mentioned that people are the primary source for company's competitive advantage and organizational prosperity and survival depend on how the employees are treated. As a result, Human Resource Management plays a key role in determining the success and progress of employees in an organization.

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Individual performance is the main unit of the overall success of any organization. Therefore, *'Job performance'* can be considered as the record of outcomes produced by a specified job function or activity during a specified time period (Bernardin and Beatty, 1984). Organizations must possess characteristics which enable to make healthy and happy employees through meeting their reasonable expectations. Constructing of *'Quality of work life'* is one of the strategic goals of human resource management in an organization. The American Society of Training and Development considers that the quality of work life is needed to achieve twin goals including effectiveness of organization and employee improvement. It means that the concept of quality of work life is more important for efficient and effective utilization of human resources in modern organizations. On the other hand, employees are committed to perform organizational goals when the employers treat them well. At present no organizations can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed towards the organizational objectives (Dixit and Bhati, 2012). Organizations are facing new challenges regarding higher achievement of employees and creating a committed workforce. There should be a favorable give and take policy for the achievement of *'Organizational commitment'*. Employee should be committed to achieve organizational goals when the employers treat them well. Creating a better quality of work life is a more favorable solution for it. The level of organizational commitment may vary from person to person due to the type of employee *'Personality'* traits. Glueck (1979) defined personality as the characteristic way a person thinks and behaves in adjusting to his or her environment. Employees' actions, attitudes and pattern of employee behavior may be varied and personality may be an influencing factor for the organizational commitment. It provides benefit to an organization in a number of ways such as; improving job performance, reducing absenteeism and turnover, etc. Another variable is *'performance appraisal system'*. It's one of the main activities of the human resource management function in an organization. A successful performance appraisal system must be a tool to gather information and communicate it to both parties for the purpose of making various decisions. Schuler and Youngblood (1986) explained that "performance appraisal system deals with controls to influence the outcome of the employee's job performance."

Hence, the purpose of this study is to review literature and to find out research gaps which would become particular aspects of interest to the future researchers to carry out research that will add to the general body of knowledge in relation to quality of work life, personality, organizational commitment, performance appraisal and job performance.

This paper attempts to:

    (a) Identify the landscape of three main variables of job performance, quality of work life and organizational commitment.
    (b) Explore the different types of relations among the above variables through theoretical and empirical findings in the past literature.
    (c) Present a nomological network by uncovering research gaps that can be raised for further studies.
    (d) Specify research gaps in relation to the nomological network with a research setting of Railway sector in Sri Lankan context.

2. Research Methodology

The above mentioned specific objectives are expected to be achieved with a systematic review of existing literature. Tranfield *et al.* (2003) advised that the archival method is applicable for this type of studies. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) suggested referring academic books and journals as the most useful sources of information. Literature review is the strongest

foundation of a research that can be built in the mind of researcher. As a result, one does not run the risk of "reinventing the wheel"; that is wasting effort on trying to re-discover something that is already known. Therefore, published information over the past years in relevant books and refereed journals which have been published in the popular data bases were considered to be useful inputs for this study.

3. Literature Review

Job Performance: In 1974, Porter and Lawler defined job performance as a function of individual ability, skills and effort in a given situation. It should be the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period (Bernardin and Russell, 1993). Viswesvaran and Ones in 2000, highlighted it as scalable actions, behaviors and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that are linked with and contribute to organizational goals. Simply, it is the sum of behaviors of employees (Griffin, 2007). Ramawickrama *et al.* (2017b) defined, "Job performance is the extent to which the employee has shown his or her traits, engaged in behaviors and produced results which are appropriate to task performance, and has engaged in citizenship performance and counterproductive performance during a particular period of time."

Many of researchers have discussed the dynamic nature of job performance and have used numerous dimensions for measuring it up to now. Previous researchers' attempts in measuring: Objective evaluation and subjective evaluation form of job performance (Burtt, 1926; Viteles, 1932 as cited in Viswesvaran, 2001), hard criteria and soft criteria of job performance (Smith, 1976), direct measures and indirect measures of job performance (Schmidt 1976 as cited Viswesvaran, 2001), and judgmental vs. non-judgmental measures of job performance have been reviewed in literature (Landy and Farr, 1983 as cited by Levy, 1993). Thirteen types of pro-social organizational behaviors were discussed by Brief and Motowidlo in 1986. Murphy (1989) elaborated four dimensions including task oriented behavior, interpersonally oriented behavior, down-time behavior and destructive or hazardous behavior. Campbell *et al.* (1990) proposed eight performance components for measuring job performance. In-role work performance and extra-role performance were declared by Borman and Brush in 1993. In the same year, having an idea towards the multi-dimensional nature of job performance, both concepts of task performance and contextual performance were classified by Borman and Motowidlo (1993). On the other hand, perspectives of job performance such as "generic work behavior" and "adaptive performance behavior" were discussed respectively by Hunt (1996) and Pulakos *et al.* (2000). Recently Koopmans *et al.* (2011) conducted a systematic review process and proposed four theoretical dimensions including task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behavior as taxonomies of job performance. However, many authors have conducted studies related to job performance and they have defined the concept of job performance differently and they used different dimensions for measuring it. As a result, we defined "Job performance is the extent to which the employee has shown his or her traits, engaged behaviours and produced results which are appropriate to task performance, and engaged in citizenship performance and counterproductive performance during a particular period of time." As a result, researchers faced difficulties in applying clear-cut measurement dimensions for measuring job performance. Further, many of past studies have highlighted the necessity of empirical findings for measuring job performance. Therefore, it says clearly that there is a problem of conceptual clarification of the variable of job performance.

With reference to the above, it is clear that job performance is a more important construct on behalf of employee perspective as well as employer perspective. Researchers are facing an inability to generalize job performance dimensions to a particular context. It can be pointed out that there is a conceptual gap of the variable of job performance. Of course task, duties and

responsibilities are varying from profession to profession even in the same organization. Thus, future researchers have the opportunity to fill this research gap of finding the suitable measures of job performance for different careers of different sectors in different country contexts.

Quality of Work Life*:* Quality of Work Life is an important variable not only for the management discipline, but also it has been vastly discussed by different authors in the world in relation to different disciplines. The term "Quality of Work life" was introduced by "Louis Davis" and the research papers were published in USA journals in year 1970. The International Labors Relation Conference, New York (1972) defined this concept giving more attention towards a "humane working life." Boisvert (1977) believed "a set of beneficial consequences of working life for the individual, the organization and society." In the year 1979, American Society of Training and Development mentioned quality of work life as "a process of work organization which enables its members at the levels to actively participate in shaping the organization's environment, methods and outcomes. According to Ramawickrama *et al.* (2017a) it seems that some authors considered organizational or employer perspective of quality of work life and other authors such as Nadler and Lawler, 1983; Kiernan and Knutson, 1990 discussed employee perspective of quality of work life. Further, in 1960, Mayo considered quality of work life as a multifaceted concept and Walton (1975) highlighted quality of work life consisting of humanistic value and social responsibilities in an organization. It is an approach or a method used for improving work in an organization (Ford, 1973). This perspective does not advocate one particular job design technique and it is more concerned with the overall climate or culture.

Lawler (1975), Martel and Dupuis (2006), as cited in Šverko and Galićin (2014) noted that no universally accepted definition of quality of work life has been formulated yet, except it has to do with the well-being of employees in an organization. Different people have different perspectives on what constitutes quality of work life (Davis and Cherns, 1975). Krueger *et al.* (2002) mentioned that quality of work life is "an umbrella term which includes many concepts." Ramawickrama *et al.* (2017a) defined that "quality of work life is the extent to which employees' reasonable expectations about the employment have been met". Different definitions could be found from different authors. As it is as an abstract construct having less measurable and observable properties than a concrete concept, researchers face difficulties in defining and measuring it due to its subjective nature. As examples, recent studies show that only minimum numbers of measurement dimensions (03 dimensions) have been applied by Rose *et al.* (2006), Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri (2007) and Al Muftah and Lafi (2011). The maximum number of measurement dimensions (14 dimensions) have been used by Saraji and Dargahi (2006) and Satyaraju and Balaram, as Cited in Bora *et al.* (2015). In between 03 to 14 dimensions have been used by different researchers from different contexts such as Walton (1975), Saklani (1979), Levine*et al.* (1984), Mirvis and Lawler (1984), Baba and Jamal (1991), Lau and May (1998), Wyatt and Wah (2001), Rathinam and Ismail (2007), Hosseini (2010), Tabassum (2011), Sinha (2012), Stephen and Dhanapal (2012), Mazloumi *et al.* (2014), Swamy *et al.* (2015) and Almarshad (2015). However, in 1975 Walton defined quality of work life consisting of humanistic value and social responsibilities in an organization and included eight dimensions for his model such as adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, opportunity for continued growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total life space and social relevance of the work life.

Ramawickrama *et al.* (2017a) have faced an intellectual puzzle in clarifying dimensions of quality of work life. They concluded that quality of work life is a broader concept and majority of researchers have reviewed the consequence of quality of work life as job satisfaction. They noticed that different authors have used different dimensions for different sectors of

organizations in different countries. Further, Beh (2012) described that, there is no one size of quality of work life that fits to all organizations in any country. Every organization needs to develop its own to represent its employee, customer and organizational needs etc.

According to the above reasons, there is a conceptual confusion of quality of work life in present scenario. *As researchers have familiarized to select dimensions for quality of work life based on different careers in different sector of organization in different country context, it creates a problem with the exact dimensions which should be used to measure the variable of quality of work life. Therefore it has created one of the research gaps to decide more suitable measurement dimensions for the variable of quality of work life for different careers of different sectors in different country contexts.*

Organizational Commitment*:* The concept of 'Employment Commitment' lies at the heart of any analysis of Human Resource Management. In general, Human Resource Management policies cause to increase the level of commitment. Gallie and White (1993) suggested that employee commitment is related to personal characteristics that they called external factors (beliefs and sense of success) and internal organizational factors (structures and policies of the organization). Muthuveloo and Rose (2005) noted, "The literature defines commitment as an employee's level of attachment to some aspect of work. Various authors have been instrumental in identifying types of employee commitment as critical constructs in understanding the attitudes and behaviours of employees in an organization". According to them, employee commitment is grouped into three foci including career commitment, work commitment and organizational commitment.

The concept of 'Organizational Commitment' originates from an article 'The organization Man' written by Whyte in 1956. In 1966 Grusky, as cited in Daxi and Bhati (2012) organizational commitment involves "The nature of the relationship of the member to the system as a whole". Kanter (1968) defines commitment as "the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relations, who are seen as self-expressive".

The concept of organizational commitment has grown in popularity in the literature on industrial and organizational psychology (Cohen 2003). Organizational commitment is an increasing field of study since past research has shown its importance to the organization as a whole. Early studies mentioned that organizational commitment viewed the concept as a single dimension based on an attitudinal perspective, embracing identification, involvement, and loyalty (Porter *et al.,* 1974). Accordingly, attitudinal perspective refers to the psychological attachment or affective commitment formed by an employee in relation to his identification and involvement with the respective organization. Porter *et al.* (1974) defined it as "an attachment to the organization, characterized by an intension to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organization; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf". Allen and Mayer (1990) theorized that, employees with strong affective commitment remain because they *want to*, those with strong continuous commitment because they *need to*, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they *ought to do* so. McCaul *et al.* (1995) defined as a global attitude which can influence an individual's reaction towards his or her organization. Further, Mowday *et al.* (1979) consisted of organizational commitment into following three:
   a) Belief in an acceptance of an organization's goals and values
   b) Willingness to strive harder to develop an organization by being part of the organization and
   c) Willingness to continue working and be loyal to the organization

In 1997 Mayer and Allen improved the idea as a psychological state that characterizes the employees' relationship with the organization and has implication for the decision to continue membership in the organization. Luthans (2005) explained that organizational commitment is an attitude reflecting employees' loyalty to their organization and is an ongoing process through which organizational participants express their concern for the organization and its continued success and well-being. Many authors think it is as employee loyalty towards the organization (Kantar 1968; Newstrom 2007) and some say unwillingness to leave the organization due to pay, status, colleague friendship etc. As explained by Opatha (2015) organizational commitment causes a significant competitive advantage. Of cause, managers should attempt to create and improve it.

Three component models have undergone the most extensive empirical evaluation to date (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer, 1997).Thus, Allen and Meyer (1991) suggested that researchers could better understand an employee's relationship with an organization by analyzing all three components simultaneously.

1. **Affective commitment** involves the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. It is relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday *et al.,* 1979). Greenberg and Baron (2003) explained that persons desire to work for an organization because he or she agrees with its underlying goals and values. It is a work related attitude with positive feelings towards the organization (Morrow, 1993).
2. **Continuance Commitment** involves commitment based on the cost that the employee associates with leaving the organization such as the loss of job security, promotions and other benefits. Greenberg and Baron (2003) explained that persons desire to continue working for an organization because he or she needs to do so and cannot afford to leave.
3. **Normative Commitment** involves employees' feelings of obligation to stay with the organization because they should; it is the right thing to do. Greenberg and Baron (2007) explained that persons desire to continue working for an organization because he or she feels obligations from others to remain there.

As mentioned by Reichers (1985), employee's level of commitment may move from a low level to a moderate level and continue to develop to a higher level of commitment. A high level of organizational commitment is characterized by a strong acceptance of the organization's values and willingness to exert effort to remain with the organization. The moderate level of organizational commitment is characterized by a reasonable acceptance of organizational goals and values as well as the willingness to exert effort to remain in the organization. The low level of organizational commitment is characterized by a lack of acceptance of organizational goals and values and the unwillingness to exert effort to remain with the organization. However, Jaros (1997) mentioned that organizational commitment is an important part of an employee's psychological state because employees who have a high organizational commitment are theorized to engage in several behaviours such as citizenship activities and high performance that are believed to be beneficial to the organization.

Empirical evidence of relationships among the variables of Quality of Work Life, Job Performance, and Organizational Commitment:

Quality of Work Life and Job Performance: There is recent research evidence which shows that quality of work life has a positive impact on employee turnover and productivity. In year 2007 Beh and Rose did a study under the topic of "Linking quality of work life and job

performance: Implications for organizations" in relation to Managers in a manufacturing industry in Malaysia and found that quality of work life is a relevant and crucial determinant of job performance. Gayathiri and Ramakrishnan (2013) studied nursing profession under the topic of "quality of work life-linkage between job satisfaction and performance" and showed hospital management has to ensure quality of work life of nurses that can provide satisfaction and enhance job performance. In the same year Nair studied about Colleague teachers in Thrissaur District, Kerala and found that perceived level of quality of work life among collage teachers differ based on their gender and accepted the tested hypothesis of significant relationship between the overall quality of work life and organizational citizenship behavior. Associating to the water and waste water office in Razavi, Shekari *et al.* (2014) investigated the relationship between quality of work life and job performance. High quality of work life is essential for organizations which care about staff recruitment and survival, so the quality of work life is one of the important variables which have been noted by many managers who wish to evaluate the performance of employees. Taghavi *et al.* (2014) did a study of relationship between quality of work life and performance effectiveness of high school teachers in Shirvan and the results of this study indicate that there is a ninety nine percent level of significance about the relationship between quality of work life and performance effectiveness. Rai and Tripathi (2015) conducted a study of effect of quality of work life on job performance and found that there is a significant positive effect of quality of work life on job performance among the IT professionals in India. Mohammadi (2016) did an investigation under the topic of influential factors on the quality of work life and its relationship with employee performance and the results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the quality of work life and the increase in the employee performance in selected organizations in Iran.

Quality of Work Life and Organizational Commitment: Louis (1998) studied secondary schools at the University of Wisconsin and reviewed that quality of work life measures are strongly associated with both dependent variables of commitment and sense of efficacy. Donaldson *et al.* (1999) emphasized that quality of work life factors significantly predicted organizational commitment, absenteeism, and tiredness. Representing the Sri Lankan context, Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri (2007) have conducted a study under the topic of "The influence of quality of work life on organizational commitment" and substantiated that quality of work life prevailing in the apparel industry of Sri Lanka positively influences the worker commitment. Daud (2010) concluded that there is a strong relationship and cohesiveness among employees in the work place will improve the sense of commitment among employees in Malaysian firms. In 2012 Ahmadi *et al.* conducted a survey of Public organizations in Kurdistan province and reviewed that better quality of work life helps for a higher level of organizational commitment too. Ojedokum (2015) conducted a study under the topic of quality of work life and commitment amongst employees in public organizations in Ghana and concluded that workers reported favorable perception of quality of work life, also reported higher score on job involvement and organizational commitment. They wish to improve organizational commitment through institutionalization of organizational culture. Ali and Zilli (2014) studied both private and public organizations located in Delhi, and advised to create a suitable atmosphere for a proper quality of work life in an organization. Associating public sector organizations in Rivers States, Omugo *et al.* (2016) identified the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment and finalized that quality of work life enhances organizational commitment with favorable positive relations.

As mentioned by Damir 2012 as cited in Nayak and Sahoo (2015) "committed employees are more adaptable, productive and having the sense of responsibility and they are not financial liabilities towards the organization." Nelson and Quick (1997) stated that organizational commitment is related to higher quality of work life, lower rate of absenteeism, and increased

productivity. Udayakumar and Opatha (2003) also highlighted that organizational commitment is a stronger predictor of job performance. McShane *et al.* (2008) mentioned "employees with high affective commitment also have higher work motivation and organizational citizenship, as well as higher job performance. Dixit and Bhati (2012) conducted a study with Indian Auto component industry and observed that employee commitment (affective, normative, and continuous) is significantly and positively related to sustained productivity. In 2013 Rehan and Islam did a research associating with 14 private and public universities in Pakistan and results indicated that certain dimensions of commitment influence specific dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Tolentino (2013) observed the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance of the academic and administrative personnel and they indicated that both the academic and administrative personnel desire to stay in the university because they feel they ought to. This feeling is driven by their loyalty to the university. As a result, academic personnel have stronger affective and normative commitment than the administrative people. However, they found that both the academic and administrative people are performing their job very well. Hettiarachchi and Jayarathna (2014) paid attention on the tertiary and vocational education sector in Sri Lanka for analyzing the effect of employee work related attitudes on employee job performance. They found that employee related work attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement) and job performance (task and contextual performance) are significantly related.

On the other hand, Nayak and Sahoo (2015) studied health care employees in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar in Odisha and reviewed that employee commitment acts as a partial and significant mediator in the relationship between quality of work life and organizational performance. Further, they have suggested that better quality of work life is the key to attract and retain qualified and motivated employees and can possibly lead to enhanced quality of services in health care organizations. Kim (2014) investigated the effect of work-life balance on affective commitment and in-role performance to explore the mediating role of affective commitment to link work life balance with in-role performance in the Korean context. The study supported the hypothesis that affective commitment would mediate the relationship between work life balance and in-role performance.

As discussed the above empirical findings conducted by different parties, it is evident that there may be proper relationships among the concepts of quality of work life, organizational commitment and job performance. However, the usage of these concepts i.e. the way of positioning these different variables as independent, dependent, mediate or moderate etc. is questionable. Further, it is essential to review results from research archives. Therefore, the following Table 1 summarizes clearly, how different authors have used these variables for their studies.

Three columns of Table 1 consist of three main variables including job performance, organizational commitment and quality of work life. Three rows of the Table 1 indicate three types of variables including independent, dependent and mediating variable. Hence, it shows how the three variables such as job performance, organizational commitment and quality of work life have been used in previous studies (labelled as independent, dependent or mediating).

Table 1: Usage of the Three Variables

Variables	Job Performance	Organizational Commitment	Quality of Work Life
Independent	None	*As cited by Reichers in 1985,* Van Maanen, 1975; Porter *et al.*, 1976; Steers, 1977; Koch and Steers, 1978; Angle and Perry, 1981; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Larson and Fukani, 1984; Hom *et al.,* 1979, Mowday *et al.,* 1979. *Recent findings are*: Dixit and Bhati, 2012; Rehan and Islam, 2013; Tolentino, 2013; Hettiarachchi and Jayarathna, 2014; Hafiz, 2017.	Beh and Rose, 2007; Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri 2008; Ganguly, 2010; Aketch *et al.,* 2012; Islam, 2012; Tahera, 2013; Nair, 2013; Shekari, *et al.,* 2014; Taghavi, *et al.,* 2014; Rai, 2015; Louis, 1998; Daud, 2010; Ahmadi, *et al.,* 2012; Parvar, *et al.,* 2013; Varghese and Jayan, 2013; Gayathri, *et al,* 2013; Narehan, *et al.,* 2014; Nekouei, *et al.,* 2014; Ojedokum, 2015; Nayak, 2015; Ali, 2015; Muindi, *et al.* 2015; Omugo, *et al.,* 2016;
Dependent	Sonnentag and Frees, 2001; Beh and Rose, 2007; Aketch *et al.* 2012; Dixit and Bhati, 2012; Nair, 2013; Rehan and Islam, 2013; Gayathri *et al*, 2013; Shekari*et al.,* 2014; Taghavi *et al.,* 2014; Rai, 2015; Tolentino, 2013; Hettiarachchi and Jayarathna, 2014; Muindi *et al.,* 2015; Hafiz A. Z. 2017.	*As cited by Reichers in 1985,* Kiesler Sakumura, 1966; Grusky, 1966; Brown, 1969; Lee, 1969; Scheldon, 1971; Hrebiniak and Allutto, 1972; Alutto *et al.,* 1973; Steers 1977; Bartol, 1979; Hall *et al.,* 1970; Buchanan, 1974; Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Morris and Sherman, 1981; Rusbult and Farrel, 1983; Fukami and Larson, 1984; Stump and Hartman, 1984. *Recent findings are:* Louis, 1998; Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri, 2008; Daud, 2010; Ahmadi, *et al.,* 2012; Parvar et al., 2013; Ojedokum, 2015; Ali, 2015; Omugo *et al.,* 2016;	None
Mediate/ Intervening	None	Varghese and Jayan, 2013; Kim 2014; Nayak and Sahoo, 2015.	None

Source: Based on Literature

According to the previous research findings, the main variable of job performance has been used only as dependent variable. It means that every researcher has labelled job performance as a dependent variable for their studies. Schmidt and Hunter (1992) mentioned that job performance is the most important 'Dependent Variable' in industrial work and organizational psychology. The construct of quality of work life works as an 'independent variable'. Findings show that no one has used job performance as a 'mediating variable'. The other construct, i. e. organizational commitment has been used for different purposes by different researchers. It means that many authors have used organizational commitment as an independent variable as well as a dependent variable. But, few of authors have used it as a mediating variable for their studies.

Hence, a research gap can be created for positioning the main variables towards future studies. It highlights lack of evidence for considering organizational commitment as a mediator in-between the main variables such as quality of work life and job performance. Further, studies are needed to investigate whether there is a mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between quality of work life and job performance.

Moderator Relationships among Job Performance, Organizational Commitment and Quality of Work Life:

Except the above types of relationships (independent, dependent and mediate), there may be some other kinds of moderating relationships among these selected variables. Generally, the moderating variable influences the strength of the relationship between two other variables. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) mentioned that the moderator variable shows a strong contingent effect that can modify the original relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Performance appraisal as a moderator in between organizational commitment and job performance: Common sense seems to say that committed employees corporate with their bosses and co-workers. They strive to complete the given assignments on time. A systematic 'performance evaluation process' may influence the organizational as well as individual performance. As evidence, Spector (1997) mentioned that correlation between quality of work life and job performance has been unexpectedly high and strong for professional jobs with little supervision, but low and weak for manual supervised jobs. Opatha (2003) conducted a study with the topic of employee performance evaluation system as an evaluative study of five selected public quoted manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka. Eight major aspects of job performance evaluation were considered and argued that the existing performance evaluation system influences the job performance and human productivity in Sri Lanka. Pandey and Khan (2016) carried out a study of quality of work life and its impact on performance appraisal system. Accordingly, one of them shows that the relationship between quality of work life, job performance and career growth aspects leads to the existing performance appraisal activities. In 2012, Zheng and others examined whether there is a relationship between performance appraisal process and organizational citizenship behavior among the employees who are working in five companies located in North-west Province in China. The main variables of the hypothesized model included performance appraisal process and organizational citizenship behavior. Findings shed a new light on the importance of performance appraisal process. Performance appraisal not only is associated with employee's in-role behavior but also extra-role behavior that is related to the social environment at work. Hence, they highlighted that organizations need to pay considerable attention on the existing performance appraisal process and regard it as an important practice to promote commitment of employee and their citizenship behavior. Ali and Opatha (2013) discussed about performance appraisal system and business performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka and showed a significant and

positive relationship between perceived systematic use of performance appraisal system and perceived degree of business performance of the apparel firms in Sri Lanka. Further representing the Sri Lankan context Bilal *et al.* (2014) conducted a study under the topic of impact of performance appraisal system on job performance with special reference to private sector universities in developing counties. Accordingly, they concluded that employee perception towards the existing performance appraisal practice causes evaluating and developing job performance as well as achieving more enhanced organizational success. Further, representing the Sri Lankan context, Weerakkody and Mahalekamge (2013) evaluated the relationship between performance appraisal satisfaction and employee outcomes in the banking sector. The results showed a weak positive relationship between performance appraisal satisfaction and job outcomes.

Hence, the employee perception towards the prevailing performance appraisal system may work as a moderating variable on the suggested nomological relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. It seems that there is lack of theoretical argument and empirical evidence with regard to contingent effect of employee perception of the prevailing performance appraisal system on the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. Hence it is worth to study this kind of relationship in different country context representing different sectors of organizations and different career settings related to a particular country.

Personality as a moderator in between quality of work life and organizational commitment: Many of the industrial psychologists have considered the usefulness of 'Personality' measures in predicting job related out comes such as organizational commitment, job performance, turnover etc. In 1993 Goldberg mentioned that "personality measures are valid predictors of divers job-related criteria". Hogan, Hogan and Roberts (1996) explained that unlike many measures of cognitive ability, personality measures typically do not have an adverse impact on dis-advantaged employees. Obviously, they mention that personality factors can enhance fairness in personal decisions. Further, explained by Howard and Howard (1995) as cited in Hussain *et al.* (2012) personality type is important to run and retain the organizational competitive advantage because personality tests help to recruit their incumbents, to maximize their utility and to obtain best of their candidates.

As evidence, Rose *et al. (*1998), Wright *et al.* (1995) as cited by Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) showed that personality dimensions are related to job performance. According to Luthans (2005), people in general and behavioral sciences defined "Personality" from different perspectives. Accordingly, most people tend to equate personality with social success (being good or popular, or having "a lot of personality") and to describe personality by a single dominant characteristic (strong, weak or polite). When it is realized further, thousands of words can be used to describe personality. Murray, Barrick and Mount (1991) as cited by Luthans (2005), personality measures are widely used in employee analysis and selection because these measures contribute to the learning and understanding of today's employees. Though many personality traits have been investigated over the years, the big five personality dimensions (Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to experience, and Emotional stability) have emerged as the most important because of their relationship with performance. Further, it states "Conscientiousness is the single strongest Big Five predictor of work performance" (Luthans, 2005). People with conscientiousness can be characterized as dependable, hardworking, responsible, persevering and achievement oriented.

Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) studied about the big-five personality dimensions and job performance of the employees in pharmaceutical companies and found that big five personality traits were related to task performance and creativity. Muindi (2015) conducted a

study with five variables including independent variable (quality of work life), mediating variable (job satisfaction), two moderating variables (competence and personality) and the dependent variable (job performance). Finally, the study found that there is a significant relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction and the personality has a moderating effect on quality of work life and job satisfaction. Jointly quality of work life, personality, job satisfaction and competence have a greater effect on job performance with competence being the most significant predictor of job performance.

The above findings have highlighted the necessity of the "Personality" as a new applicable variable in between the variables i. e. quality of work life and organizational commitment in a created relationship network. Hence, another research gap can be presented. There is a lack of sufficient evidence of big five personality as a moderator in between quality of work life and organizational commitment. The authors suggest to do future studies by considering big five personality as a moderator on the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment in a different country context representing different sectors of organizations and different career settings.

Based on the identified research gaps, a nomological network was developed for further empirical studies and the developed nomological network is presented in Figure 1.
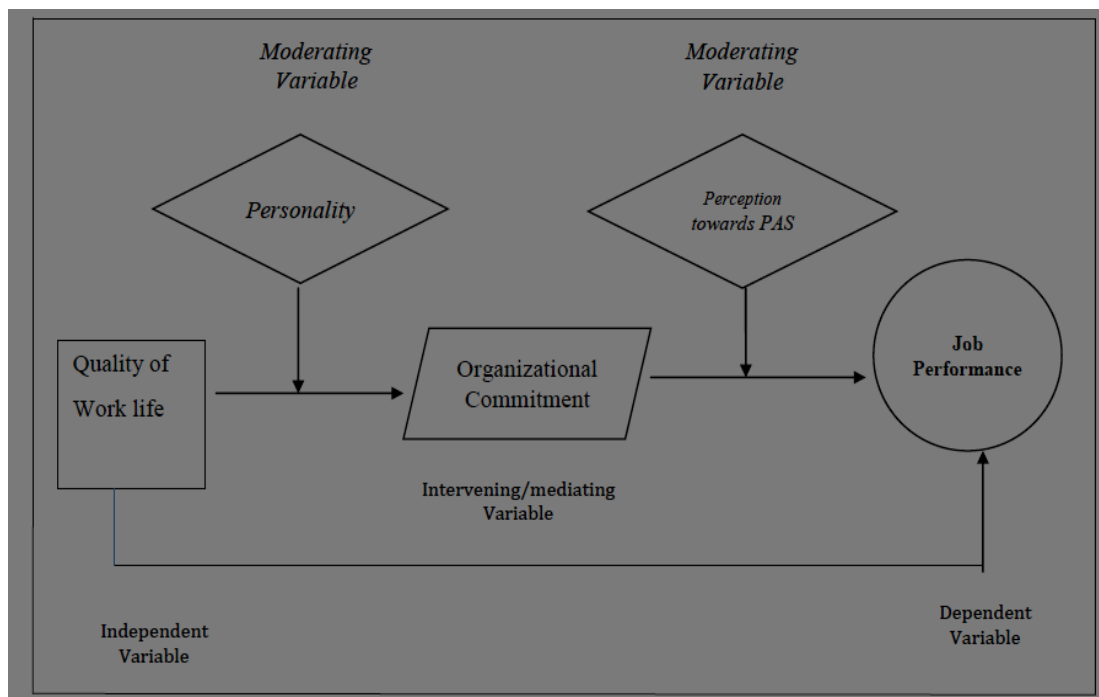
Fig1: Nomological Network of the Study

Figure 1 illustrates the three main variables i.e., quality of work life, organizational commitment and job performance as main variables of this framework. They are considered as the independent, mediating and dependent variables respectively. Personality and perception on performance appraisal system (PAS) work as the moderators of this model. General system theory provides a strong stand to the above framework. While human qualities and abilities are treated as inputs from the environment, employee behaviors are treated as throughput and employee satisfaction and performance are treated as outputs. Quality of work life may be one of the input resources. Quality of work life builds a proper balance between work and personal

life which also makes sure organizational productivity and job satisfaction. As a result, the quality of work life practices may create attitudinal changes in employees' mind. The attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment predict and may lead to organizational citizenship behavior. It means that committed employees are volunteering for extra job activities; helping coworkers and making positive comments about the company (Organ and Ryan 1995, as cited in Luthans, 2005). Employees who are having different personalities show different behaviors. Hence, the prevailing performance appraisal system may affect favorable or unfavorable results of employees.

Though many empirical findings were discussed above, this nomological network of the given relationships is argued to be original. Relationships among the variables i. e. quality of work life, personality, organizational commitment, performance appraisal system of the organization and job performance together have neither been theoretically argued nor empirically tested in Sri Lankan context or perhaps in the international context. No any finding could be found similar to the hypothesized model given in figure 1.

Therefore, it is intended to investigate whether personality, organizational commitment, and performance appraisal system of the organization influence the relationship between quality of work life and job performance as a whole.

The nomological network is proposed to test empirically in Sri Lankan context with special reference to the Railway sector. Though, there is not a similar study that has been done worldwide in relation to the variables in this nomological framework, few research findings could be found in respect of the railway employees in national and international context.

Empirical findings of the Railway sector: In the 2010 Ranjan and Prasad studied about 'Working-Conditions, Stress and their Outcomes: A Review Study among Loco-Pilots (Railway Drivers) in India' and found that drivers are facing extremely stressful and fatigue work environment and high probability of accidents. They have suggested ergonomics of the driver´s cabin, leisure time activities and psychological training etc. Hosmani and Bindurani (2014) studied the impact of quality of work life on job performance amongst employees of South Central Railways. Several aspects of quality of work life have been analyzed including working conditions, safety measures, welfare practices, career development opportunities etc. This study reveals that there is a high level of satisfaction among the employees regarding quality of work life as it enhances the employee quality of work life and also organizational performance. Mazloumi *et al.* (2014) have done an assessment of quality of work life among train drivers in Iran railways and concluded that working conditions and home-work interface were identified as appropriate measures for improving the quality of work life of train drivers. Verma (2015) suggested that there is a significant relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction among diesel locomotive employees in Varanasi.

Representing the Sri Lankan context Halpita *et al.* (2011) did an exploratory study on how technology makes changes in railway transportation in Sri Lanka. They found that "most of the work related to Sri Lanka Railway service is done manually and also highlights that the early established manual system is inappropriate for the current situation and it creates lots of problems for workers and passengers".

Being a state-owned enterprise, Sri Lanka Railways earns 7.5 billion LKR as the net income managing around 14,400 employment. "Station Master" means the officer appointed by the General Manager to be in overall charge of the station. Having burdensome duties and responsibilities with this special job category, only males are being employed as station masters in Sri Lankan context. All railway servants employed at the station or within its limits

are subject to station master's authority and directions in the working of the station. Hence, the scope of station masters' responsibility is vast. Basically, he must control and maintain day to day activities of a particular station and need to bear responsible for admission of trains. Not only that, but also he is the person to manage relations with the external customers who may be the passengers or cargo owners.

Mani *et al.* (2014) studied occupational stress on quality of work life among the railway station masters of Trichy division in Tamil Nadu. They concede that "many of researchers have searched for occupational stress of jobs such as pilots, nurses, accountants, teachers, university academics, managers and IT professionals. Few researchers have touched railways (Engine pilots) but no any study in relation to the job category of station masters. Further, they declared that the station master is in charge of reception and dispatch of trains, ensuring safety, running of trains, safety of cargoes, as well the lives of railway passengers. As they suggested the probable consequences that might by faced by station masters were burnout due to stress, accidents and illness, hyper tension, coronary heart diseases, and severe depression. As a result, poor quality of performance, lower job satisfaction, high turnover and increased work absence or lack of concentration on the job may occur. So, it is agreed that it is vital to enhance the quality of work life in order to reduce the negative effect of lower level of quality of work life. General understanding is that any employed person spends nearly one third of his or her live in the work place. This general understanding does not apply to the profession of station masters because they have to work and live with their profession. Kesavan *et al.* (2015) have conducted their research on the topic of *"150 Years of Sri Lankan Railways: Evaluation of the Services from Employee and Customer Perspectives"* to recognize the customer perspective on the current level of quality and to identify their own grievances as well as the employee perspective on the current administration and functionality of Sri Lankan Railways. They have made important suggestions through their findings and mentioned "when compared with many other developing countries in the region, though Ceylon railway has 150 years of long history, the current level of service and working facilities are not at a satisfactory level". Further, they mentioned that very few research works have been carried out in railway industry in recent past. As a result another research gap can be highlighted as below.

Due to unavailability of empirical knowledge in relation to the existing practices of quality of work life, personality, organizational commitment, performance appraisal and job performance in railway service sector in Sri Lanka, there is a need to uncover the level of quality of work life and its effect on job performance of station masters in Sri Lankan context.

4. Discussions
Five variables which were studied widely are incorporated in a nomological network given in Figure 1. Three stages were followed to develop Figure 1. At the beginning, three main variables i.e., job performance, quality of work life, and organizational commitment were widely discussed and measurement dimensions of them were studied through theoretical studies and past empirical studies and mentioned briefly in this paper. In view of the nature of conceptual confusion, necessity of further studies emerged as below:

(i) As researchers are facing difficulties to determine job performance dimensions for a specific profession, studies are needed to find suitable job performance taxonomies for the profession of Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.

(ii) As researchers are facing difficulties to determine the exact dimensions which should be used to measure the variable of quality of work life, studies are needed to confirm suitable measurement dimensions for Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.

The second stage paid attention to develop the main structure of the relationship network of Figure 1 and labelled the main variables with past evidences. Hence, the job performance, quality of work life and organizational commitment in the relationships network have been labelled as the dependent variable, independent variable and the mediating variable respectively.

Four empirical gaps were identified correspondingly and they are given below:
(i) Due to lack of adequate empirical evidence showing the relationship between quality of work life and job performance, it is needed to find empirical evidence of the relationship between quality of work life and job performance of Station Masters who are working in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.
(ii) Due to lack of adequate empirical evidence showing the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment, it is supposed to find empirical evidence of the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment of Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.
(iii)As researchers suggested further evidence to clarify the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance, there is a need to find empirical evidence of the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance of Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.
(iv)Due to lack of evidence for the usage of organizational commitment as a mediating variable in between quality of work life and job performance, it is needed to investigate the mediation effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between quality of work life and job performance related to Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka. The third stage of Figure 1 considered the moderator relationships that could be raised from logical arguments. One of the moderators was performance appraisal system and the other one was personality. Hence two research gaps were identified as below:
(v) Due to lack of empirical evidence of personality as a moderator on the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment, it is needed to find empirical evidence of contingency effect of personality on quality of work life- organizational commitment relationship in relation to Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.
(vi)Due to lack of empirical evidence of the prevailing performance appraisal system as a moderating effect on organizational commitment-job performance relationship. A need arises to find empirical evidence about the moderating role of perception of prevailing performance appraisal system in the setting of Station Masters who work in the Railway Department, Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, an empirical study is proposed to find out whether personality, organizational commitment, and performance appraisal system influence the relationship between quality of work life and job performance of Station Masters who work in the Railway, Sri Lanka.

5. Conclusion
Quality of work life, personality, organizational commitment, and performance appraisal system and job performance are critical phenomena in human resource management and organizational behavior disciplines. An attempt was made to explore important research gaps, and then subsequent further studies related to the above variables and to develop a nomological network showing the linkages among the variables under consideration. We believe that it was possible to give a justifiable account to achieve the four objectives established for this research paper. Our attempt in terms of a desk research reveals certain research gaps implying further studies to carry out to fill those gaps.

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