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## **Effect of Grievance Handling Mechanism on Extra-Work Performance of Shop Floor Employees**

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### **A B S T R A C T**

The study aimed at investigating the effect of the Grievance Handling Mechanism (GHM) on the Extra-Work Performance (EWP) of shop floor employees in the Sri Lankan biscuit manufacturing industry. The deductive reasoning deployed the quantitative approach to test the theoretical arguments. Key attributes of an effective grievance handling system, namely, top management commitment, perceived justice, informal procedure, simplicity, and prompt actions were tested for their capacity to influence the EWP of employees. Pre-tested instruments quantified the independent variables while the average extra production volume of an individual employee measured the EWP. A representative sample (n = 156) of shop floor employees of three leading Sri Lankan biscuit brands was surveyed using a self-administered questionnaire in which the responses are scaled on a five-point Likert scale. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings discovered that all predictors possess a statistically significant capacity to impact the EWP, among which perceived justice and top management commitment found the leading predictors of shop floor employees' EWP. Addressing the contextual gap and the confirmation of the existing findings of identical nature are believed to be the theoretical implications of the study. Additionally, it revealed that the weights of each aspect of the GHM over the EWP of operational-level employees. The practical implications highlight the necessity for maintaining an effective grievance managing mechanism to ensure sustainable business performance and to tailoring the GHM of shop floor workers because of the weights of different aspects of it to affect the EWP.

**Keywords:** biscuit manufacturing industry, extra-work performance, grievance handling mechanism, perceived justice, top management commitment

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## 1. Introduction

At present, maintaining industrial harmony and relationships in the workplace has made the management of employee grievances serious and vital to boost employee morale, enable organizational effectiveness, and improve organizational productivity. When a good grievance management procedure is in place, the organization is more likely to experience employee morale, commitment, an opportunity for reconciliation, and harmonious management (Schuler, 1990). It is vital to prevent the grievance from escalating to the point where it becomes a problem for all the organizational community (Stuhmcke, 2001; Sucharitha, 2019). A few grievances can be found on the surface of the environment while the majority of them lie beneath the surface. It is a fact that most of the organizations declared that human resources and/or human capital were the most valuable asset of the organization, and to gain the competitive advantage through human capital their grievances need to be addressed properly (Opatha & Ismail, 2001; Thomas, 2015; Kemp & Owen, 2017; Opatha, 2019; Sivanandam & Chaturvedi, 2020; Nyarko & Simons, 2021; Kong & Su, 2021). The grievances of the employees are mostly related to a contract of employment (Hunter & Kleiner, 2004). Capability and a positive mindset with the right attitude on the part of management are very critical to understand the problems of the employees and resolve them in an amicable way (Meyer, 1994). In the context of the biscuit manufacturing industry, there is ample room for innovative and creative work which would be paid off in competitive world business. Yet, based on the best knowledge of the researchers, the association between the GHM and the EWP of the employees is addressed seldom in the human resource management body of knowledge. Confirmation of this association would be significant in managing the number of workplace grievances, particularly in the biscuit industry to optimize the investment in human capital.

### 1.1. Research problem

With the emerging dynamic competition among the biscuit manufacturing organizations in Sri Lanka, the performance beyond their capacities is more important to be highly competitive. Employers invest huge sums of money for human resource budgets aiming to have a motivated, disciplined, and satisfied workforce. There, they undertake all measures to improve the overall HR function while developing employees' knowledge, skills, competencies, and workplace discipline. Moreover, to improve the satisfaction level and employee motivation, the employers are staging several measures along with huge training budgets. Yet, employers experience several unlooked outcomes such as work stoppages and the slowdown of work despite their immense effort in developing the workforce. For instance, critical gaps in overall human resource performance are noted in leading companies of the Sri Lankan biscuit industry (Amerasinghe, 2009). This is indicated by the increased grievances of two kinds; psychological counseling issues and general grievances (Table 1). Despite the nature of the grievance, an upward trend is noted in both types of grievances. It is noteworthy to mention the radical rise of these numbers in 2020, which might be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 1: The Average Number of Reported Grievances (Company A)**

Year	Monthly		Annually	
	Psychological Counseling Issues	General Grievances	Psychological Counseling Issues	General Grievances
2020	5	29	43	162
2019	3	10	31	138
2018	3	11	27	117

Source: Internal Records of Company A

Professionals are in the view that all if not most of these performance deficiencies could have been addressed by effective grievance management systems at the operational level itself. These circumstances made essential the understanding of and solving the employees' grievance effectively and efficiently. Theoretical inputs of the human resource management body of knowledge suggest that the EWP can be uplifted via an effective grievance management system (Loke, 2001; Sharkey & Davis, 2008; Armstrong, 2009; Al-Taweel, 2021). This theoretical argument was tested by many scholars in different contexts (tourism, health, banking, & apparel) and reported a positive influence of GHM on EWP. However, the effect of some GHM dimensions on the EWP reported mixed results (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Heffernan & Dundon, 2016; Kemp & Owen, 2017). Additionally, the said relationship was not tested in the biscuit manufacturing industry within the local context. Moreover, the association between study variables was not tested in the local context recently. The available empirical support for these relationships dates back to one to two decades which may not reflect the dynamic of the present working environments (Peterson & Lewins, 2000; Opatha, 2005; Gamage & Hewagama, 2007; Adikaram & Rupasiri, 2008; Dissanayake & Anjala, 2019). Given the importance of capitalizing on their human capital's core competencies to survive, gain and retain the competitive advantage over other competitors, smoothing the grievance handling process is considered of utmost critical. Thus, the present study is staged in the biscuit manufacturing industry with a closure focus on GHM and the EWP of the employees.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Grievance**

The grievance is defined as “any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace expressed in a formal way to his or her immediate supervisor” (Rose, 2004, p.11). Grievances are indications of dissatisfaction of an individual member with the way things are playing out in workplaces. Thus, employee grievances refer to any act of employee dissatisfaction close by his immediate supervisor regarding his work and workplace grievances (Opatha, 2019). It also refers to a matter raised by an employee who expresses dissatisfaction with the management behavior and attempts to bring out changes (Jayathilaka, 2017). It is in any discontent or dissatisfaction on the part of a worker resulting from an act of supervisors or top management. It imagined a real feeling of personnel injustice (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016). George (2000) defined grievance procedure as “a method through which employees make their voice known about management practices and decisions to have them properly reserved” (p. 1028).

Some of the causes of grievances include application and interpretation of poor supervisory abilities, absence of clear policies & procedures, poor channels of communication, personal problems, unfair hiring process, lack of training, and discrimination only to mention but few (Akuratiyagama & Opatha, 2004; Kong & Su, 2021). Gamage and Hewagama (2007), and Seliverstova and Pierog (2021) stated some causes of conflicts as discrimination, lack of equality difference in perception on certain issues, individual differences, limited resources, religious differences, and unfair processes, etc. Many observed that anticipated dispute images were due to lack of knowledge, inadequate communication, and poor human resources practices while real disputed images were in places where there is diversity and multi-disciplinary ways of handling similar issues. Suppressed workers' grievances are known to cause accidents at the workplace. Effects of grievances on different categories of organizational members are varied and relatively cut across all the levels such as supervisors, managers, and employees (Poole et al., 2001). Hence,

it is clear that all the internal parties are badly affected by the grievances irrespective of their scale and context.

Disagreements are always an inevitable part of the organizational context (Jayathilaka, 2017). However, management always plays with some processes and procedures which can be followed to ensure that any of such conflicts and grievances are resolved. All these processes are known as employee grievance procedures and are much in line with the principle of due process which guarantees the applications of procedural justice, and ethical decision making in the organization (Bon et al., 2017). Generally, there are levels of employee categories in any organization. They are operational level, junior management level, middle management level, senior management level, and top management level. It is believed that there always remains a feeling of competition and jealousy among people of different levels. This was found as a prominent source of grievances (Foster et al., 1972; Jayathilaka, 2017). There are several reasons identified so far for the arousal of grievances, namely, workload, incentives, salary hikes, fringe benefits, promotions, and career growth, etc (Opatha & Ismail, 2001; Peterson & Lewin, 2000; Nyarko & Simons, 2021; Ramlal & Mozumder, 2017). The dimensions of the grievance handling mechanism were used for establishing the hypotheses. Next, the theoretical linkages of these constructs are explained in the light of related theories.

## **2.2. Procedural justice theory**

Procedural justice theories concern studying individuals' subjective perceptions of the fairness of the procedures, whether they are based on unbiased human or non-human, and otherwise reconcile with people's perceptions of just processes for social interruption and adjudication (Tyler, 2021). According to Lind and Tyler (1988), and Tyler (2021), personal procedural justice decisions have been the cynosure of voluminous research interest by psychologists since they have had a positive effect on a broad variety of crucial cooperative attitudes and conduct. Procedural justice theory was initiated in courtrooms and not in the labor market and the link between sessions of Venison's grievance handling structure was addressed by Gordon and Fryxel (1993). They argued that how a union relates to its members is connected closely to procedure and distributive justice. The filing of a complaint is a formal indicator of the procedure of justice while distributive justice is greatly reflected in the impartiality of appointing rewards such as remuneration, job elevation, and promotional decisions (Thibault & Walker, 1975; Zarish et al., 2020). Hence, based on the theoretical support of procedural justice theory, perceived organizational justice is identified as one of the dimensions of GHM (Thibault & Walker, 1975; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Nikbin et al., 2010; Del Río-Lanza et al, 2009; Tyler, 2021).

## **2.3. Contingency theory**

Contingency theory specifically, analyses the link between the organizational framework and the working conditions using the method of empirical comparative analysis (Jayathilaka, 2017). The first evidence of the contingency theory was documented by Lawrence and Lorsch in 1967. Derr (1975) declared that this theory was one of the visionary instruments crucial in solving most of the organizational discordance. It identified three main approaches in conflict management from which the mediator draws in solving disagreements; collaboration, bargaining, and power dynamics. The appropriate application of these methods varies from one individual to another or an organization to another. Contingency theories that analyze organizational skeletons consider the organizational size, the management environment, and the organizational strategy. Early researchers emphasized that the probability factors and the organizational features should be aligned to meet the best condition (Thomson, 1974;

Thibault & Walker, 1975). Additionally, there exist other factors though prominence is given to these three factors based on the contingency perspective of organizations. Besides, the frameworks of contingency theories, there exist other theories that are specific to the organizational trait, for instance, administration, human capital, and strategic decisions (Donaldson, 2001). Tjosvold and Morishima (1999) utilizing the Dispute settlement theory ratified that individual are of the thought that there was a direct relation in that they will both succeed and handle their grievances compared with antagonistic goals. The study found that managers who used a competitive approach to grievance handling which involves opposing & uncompromising aspirations, which aimed at promoting political agendas; or a corporate style in managing grievances are not welcome by the vast majority of organizational members. The theoretical boundaries of contingency theory led researchers to identify, top management commitment (Zhu et al., 2013; Lee, 2016; Hu et al., 2021), simplicity (Sharma & Mehta, 2017; Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021), informal procedures (Peter & Iverson, 1999; Taru, 2016), and prompt actions (Opatha & Ismail, 2001; Ramlal & Mozumder, 2017 ) as the essential component of the GHM. The presented theoretical support is derived in setting the hypotheses along with the empirical support of the existing findings in this connection. The theoretical background of the dependent variable is presented next.

#### **2.4. Extra-work performance**

It is a fact that most of the scholars have identified the concept of work performance and employee behaviors leading towards effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Srivastava & Shree, 2019; Bani-Melhem, 2020). Similarly, scholars and researchers highlighted the importance of EWP in an organizational setup. Extra-role behavior refers to voluntary and discretionary behavior of employees which is targeted towards benefiting the organization (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang, 2009). Some scholars regard extra-work behavior as a form of voluntary behavior grounded on the willingness of the individual while others regard it as a compulsory behavior (Ganster & Schaubrock, 1991; Schmidhuber & Hilgers, 2019; Kemp & Owen, 2017; Salanova, Lorente, Chambel & Martínez, 2011). Most organizations do not view the concept of extra-role behavior as an ingredient of job appraisals or recognition (Wright, George, Farnsworth & McMahan, 1993). However, it has been evident that such behavior is needed to develop a healthy culture at the workplace (Srivastava & Shree, 2019).

Several scholars revealed that the description of extra-role behavior lacks proper limits, which makes extra-role behavior measurement a difficult task (Wright et al., 1993; Borman et al., 1995). This is mainly due to improper interpretation of the term by different employees and managers in the organization. The contextual differences are also affecting this condition. So, extra-work behavior benefited mostly the organization than the individual. Since the extra-work behavior is regarded as a form of voluntary behavior, non-performance of EWP does not cause any penalty or punishment to the employees. Furthermore, EWP benefits the organization in the long run (Ng et al., 2009). Extra-role behavior is perceived to be necessary for the overall success of the organization (Wright et al., 1993; Panaccio et al., 2015). It may be targeted towards an individual or a team. Most of the benefits associated with extra-role behavior are in favor of the organization. Therefore, it can be said that "extra-role behaviors are not simply those that happen to occur within an organization, but those that are directed towards or seen as benefitting the organization" (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000, p.650). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) proposed that organizations can win when individuals go beyond the formal tasks and contribute towards shaping the organization. Katz and Kahn (1966) stated that an organization in which cooperation among the team members

is limited to formal roles and duties tends to fail. Borman et al., (1995) stated that workers are considered to be efficient not when they were productive, but when the people around them were productive, helpful, and cooperative. Signifying the effect of extra-work behavior on performance, Organ (1988) specified that because extra-role behavior gives a valuable way to manage interdependencies among team members, it supports collective work outcomes like performance and productivity. It reduces the demand for high supervision and enables managers to give more time to planning, organizing, and controlling the fruitful tasks. The theory of extra-role behavior is also context-specific as the definition and scope of extra-role behavior changes with the change in context (George & Jones, 1997; Chiaburu, Marinova & Lim, 2007; Srivastava & Shree, 2019 ). Due to this reason, the influence of extra-role behavior on work outcomes differed in the literature. This concept depends upon the one who defines it, the person who is being evaluated, and at the time of evaluation. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) argued that the principal and teacher who work in the same school specify the scope of extra-role behavior in a common way (based on attraction-selection- attraction theory), while parents and students can widen or narrow the scope based on their requirements. Similarly, the scope of extra-role behavior will differ from industry to industry. The extra-role behavior of a teacher and a software engineer can never be the same (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). This particular characteristic of extra-role behavior tends to confuse the scholars.

Scholars are still debating to categorize the distinguishing characteristics of in-role behavior and extra-role behavior (Zhu et al., 2013). Context-specific nature is also a reason for the difference in the extent of the relationship between different variables and extra-role behavior. Initially, the extra-role behavior was evaluated in different services (Salanova et al., 2011) and manufacturing industries (Hui et al., 1999; Bani-Melhem, 2020). Later, the attention of organizational behavior scholars shifted to the schools and educational institutions. Beginning this regime, thirty-one years ago, Fullan (1985) pointed to extra-role behavior as a critical element for school effectiveness. Following this study, Ng et al. (2009) expressed extra-role behavior as an important element for school and student performance and emphasized on schools to learn the ways to cultivate extra-role behavior. Similar suggestions were made concerning the manufacturing organizations by Seliverstova and Pierog (2021) and Opatha (2005).

## **2.5. Employee grievance management and extra-work performance**

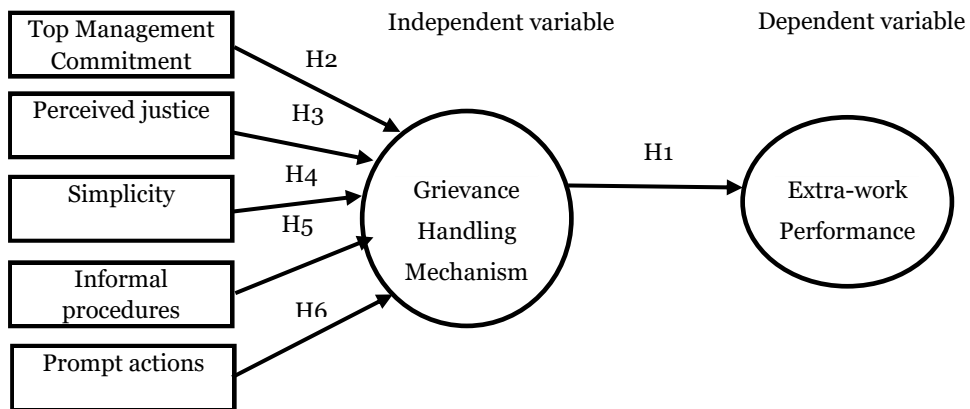
The people factor has been regarded as a paramount, important yet unique factor that helps as an ingredient for organizational productivity. The ability of the management to ensure that their grievances are handled in an unbiased, just, and fair manner is a plan for any management team. Melchades (2013) stated that employee performance is affected by a grievance of any nature and grievance management deals directly with workers and all that concerns them. So, it can influence workers' performance and productivity of the organization. Furthermore, concerning the above association in the Sri Lankan context, a few important research findings are noted. Opatha (2005), Peterson and Lewins (2000), and Gamage and Hewagama (2007) have tested the association between grievance handling and EWP in different industrial set-ups. Almost all the findings support a strong link between tested variables. Yet, none of them has focused on the biscuit manufacturing industry where lower performance and a high level of labor turnover are often reported. Additionally, only a handful of studies have specifically looked at the variance of EWP based on grievance management practices. Again, no recent study is conducted in the local context which would bring about a different result owing to dynamics taking place in the world of work. Hence, the

present study which aimed at testing the effect of GHM on the employees' EWP is regarded as a study of a greater significance.

Based on the prevailing literature support, the researchers aimed at testing the following hypotheses.

- H1:* GHM affects the EWP of shop floor employees.
- H2:* Top management commitment towards GHM affects the EWP of shop floor employees
- H3:* Perceived justice of the GHM affects the EWP of shop floor employees
- H4:* Simplicity of the GHM affects the EWP of shop floor employees
- H5:* Informal procedures of the GHM affect the EWP of shop floor employees
- H6:* Prompt actions of the GHM affect the EWP of shop floor employees

The hypothesized associations can be depicted graphically as follows (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Research Model**

Source: Developed by the authors (2021)

### 3. Methods

The reasoning approach of the study was deductive and followed a quantitative perspective. It is a cross-sectional study as it provides a snapshot of results at a given point in time. GHM and its dimensions (Top management commitment, perceived justice, simplicity, informal procedure, and prompt actions) were the independent variables while EWP was the dependent variable. A field survey of employees in three leading Sri Lankan biscuit manufacturing industries was staged with the aid of a self-administered questionnaire that collected the data. A pre-tested instrument for measuring GHM was used after assessing its measurement properties (Geetika et al., 2014). EWP was instrumentalized using the average number of extra units produced by the respondents beyond their daily target (where workers are paid based on hours of working rather than based on the piece rate). The questionnaire consisted of 28 items out of which 06 items assessed demographic factors, 20 items measured the perceived effectiveness of GHM. Five-points rating scale of which 5 – "Excellent", 4 – "Very good", 3 – "Good", 2 – "Average", and 1 – "Poor" ranked the responses. The study population was comprised of shop floor employees of three leading biscuit manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka. The approximate count of shop floor employees of each company was 1850 – Company A, 1200 – Company B, and 450 – Company C which

resulted in a population of 3500 shop floor employees. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommendation decided the sample size of 346. The list of shop floor employees of each company is used as the sampling frame to randomly draw the sampling items. The 51% response rate generated 177 responses out of which 21 were incomplete. Accordingly, the final analysis comprised 156 valid responses representing the shop floor level employees of three destination companies. Conclusions were drawn based on the results of multiple regression analysis where other univariate and bivariate data analysis techniques aided the data analysis process.

#### **4. Data analysis**

A relatively identical representation of both gender groups is noted in the sample. Similarly, a fairly equivalent portion of married and unmarried respondents was included in the sample. The majority of respondents are above 30 years old (63%) and have a service range of 1-5 years. However, the most presented educational qualification is Grade 5 to O /L (53%).

Data distribution appeared normal as far as the central tendency and measures of dispersion were concerned. GHM's attributes such as top management commitment, perceived justice, and simplicity were found to have higher averages (3.76, 3.861, and 2.66 respectively) with an acceptable level of variance (SD = 1.095, 0.495, 0.831 respectively). Effects of grievance on different categories of organizational members are varied and relatively cut across all the levels such as supervisors, managers, and employees.

Then the results of the correlation analysis show strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships among all the independent variables and dependent variables. The highest correlation is reported between Perceived Justice and EWP ( $r = 0.733$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) while the correlation between Top Management Commitment and EWP ( $r = 0.607$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was the lowest.

Significant and moderate to high positive relationships are noted for all combinations of the variables. Particularly, the GHM was found to have a very strong association with the EWP of employees at biscuit manufacturing industries in Sri Lanka (Vaus, 2002). Hypothesis testing of the study is supported by the results of the multiple regression analysis. Testing of multivariate assumptions showed that the data are normally distributed, free of autocorrelation (Durbin Watson value = 2.007  $\Omega$  2), free of heteroscedasticity, and are within the tolerable level of multicollinearity (VIF values  $< 3$ ). Hence, it is confirmed that the data set is suitable for analysis via a multiple regression model. The model summary results evidenced a 56.7% collective predictive power of independent variables at the 95% confidence level ( $p = 0.00 < 0.05$ ).

The individual capacity of each dimension of the GHM is assessed with the aid of coefficients of determination. Table 2 provided the evidence to prove that all the dimensions of the GHMs are good enough at predicting the EWP of employees at a statistical significance level of 5%.



**Table 2: Coefficients of Determination – Multiple Regression Analysis**

Model	Std. Coefficients		Unstd. Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	6.215	1.457		.000		
TMC	1.824	.368	1.550	.032	.750	1.334
PJ	2.168	.390	1.843	.009	.549	1.822
SIM	1.150	.363	.978	.033	.582	1.719
IP	0.549	.503	.467	.004	.550	1.018
PA	0.368	.416	.313	.004	.570	1.644

a. Dependent Variable: EWP

Source: Survey Data (2020)

Accordingly, the following regression model can be proposed to predict the EWP of employees on the study population; biscuit manufacturing organizations of Sri Lanka.

$$EWP = 6.215 + 1.824 \text{ TMC} + 2.168 \text{ PJ} + 1.150 \text{ SIM} + 0.549 \text{ IP} + 0.368 \text{ PA} + e$$

[Where; EWP = Extra-work Performance, TMC = Top Management Commitment, PJ = Perceived Justice, SIM = Simplicity, IP = Informal Procedure, PA = Prompt Action]

The results and discussion section addresses the hypotheses testing.

## 5. Results and discussion

All the hypotheses were supported as the significance values of all the coefficients of determinations are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, researchers concluded a significant predictive ability of all the dimensions of GHM to envisage the EWP of employees in the study setting. Among them, perceived justice was found to be the greatest influencer over the EWP ( $\beta = 2.168$ ) while prompt actions contribute least ( $\beta = 0.368$ ) towards the EWP. This is demonstrating the real motive of any employee to evidence equal and fair treatments rather than seeking quick resolution for their grievances.

The finding shows a clear line of connection between having a properly crafted grievance mechanism and the EWP of employees ( $r^2 = 0.567$ ). This finding is consistent with the previous findings of the discipline (Lee, 2016; Sumalatha & Sucharitha, 2019). The shop floor employees of the biscuit manufacturing organizations are not that educationally or professionally qualified. The majority (53.215%) of them possess educational qualifications below G.C.E. (O/L). They represent the blue-collar category of the industry and are hardly capable of self-managing any resolution for their grievances. Thus, having clearly defined, well-communicated systems to channel their grievances is very critical in getting to solve their grievances. Positively reinforced minds without any dark shadows of grievances would essentially lead to EWP of their operational group of the industry (Ng, et al., 2009; Srivastava & Shree, 2019). The top management commitment towards effective GHM was found to have a significant impact on the EWP of shop floor employees of the biscuit manufacturing industry ( $\beta = 1.824$ ). The top management commitment simply is the initiative and motivation by the top management towards an organizational practice (Wable, 2017). It is a generalized norm that any organizational process that is being backed by top management becomes successive due to acceptance and the perceived commitment of followers (Kemp et al., 2011). Similarly, if the top management shows a greater interest in enhancing grievance management system, employees, especially those who are in low grades such as shop floor

workers, tend to develop greater commitment towards the organization resulting in an attempt to do a better service or do something more to compensate for the flavor demonstrated by the management. This is found in line with the previous work too (Hu et al., 2021; Lee, 2016). Perceived justice is an employee's feelings about decisions, decision-makers, and managers in organizational settings. It is their perception of fairness that refers to any element of the environment perceived by individuals or collectives as fair according to previous norms or standards. The study discovered a positive and significant connection between the perceived justice of shop floor employees ( $\beta = 2.168$ ). This result is consistent with the previous work as well (Nikbin, et al., 2010; Del Río-Lanza et al., 2009). The majority of shop floor employees of the industry are relatively young (below 30 years) and less experienced (below 5 years). Thus, the ability to form their judgment about complex organizational networks might be far reached. Hence, the management must design a grievance management system with greater transparency. So that the employees will eventually perceive it as fair and balanced. Next, the study detected a positive association between the simplicity of grievance management mechanism and the EWP of the shop floor employees ( $\beta = 1.150$ ). Similarly, as it worked for top management commitment and perceived justice, lower grade employees always need to be provided with procedures and practices in a simplified version, compatible with their span of cognitive and intellectual ability. Identical results are noted in previous studies too (Sharma & Mehta, 2017; Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021). The informal procedures of GHM seem to affect the EWP of shop floor employees ( $\beta = 0.549$ ) positively. However, both positive (Peter & Iverson, 1999; Taru, 2016) and negative effects (Geetika et al., 2014; Meyer, 1994) of this relationship are reported. In the biscuit manufacturing industry of Sri Lanka, powerful unionization is not evidenced. Formal procedures are encouraged under such a set-up, whereas lower-level employees with less unionized power always seek easy and informal procedures for reporting their grievances (Meyer, 1994; Adikaram & Rupasiri, 2008; Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). Thus, the management must maintain a balance between formal and informal procedures of a grievance management system, specifically, when it applies to shop floor levels. When an employee suffers from grievance, he or she always expects prompt actions against the grievance from the employer to get relief for the mental distress that he or she is experiencing. Likewise, a positive link is there between the prompt action of GHM and the EWP (Usman & Mat, 2021; Gamage & Hewagama, 2007; Opatha & Ismail, 2001; Ramlal & Mozumder, 2017). The findings of the study too further established that relationship ( $\beta = 0.368$ ). The researchers' experience with the shop floor workers too evidenced a direct improvement of commitment and productivity as the prompt actions were taken by the employer for the reported grievances.

Overall, all the findings of the present study are in line with the previous findings of the existing empirical evidence (Melchades, 2013; Deery, Peter & Iverson, 1999; Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021; Opatha, 2005; Peterson & Lewins, 2000; Adikaram & Rupasiri, 2008; Usman & Mat, 2021; Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). Yet, none of the findings offers direct evidence of the same in the Sri Lankan biscuit manufacturing industry. More importantly, almost all the local previous findings are older than one to two decades where they may not reflect the dynamics of the contemporary working environment and associated employee behaviors. In this accord, the findings of the present study are considered valid and credible as compared to existing claims towards the said associations.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study aimed at identifying the association between GHM and EWP of shop floor employees of the biscuit manufacturing industry of Sri Lanka. The results show that all the

five independent variables; top management commitment, prompt action, perceived justice, simplicity, and informal procedures are having significant associations with the EWP of the shop floor employees. Accordingly, it is concluded that all the independent variables can be taken as a good set of contributing factors for forecasting the dependent variable. The implications of the findings showed us that there is ample room for improving the GHM to affect the EWP of employees of the biscuit manufacturing industry, where innovative work performance of employees is highly pertinent to enhance organizational competitiveness. In other words, making available a proper mechanism to express the concerns of employees and to obtain emotional support for their grievances acts as a catalyst to a better emotional balance so that the employees are motivated to think and act in different ways. The results indicate that the grievance mechanism should essentially be simple and transparent where employees perceive it as just and fair. The next very important point traced by the findings is the importance of the top management commitment towards maintaining an effective GHM. The policies, procedures, rules, and regulations must be framed for the benefit of the organization while due respect is given to the people factor. The practice revealed that most of the grievances were created due to passing over without giving due attention to the issue or the problem promptly. Furthermore, it was noted that the lack of awareness has become one of the major laps on the part of the management. Most of the employees don't know the path of the GHM and to whom they should forward their grievances. The top management is accountable for maintaining an effective GHM. Further, continuous awareness must be implemented to educate the employees about the grievance handling systems with easy-to-understand learning materials such as graphical illustrations, i.e., floor charts. Next, informal procedures, simplicity, and prompt actions can be optimized to uplift the GHM. Grievances need to be addressed then and there with proper solutions and which can be justifiable. Employees expect justifiable solutions every time with equal treatment across the crowd.

Theoretical implications of the study are believed to be the addressing of the context gap of the biscuit manufacturing industry in which the association between GHM was not tested for its association with EWP. Then, it delivered empirical evidence of the same relationship relating to a contemporary working setup. In addition, it has accounted for the factual evidence of employees' EWP (i.e., the average number of extra units produced) while quantifying the predictor variable, whereas the previous studies had only accounted for the perceived level of EWP by employees. The practical implications highlight the necessity for maintaining an effective GHM to ensure sustainable business performance and to tailoring the GHM of shop floor workers because of the weights of different aspects of it to affect the EWP. The limitation associated with sample size is expected to be a clue for the next relay of researchers. Future studies are also encouraged to utilize different methodological approaches, particularly the qualitative design to view the matter from a wider angle. Further, complex research models that incorporate possible moderators and mediators are proposed along with advanced statistical analyses.

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