



THE IMPACT OF TRAINING ON JOB SATISFACTION OF NON-EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES OF THE EXPORT APPAREL INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Employee satisfaction is extremely important for an organization to reach its objectives. Job satisfaction can be identified as the degree of enjoyment employees feel towards their job where they will help the organisation to have a creative and innovative workforce who may come up with new ideas that allow a company to grow and change positively with time and changing market conditions. Accordingly, this study was aimed to examine whether there is an impact of Training on the Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire from a stratified random sample of 316 Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka including Operational Workers, Supervisors, and Non-Executive Office Staff. Training was assessed using a self-developed questionnaire and the Job Satisfaction was assessed using a questionnaire adapted from Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The simple regression analysis was used to test the impact of Training on the Job Satisfaction. The results indicated that there is a significant impact of systematic use of Training on Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry. Thus, the organizations can use training not only to enhance the competencies of the employees but also to enhance the job satisfaction of employees, which leads to higher performance and retention of employees.

Keywords: Export Apparel Industry; Job Satisfaction; Non-Executive Employees; Training; Non-Executive Employees

1. Introduction

The Apparel Industry is one of the most important industries in Sri Lanka in terms of employment, export earnings ratio and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of the country (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2009, p. 99). Export oriented textile, wearing apparel and leather products industry category recorded a marginal growth in 2009. Sri Lanka's apparel industry was affected by the withdrawal of GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) Plus facility by the European Union. However, the situation is slowly recovering because of the internal crisis in other major apparel producing countries such as Egypt which has duty free access to the United States of America and worker issues in Bangladesh. But the decline in international demand is still adversely affecting the small and medium scale export garment manufacturers. Meanwhile, only the major players in the apparel industry were able to remain competitive in the export

markets during 2009 by maintaining the reputation for high quality products, producing world trade brands, and meeting deadlines in supplying goods (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2009, p. 43). Under this set up, the Sri Lankan export apparel sector should work in full capacity to gain competitive advantage. Therefore, at present many of the organizations of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka have identified and launched various training and development programmes for their employees in order to gain a leading position in the export market by being competitive with their quality products having unique characteristics in procuring, manufacturing, delivering, and selling products. Organizations provide training to their employees in order to enhance the competencies of employees. In general, training is specifically designed to accomplish an explicit goal and that is the enhancement of employee performance through improving employee competencies. Organizations can easily identify the impact of training on that explicit goal through employee performance. But it is difficult to identify the impact of training on implicit organizational goals such as job satisfaction. Enhancement of employee's cognitive and physical abilities through training assumes to be established a higher job satisfaction among the employees.

2. Background of the Study

Training is a process that attempts to provide an employee with information, skills, and an understanding of the organization and its goals. Further, training and development is designed to help a person to continually make positive contributions in the form of good performance. With this dynamic environment organizations specially need to provide training for their employees related to various aspects such as work related skills, adaptability, critical thinking, problem solving, professionalism, positive thinking, leadership, work ethics, teamwork, customer relationship management, etc. Training should be provided in a more systematic or methodical way to gain the maximum benefits of the training investment.

Today, the organizations in the export apparel industry have to focus much on gaining the competitive advantage through providing unique and quality garments with on time delivery. Thus, they organize and implement various training programmes by spending lot of money on their training function. According to the discussions had with few Human Resource Executives in export apparel industry, these organizations spend average of Rs. 4 million per year as their total annual training cost. Out of the total training cost, around 60% has been allocated to train their Non-Executive employees. These organizations offer various training programmes specially for their non-executive employees such as training related to sewing, cutting, designing, ironing, work study, supervising, quality checking, health and safety, office handling, etc.

Organizational performance highly depends on its employee performance and employee performance is usually resulting from the personal characteristics such as attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Therefore, most of the organizations provide training for their employees and try to enhance their competencies. Enhancement of employees' competencies creates a reciprocal relationship between employer and employee and consequently creates positive attitudes within the employees towards their job and the organization. It develops a greater sense of self-worth dignity, well-being which leads to enhance job satisfaction of the employees as they become more valuable assets to the firm, society and to the nation. Provision of training to employees in a more systematic way not only facilitates to enhance skills, knowledge, and attitudes of their employees but also enhancement of these competencies through training may facilitate improvement of positive attitudes such as job satisfaction. Further, the enhancement of competencies provides more opportunities to employees for advancement, recognition, quality of work, achievements, enrich current job, etc. It helps to improve positive attitudes towards their job as it facilitates to attain the employees' individual life goals. The study done by Sahinidis and Bouris, (2007, p. 72) on employee perceived training

effectiveness relationship to employee attitudes, examined the responses of 134 employees and lower managers of five large Greek organizations, and found that there is a significant correlation between the employee perceived training effectiveness and their commitment, job satisfaction and motivation. Further, Georgellis and Lange (2007, p. 983) have empirically found that participating in training enhanced employees' job satisfaction through a study based on the data from the German Socio-economic Panel. Supporting to this notion, another empirical study done by Osca, Urien, Gonzalez-Camino, Martinez-Perez and Martmez-Perez (2005, p. 310) has found that participation in training was positively related to job satisfaction. Also, Schmidt (2007, p. 492) has done a study on the relationship between satisfaction with job training and overall job satisfaction and has examined three factors that may affect satisfaction with job training: methodology, type of training and amount of time spent in training. The study found a high correlation between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction among employees in customer contact positions and he concluded that opportunities for training are paramount in decisions regarding employee career choices.

In the view of Sun and Shi (2005, p. 354), training builds competency and confidence because participants know what level of performance is expected, how knowledge and skills will be evaluated, that progression through training is self-paced, and that there are opportunities for practice until mastery is achieved. Thus, organization can change or develop its employees' competencies and their attitudes through systematically organizing training programmes. Training programmes should be systematically planned, implemented, and evaluated in order to enhance the necessary competencies of the employees which result in creating a psychological link between employee and employer, to gain the maximum benefit of the training function within the organization.

3. Problem Statement of the study

Today, many of the Sri Lankan organizations that are engaged in the export apparel industry spend a lot of money, time, and effort on employee training. These organizations expect to enhance the competencies of their employees in order to gain competitive advantage through their unique human resources. They offer training to their employees as a mechanism for developing and training a productive workforce, in that it gives workers new opportunities to develop skills and competencies, fulfil career development goals, achieve professional success and strengthen their emotional attachment to the firm and to their job. They have to incur a considerable high cost and effort when they trying to adopt more systematic training practices.

According to the discussions had with Human Resources Executives in these companies, it was noticed that they still have a poor idea of how and to what extent the systematic training activities are appreciated by workers and how it creates job satisfaction among the employees. Tangible outcomes of training can be easily measured through employee performance and organizational performance. But it is important to study the influence of systematic use of training on intangible outcomes such as job satisfaction.

It is difficult to find the researches directly on outcomes of "systematic training" in Sri Lankan context and the studies on this area specifically with related to "the export apparel industry." Most of the previous researches have addressed the outcomes of effective training, the different training methods, etc. Therefore, it is very important to identify whether there is a significant impact of systematic use of training on job satisfaction of non-executive employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka. Based on the above facts, researcher attempted to address the following research question.

Is there a significant impact of Training on the Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka?

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Training

According to Barcus (2008, p. 1), many organizations attempt to gain a sustainable competitive advantage through direct investment in training and suggesting that as an element of the infrastructure to ensure this competitive edge. Along with changing values, workplace trends such as recurrent job movement, internationalization, the loss of job security and corporate reorganization; organizational success is based on intellectual capital. Sterrett (2001, p. 5) has suggested that the organizations require appropriate employee training programmes to enhance knowledge and skills of the employees in order to exist this dynamic environment.

Gorden (1992, p. 235 as cited in Laing, 2009, p. 11) has defined training as planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, activities and programmes which results in the participants achieving the levels of knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities to carry out their work effectively. Many authors have identified training as a systematic process which should be carried out with series of steps. Armstrong (2003, p. 549) has described training as the use of systematic and planned instructions and development activities to enhance learning. Supporting to this notion, Glueck (1978, p. 336 as cited in Kalyani & Alwis, 2005, p. 83) and Patrick (2000 as cited in Schmidt, 2008, p. 483) have identified training as a systematic process of changing the behaviour and abilities of employees in a way that enhance organizational goal attainment, and learning is the act by which the individual acquire skills, knowledge and ability which consequences in a relatively permanent change in his behaviour.

According to Werther and Davis (1996, p. 285), training helps to improve more positive attitudes towards profit orientation, improve job knowledge and skills at all levels of the organization, improve moral of the workforce, aware employees about the organizational goals, create a better corporate image and improve the relationship between boss and subordinate. Further, he has mentioned that it helps to improve leadership knowledge, communication and attitudes, increase job satisfaction etc. among individual employees. In 2002, Brown has found that training and development are necessary components for retention and recruitment (as cited in Bennett, 2005, p. 22). Today, employees in the workplace are regularly changing the organizations or employers, jobs and career, based on their job satisfaction gained through the received benefits such as training.

4.2 Systematic Training

Opatha (2009, p. 473) has mentioned that more methodical and consistent training can be identified as systematic training. Further, Armstrong (2003, p. 551) has explained that when the training based on a logical sequence of activities and is specifically planned, designed and implemented to meet the define needs, it turn out to be a systematic training. Since, training is important to the enterprise and costly to run, it is essential to manage the training function more effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the training function should be methodically carried out with well planed logical sequence of activities.

According to Opatha (2009), training process can be divided in to seven steps and these seven steps can be categorized in to main three stages as planning stage, implementation stage and evaluation stage. Therefore,

training should be carried out under these three stages in order to provide a more systematic training for the employees in any organization.

4.3 Job Satisfaction

According to Weiss et al. (2002, p. 174), job satisfaction generally considers as an affective or emotional reaction to one's job, or as an attitude one holds about their job. Further, as cited in Bennett (2005, p. 21), Ulrich and Lake (1991) has defined the job satisfaction as a positive emotional state consequence from a person's experience associated with his or her job. In these definitions, job satisfaction has identified as employees' positive attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job.

As described by Bennett (2005, pp. 21-22), many workplace behaviours are related to job satisfaction such as voluntary turnover (Trevor, 2001), pay satisfaction (Terpstra & Honoree, 2004), organizational commitment (Lopopolo, 2002), employee turnover (Kim et al., 1996), absenteeism (Scott & Taylor, 1985), work performance (Petty, McGee, & Cavendar, 1984), job relocation (Geyer & Daly, 1998), intention to leave (Hellman, 1997) and retention (Campbell, Fowles, & Weber, 2004). Further, the job satisfaction has identified as an important factor in attracting, retaining talented employees within the organization based on the findings of Campbell et al. (2004 as cited in Bennett, 2005, p. 22).

5. Objectives of the Study

According to the above research question, the objectives of the study are as follows.

General Objective

The general objective of the study is to determine the impact of Systematic Training on the Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka.

Specific Objectives

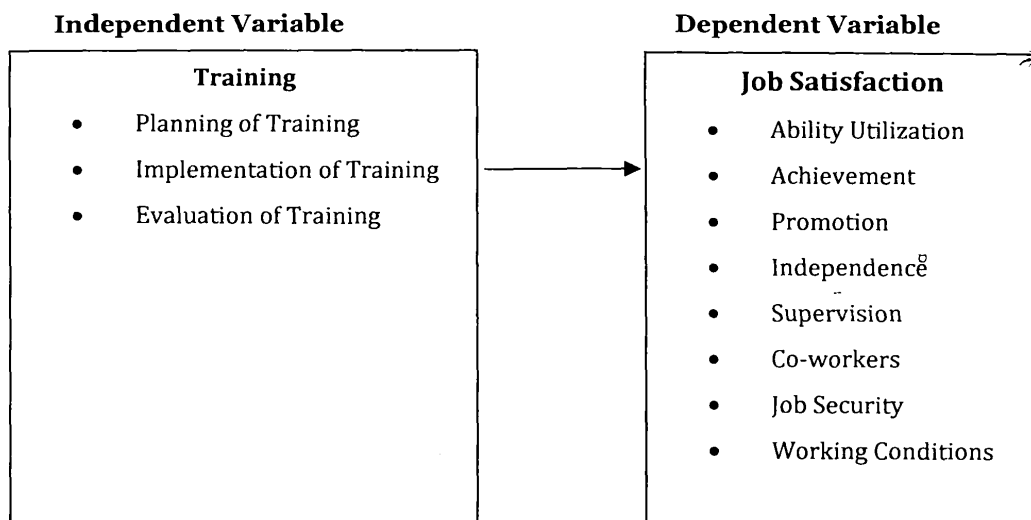
Further, it attempts to identify the level of Training within these organizations and the level of Job Satisfaction among the Non-Executive Employees in Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka.

6. Conceptual Framework

In this study, researcher focused on identifying the impact of training on job satisfaction. Thus, the conceptual framework of the study was developed by combining the factors related to the independent variable and dependent variable based on the theoretical background. The relationship between Training and Job Satisfaction can be hypothesized based on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964, p. 4) and Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995, p. 35). Thus, the independent variable was training and dependant variable was job satisfaction.

Accordingly, training is defined as the degree of systematic use of training process including planning of training, implementation of training and evaluation of training that change the employee behaviour and motivation in a way that will enhance employee performance and then organizational overall performance. Job satisfaction is defined as the degree of enjoyment an employee feels towards his or her job (Opatha, 2009, p. 911).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



7. Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses were formulated with reference the objectives of the study as follows.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a higher level of Training for Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a higher level of Job Satisfaction among the Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is a significant positive impact of Training on Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka.

8. Methodology

8.1 Study Design

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of training on job satisfaction of non-executive employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka. Thus, the type of investigation of this study is correlational (Sekaran, 2006, p. 126) and the study setting was non-contrived as it was conducted in the natural working environment of selected export apparel companies. Further, the study was a field study with minimum researcher's interference. The study was cross-sectional in time horizon (Sekaran, 2006, p. 135).

In this research, primary data were collected mainly through self-administered questionnaire and it was used to get a better understanding of the opinions of the non-executives in the export apparel companies related to perceived use of systematic training and the job satisfaction. Data were collected from a stratified random sample of 316 non-executive employees in 14 export apparel companies including operational workers, supervisors, and non-executive office staff. A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Univariate and Bivariate analysis were employed to analyze the gathered data.

8.2 Measures

Training is measured under three dimensions: planning of training, implementation of training and evaluation of training based on the systematic training process introduced by Opatha (2009) using a self-developed questionnaire containing 25 questions. Job satisfaction is measured in terms of eight dimensions:

ability utilization, achievement, independence, promotion, supervision, co-workers, job security, working conditions using the questionnaire containing 08 questions adapted from Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire.

9. Analysis of Validity and Reliability of the Measures

The content validity of the instrument was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables based on the available literature, and indirectly by the high internal reliability of the instrument as denoted by Cronbach's Alphas. The questionnaire provides an adequate coverage by embodying an adequate number of items that represent variables of interest of ensuring the content validity of the instrument. To assess the construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted based on the pilot study. Factor loading values for training and job satisfaction were 0.794 to 0.899 respectively. As they were higher than 0.30, the minimum level of acceptance (Thurstone, 1947), the results ensured the construct validity of the instrument. Test-retest method was employed to examine the external reliability of the instrument. Thirty seven non-executive employees in the export apparel industry in Sri Lanka were involved in this test and test-retest coefficient was .786 and .842 for training and job satisfaction respectively confirming that the instruments related to the each variable had a high external reliability.

The inter-item consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach's alpha test (Sekaran, p. 205). Cronbach's Alpha for training and job satisfaction were .891 and .832 and it suggests that the internal reliability of each instrument was satisfactory.

10. Results

10.1 Testing Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a higher level of Training for Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

Table 1 illustrates the frequency distribution of training. According to table 1, most of the respondents have positively responded to the instrument. Respondents representing 40.5% of the sample have agreed and 47.8% of respondents of the sample have strongly agreed to the question statements in the questionnaire with related to training. Further, the mean value of training was 4.36 (Mean > 3 = "Low", Mean = 3 = "Moderate", Mean > 3 = "High") which indicate that the perceived degree of training is "high" among most of the respondents. Accordingly, it can be identified that the perceived degree of systematic use of training is at a higher level among most of the non-executive employees in the sample. Hence, the first hypothesis of the study was accepted.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Sample related to Training

Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
3	37	11.7%	11.7%
4	128	40.5%	52.2%
5	151	47.8%	100.0%
Total	316	100%	

10.2 Testing Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a higher level of Job Satisfaction among the Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

Table 2 illustrates the frequency distribution of job satisfaction. According to the table 2, most of the respondents have positively responded to the instrument. Respondents representing 46.8% of the sample

have agreed and 40.8% of respondents of the sample have strongly agreed to the question statements in the questionnaire with related to job satisfaction. Further, the mean value of training was 4.28 (Mean > 3 = "Low", Mean = 3 = "Moderate", Mean > 3 = "High") which indicates that the job satisfaction is "high" among most of the respondents. Accordingly, it can be identified that the job satisfaction is at a higher level among most of the non-executive employees in the sample. Hence, the second hypothesis of the study was accepted.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of the Sample Related to Job Satisfaction

Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
3	39	12.3%	12.34%
4	148	46.8%	59.18%
5	129	40.8%	100.00%
Total	316	100%	

10.3 Testing Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is a significant positive impact of Training on Job Satisfaction of Non-Executive Employees of the Export Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

Pearson's Product Movement Correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between two variables. Pearson's correlation of coefficient between training and job satisfaction is 0.853 and it is significant at 1%. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between training and job satisfaction of the respondents in the sample. Thus, the stated relationship among these two variables is strong.

Simple regression analysis was conducted to identify the impact of training on job satisfaction and the results of the simple regression analysis are shown in Table 3. According to the statistics depict in Table 3, the b value, the gradient of the regression is .853 and it is significant at 1% ($p = 0.000$). According to Adjusted R^2 , training (independent variable) has explained 72.6 % of the variance of job satisfaction. The F value is 836.955, which is significant ($p = 0.000$) at 1%, statistically supports that training has significantly explained 72.6 % of the variance of job satisfaction. Hence, the third hypothesis of the study was accepted.

Table 3: Results of Simple Regression Analysis between Training and Job Satisfaction

Method	β	t	t Sig.	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	F Sig.
Job Satisfaction	0.853	28.93**	0.000	0.727	0.726	836.955**	0.000

** Significant at the 0.01 level

Independent Variable: Training

11. Conclusion and Discussion

Today, many of the export apparel organizations in Sri Lanka have given a higher consideration on providing more systematic training to their employees, as a mechanism for maintain a productive workforce in their organizations. The results of the study indicates that many of the organizations in export apparel sector in Sri Lanka have given much consideration on their training function in order to provide more systematic training for their employees. Further, based on the results, majority of the employees in the export apparel industry have a higher satisfaction with related to different facets of their job such as

achievement, ability utilization, independence, supervision, promotion, job security, working conditions, co-workers interaction etc.

Further, the statistical results showed a significant impact of systematic use of training on job satisfaction and these results consistent with the findings of Schmidt (2007, p. 492). He has found a significant strong positive relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction of a sample of customer contact representatives. Further, he has concluded that the time spent in training, training methodology, and contents were found to be significantly related to job training satisfaction (2007, p. 494). Similarly, these results consistent with the findings of Saks (1995 as cited in Rowold, 2008, p. 35) and he has found that participating in training enhanced employees' job satisfaction. This results also agree with the City and Guilds Happiness Index (2007, p. 2) which has shown a clear link between workplace happiness and professional development demonstrating that some of the happiest workers are those who feel they have lot of opportunities for professional development. Specially, the findings of the study agree with the concept discussed in the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964, p. 4) and Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995, p. 35). One of the reasons is that the global economy has emerged the requirement of ongoing learning during an employee's career. It arises a need for employees to continually learn and grow on the job as a requisite for the continuation of employability and for their career development. Therefore, when the organizations provide training to employees, they might feel that the organization cares of their growth; and consequently it creates job satisfaction among these employees.

12. Recommendations

The results of this study point to the fact that, importance of systematic use of training or actual quality of the training programmes offered to employees. Training perceived by the employees to be more systematic, will likely have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction. Managers ought to be careful as to what constitutes "adequacy" of training and what the characteristics of systematic training are, particularly in the view of the trainee. Organizations can implement training programmes as a valuable investment of time, money, and effort not only to enhance the competencies of the employees but also to enhance the job satisfaction of employees which leads to high performance and retention of employees. Therefore, the systematic planning of training, systematic implementation of training and systematic evaluation of training is very important in launch any kind of a training programme within the organization and it may help in creating a psychological link between employer and employee. Organizations interested in improving job satisfaction through job training may want to focus on individual aspects of job training such as selecting employees for training, time spent in training, methodology, contents, evaluation of training, etc. As indicated by the results of this study, organizations can considerably address job satisfaction by provision of systematic training to their employees.

13. Direction for Further Studies

The researcher attempted to identify only the impact training on job satisfaction through this study. Further researches can be carried out to explore the impact of systematic use of training on other work related attitudes such as job involvement and organizational commitment. Also, further studies can be carried out to investigate the moderating effect of other characteristics of the trainee such as ability and personality and the characteristics of work environment such as support, opportunity to use the knowledge and culture on the relationship between training and the employee job satisfaction.

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