

Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment on the Relationship between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance: Evidence from Station Masters in Sri Lanka Railways

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Abstract

Quality of Work Life in an organization is a critical factor for deciding organizational effectiveness and reducing the negative behavior of workers. This concept is considered as a deciding factor of employee related outcomes. A systematic study based on the hypothetical deductive method was carried out to glean empirical evidence from the Sri Lanka Railways context, with regard to Organizational Commitment and its mediating effect on the Quality of Work Life –Job Performance relationship. This study was correlational and cross-sectional in the time horizon and the unit of analysis was the individual. A stratified random sample of 280 Station Masters was selected from the Railways Department in Sri Lanka. A pre-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire (utilizing a 5-point Likert scale) was used to collect primary data. The SPSS version 23.0 was applied, and correlation and regression analyses were conducted. Quality of Work life was positively and significantly related to Job Performance and Organizational Commitment. Further, Organizational Commitment was positively and significantly related to Job Performance. The construct of Organizational Commitment partially mediated the relationship between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance. The results were consistent with the four formulated hypotheses, establishing that Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance of Station Masters who work in the Railways Department in Sri Lanka. Hence, this study provides evidence to confirm the relationship between quality of work life and job performance of the Station Masters working at the Railway in Sri Lankan context. Further this relationship can be enhanced through the mediating effect of organizational commitment Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings and directions for further research are discussed at the end of the paper.

Keywords: Job Performance, Quality of Work Life, Organizational Commitment, Railways, Station Masters, Sri Lanka

Introduction

‘Job Performance’ (JP) is a multifaceted construct for determining an organizational outcome and its success. It is a central construct in industrial and organizational psychology (Campbell,

1990; Austin & Villanove, 1992; Schmidt & Hunter, 1992; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995, Koopmans et al., 2011; Ramawickrama et al., 2017b). It is simply defined as the quantity and quality of the output of each employee who works in an organization. Organizations expect to sustain a better outcome from their workforce throughout their period of employment. Organizational Commitment (OC) is an important factor needed to determine the overall performance of an organization (Abdul-Nasiru et al., 2014). No organization can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organizational objectives (Dixit & Bhati, 2012). Therefore, employee wellbeing is an essential element that needs to be improved in modern organizations. Schuler and Youngblood (1986) mentioned that 'Quality of Work Life' (QWL) involves both job design and work environment. Recently, many researchers have paid attention to the construct of QWL and JP, and they have found a positive relationship between both concepts representing various sectors in different countries (Beh & Rose, 2007; Gayathiri & Ramakrishnan, 2013; Shekari et al., 2014; Muindiet et al., 2015; Mohammadi, 2016). Sri Lanka Railways (SLR) is a government department which functions under the Ministry of Transport. It is a major transportation service provider, and is the only rail transport organization in the country. The rail transportation system was introduced to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1864 during the British Colonial Era. Having the mission of "Providing a safe, reliable and punctual rail transport service for both passengers and freight traffic, economically and efficiently", this organization provides, even now, a huge service to the country. According to the Performance Report of SLR (2017), its number of current employees is 15,413. Hence, employees who are in the organization have become the backbone of this organization and the level of their performance is highly important to the organization. Station Master is one of the employment categories among the employees of the Railways department. The "Station Master" (SM) is an officer appointed by the General Manager Railways to be in over-all charge of the station. Since the work is physically very demanding and stressful in this special job category, only males are employed as Station Masters (SMs) in SLR. Accordingly, the main aim of this study is to investigate whether there is a mediating impact of OC on the relationship between QWL and JP.

Problem Context and Importance of the Study

There are only a limited number of empirical findings related to Railways in SL. The studies of Kesavan et al. (2015) and Halpita et al. (2011) have revealed many of obstacles faced by SMs and suggestions for overcoming them. As they mention, though the Railways is 150 years old, the current level of service and working facilities are not at a satisfactory level. The writer

and novelist, Ellis (1994, p.3), as a regular user of railway transport in Sri Lanka, has penned his feelings as follows. “*I am grateful to the railway men, particularly the Guards, Drivers and Station Masters who are proud of the Railways and have always been helpful with information and advice.*” The above statement provides evidence that the three parties i.e. Guards, Drivers and Station Masters are more responsible related to the operating and service providing activities of the railway. Among them SM is the most responsible person for handling all the tasks related to operations and administration of a particular station. Though there are many other important professions in the railway, they are performing their tasks behind the scenes. But the profession of SM is too close and popular among the passenger and other related parties. Within his limits, he works as a manager. Due to a lack of adequate empirical evidence showing the relationship between QWL and JP, it is necessary to find empirical evidence from SMs who work in the Railway Department, SL.

Many researchers have defined JP differently in different decades and they have used various dimensions for measuring JP in a wide range of professions in different disciplines around the world (Ramawickrama et al., 2017b). Further, they have highlighted the necessity of obtaining empirical findings for measuring JP. As a result, the current researchers faced difficulties in applying clear-cut measurement dimensions for measuring JP. Hence, this study seeks to establish appropriate dimensions for measuring the JP of SMs who work in SLR.

Walton (1975) highlighted that QWL in an organization is a multifaceted concept that consists of humanistic values and social responsibilities. The concept of QWL is an abstract construct, having less measurable and observable properties than a concrete concept. Researchers face difficulties in defining and measuring this abstract concept due to its subjective nature. Ramawickrama et al. (2017a) reviewed more suitable measurement dimensions for the variable QWL for different careers in multiple sectors in various country contexts, and concluded that measurement dimensions vary according to the selected profession, organization, and industry, as well as the country concerned. Further, Beh (2011) points out that there is no one size of QWL that fits all organizations in any country. Every organization needs to develop its own QWL to represent its employees, customers and organizational needs. Consequently, it is necessary to find suitable measurement dimensions of QWL for the SLR.

Empirical evidence proves that QWL relates significantly with JP (Rose et al., 2007; Gayathri & Ramakrishnan, 2013; Shekari et al., 2014; Taghavi et al., 2014; and Rai, 2015). The above evidence shows that there is a relationship between QWL and JP in relation to multiple work groups in various types of organizations in different countries including SL. Therefore, due to a lack of exact evidence from empirical findings, further research is needed to explore the

relationship between QWL and JP of a specific profession in a particular organization in a given country. Further, some researchers have conducted studies in relation to QWL and OC (Louis, 1998; Normala, 2010, Ahmadi et al., 2012; Parvan et al., 2013; Ali & Zilli, 2015; Omugo et al., 2016). Hence, there is a research gap in the area of investigation of the relation between QWL and OC related to SMs work in SLR.

Though the above findings show a positive relationship between the variables, studies were done on different work groups and were organization-specific as well as country-specific. Hence, the fourth research gap exists in the need to clarify the relationship between QWL and OC with reference to a specific profession in a particular organization for a particular country. On the other hand, a higher level of OC helps to reduce employee related negative behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism and turnover. McShane et al. (2008) mentioned that “employees with high affective commitment also have higher work motivation and organizational citizenship, as well as higher JP.” Uthayakumar and Opatha (2003) also highlighted that OC is a strong predictor of JP. Though the above findings show the numerous relations between OC and JP, the findings have come from different work groups, in various types of organizations worldwide. Hence, further evidence is needed to clarify the relationship between OC and JP with particular reference to SMs in the railway sector in Sri Lanka.

Further, findings show that some researchers have used OC as an independent variable in their studies (for example Van Maanen, 1975; Porter et al., 1976; Porter et al., 1977; Steers, 1977; as cited by Reichers, 1985). Some other researchers considered OC as a dependent variable (for example Hall et al., 1970; Buchanan, 1974; Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Morris and Sherman, 1981; as cited by Reichers, 1985). This trend is further noted by Louis, 1998; Normala, 2010; Ahmadi et al., 2012; Parvan et al., 2013, Ojedokun, 2015, Ali & Zilli, 2015 and Omugo et al., 2016, who have also conducted studies on the concept of OC as a dependent variable. However, a few researchers such as Varghese and Jayan (2013), Kim (2014) and Nayak (2015) have found that OC works as a mediating variable in their research.

As a result, it can be seen that plenty of studies have been conducted with OC as a dependent variable as well as an independent variable. This reveals a lack of sufficient evidence for the use of OC as a mediating variable in the research archives. Therefore, evidence is needed to ensure the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between QWL and JP, especially for SMs in the SL context. Based on the above discussed research gaps in the literature, four specific research questions have been developed.

1. Does QWL have a significant relationship with JP among the SMs who work in SLR?
2. Is QWL positively and significantly related to OC for SMs who work in SLR?

3. Is OC positively and significantly related to JP among the SMs who work in SLR?
4. Does OC intervene significantly in the relationship between QWL and JP of SMs who work in SLR?

The broad objective of this study is to investigate whether organizational commitment influences the relationship between quality of work life and job performance of station masters who work in the Sri Lanka Railways department. The four specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To empirically investigate the relationship between QWL and JP among SMs who work in SLR.
2. To empirically investigate the relationship between QWL and OC with regard to SMs who work in SLR.
3. To empirically investigate whether the OC is positively and significantly related to JP of SMs who work in SLR.
4. To empirically investigate the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between QWL and JP among SMs who work in SLR.

Literature Review

Job Performance: In 1974, Porter and Lawler defined JP as a function of individual ability, skills and effort in a given situation. Porter and Lawler (1974) considered JP to be a function of individual ability, skills and effort in a given situation. Other researchers added several important elements to this concept, and some considered it as an individual behavior, closely linked with organizational goals. Murphy (1989) explained that JP should be defined in terms of behavior rather than results. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) highlighted three important features of JP as follows: 1. Work performance should be defined in terms of behavior rather than results, 2. Work performance includes only those behaviors that are relevant to the organization's goals, 3. Work performance is a multidimensional concept. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) defined JP as scalable actions, behavior and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that are linked with and contribute to organizational goals. Further, different authors have defined various types of JP taxonomies. A few of them are; the thirteen types of pro-social organizational behaviors (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986), both concepts of organizational citizenship behavior and pro-social behavior (Organ, 1988), eight performance components for measuring JP (Campbell et al., 1990), in-role work performance and extra-role performance (Borman and Brush, 1993), and generic work behavior and adaptive performance behavior (Hunt, 1996). Recently, Rotundo and Sackett (2002) discussed three types of

measures, including Task performance, Citizenship performance, and Counterproductive performance. Koopmans et al. (2011) proposed four theoretical dimensions as taxonomies of JP, including Task performance, Contextual performance, Adaptive performance, and Counterproductive work behavior. As far as this study is concerned, the working definition for JP is:

“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.” (Ramawickrama et al., 2017a). According to this definition, the three dimensions of JP are Task performance, Citizenship performance and Counterproductive work behavior.

Quality of Work Life: Louis Davis introduced the concept “Quality of Work life” prior to 1970, and the 1st International Conference on QWL was held in Toronto in 1972. The International Council of QWL was established in 1973, and this concept of QWL is almost a half-century old. Therefore, different definitions could be found proposed by different authors. A few of them are: a set of beneficial consequences of working life for the individual, the organization and society (Boisvert, 1977), a situation in which all members of the organization, through appropriate channels of communication set up for this purpose, have some say about the design of their jobs in particular and the work environment in general (Schuler & Youngblood, 1986). In 1993, Bernadian and Russell stated that QWL is the degree to which individuals are able to satisfy their important personal needs. Paying attention to the above definitions, researchers developed a working definition for QWL which is given below:

QWL is *“the degree of availability of features for ensuring a humane working life for each employee of the organization”*. Eight dimensions of QWL were selected for this study; they are basic salary and fair compensation, work conditions, safe and healthy work environment, development of human capacity, social integration in work organization, constitutionalism in work organization, balance between work and non-work life, and social relevance of work life.

Organizational Commitment: In 1966, Grusky, as cited in Daxi and Bhati (2012), stated that OC 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, which are seen as self-expressive. Luthans (2005) explained that OC 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. Accordingly, the working definition of OC and its dimensions are presented below;

“*The degree to which the employee is loyal to the organization*” (Opatha, 2015). The three component model of OC which comprises of Continuous Commitment (CC), Affective Commitment (AC) and Normative Commitment (NC) was considered for this study (Allen & Meyer, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002).

Relationships among the Variables of JP, QWL and OC: According to the research findings, the main variable of JP has been used by many researchers as a dependent variable in their studies (Sonnentag & Frees, 2001; Beh & Rose, 2011; Dixit & Bhati, 2012; Taghavi et al., 2014; Rai, 2015; Tolentino, 2013; Hettiarachchi & Jayarathna, 2014; Muindiet al., 2015; Hafiz, 2017). Schmidt and Hunter (1992) mentioned that JP is the most important ‘dependent variable’ in industrial work and organizational psychology. However, many researchers have used the construct of QWL as the ‘independent variable’ (Beh & Rose, 2011; Gnanayudam & Dharmasiri 2008; Ganguly, 2010; Ahmadi et al., 2012; Parvanet al., 2013; Varghese & Jayan, 2013; Ojedokum, 2015; Ali & Zilli, 2015; Muindiet al. 2015; Omugo et al., 2016). The other construct, i. e. OC has been used for different purposes by different researchers. This means that many authors have used OC as an independent variable, while others have used it as a dependent variable. On the other hand, Varghese and Jayan (2013), Kim (2014) and Nayak and Sahoo (2015) have used OC as a mediating variable. The above empirical evidence that are related to different job categories from different sectors including baking, manufacturing, garment, education in different countries. Consequently, the conceptual model for this study is developed below.

Conceptual Model of the Study

A hypothetical model was developed to exhibit the network of relationships among QWL, OC and JP. General system theory provides a strong support for this framework. While human qualities and abilities are treated as inputs from the environment, employee behaviors are treated as throughputs and employee performance is treated as output. QWL may be considered as one of the input resources. QWL helps build a proper balance between work and personal life, and ensures organizational productivity and job satisfaction. As a result, QWL practices in an organization may create attitudinal changes in employees’ minds. The attitudinal variable, i.e. OC, predicts and may lead to organizational citizenship behavior. This means that committed employees volunteer for extra job activities, like helping coworkers and making positive comments about the company (Organ & Ryan, 1995 as cited in Luthans, 2005). Thus, the three main variables of this study were positioned in Figure 1, i.e. QWL as the predictor

(independent) variable, JP as the outcome (dependent) variable and OC as the mediating variable.

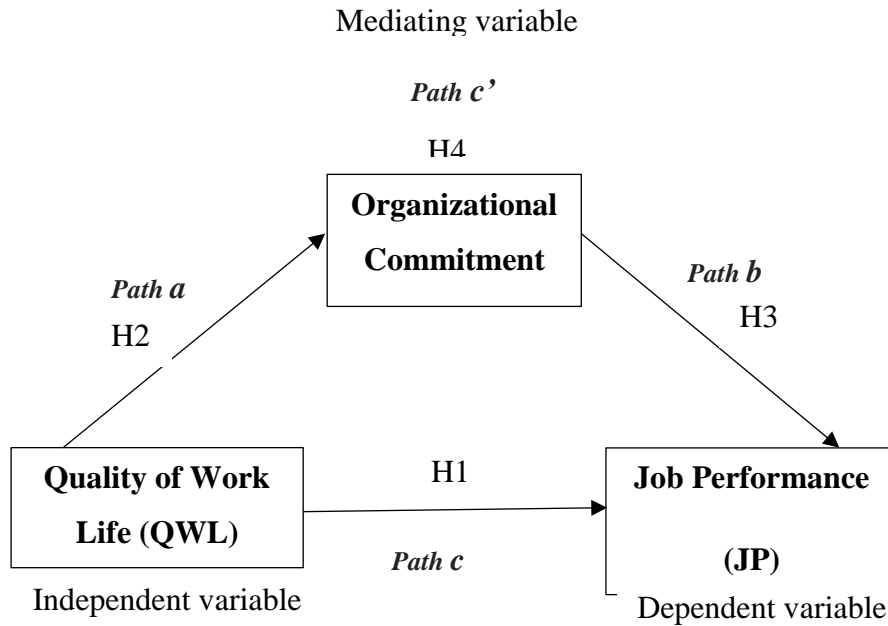


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Hypotheses Development:Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence in the existing literature and the logical arguments of the authors, four hypotheses (H1 to H4) were developed through a deductive approach to test the relationships among variables in the conceptual model.

Quality of Work Life and Job Performance:Kim et al. (1999) noted that a safe and secure workplace is instrumental and makes a positive contribution to employees' work performance. Nayakand Sahoo(2015) state that employees with high QWL tend to have lower job stress, while poor QWL can lead to stressful working conditions as well as negative health outcomes. Beh and Rose (2011) observed the positive relationship between QWL and employee JP at different levels, including individual, group and organizational levels. Gayathri et al. (2013) emphasized the linkages among QWL, job satisfaction and performance. The significant relationship between the overall QWL and organizational citizenship behavior was reviewed by Nair in 2013. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H1: *"Quality of work life has a significant positive relationship to job performance"*.

Quality of Work Life and Organizational Commitment:Louis (1998) found that QWL is strongly associated with both the dependent variables of commitment and sense of efficacy. Normala (2010) proved that there is a strong relationship and cohesiveness among employees

in the workplace, which will improve with the sense of commitment of employees. Ahmadi et al. (2012) confirmed that QWL helps to build a higher level of OC. Parvan et al. (2013) and Omugo, et al. (2016) found a positive and significant impact of QWL on OC among employees. Hence, QWL provides a favorable support for better OC. Based on the facts supporting the positive impact of QWL on OC, the second hypothesis is posited below:

H2: *“There is a positive and significant relationship between the quality of work life and organizational commitment”*.

Organizational Commitment and Job Performance: As a consequence of the psychological contract of employees discussed in the systems perspective, OC may occur and employees may try to bind to the organization affectively, normatively and continuously. Further, expectancy theory shows that employees’ efforts may result in better performance and rewards. Other motivational theories also highlight a positive interrelationship between OC and JP. One of the studies conducted by McShane et al. (2008) revealed that “employees with high affective commitment also have higher work motivation and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as higher JP.” Further, OC is related to higher QWL, lower rate of absenteeism, and increased productivity (Nelson & Quick, 1997). Uthayakumar and Opatha (2003) found that OC is a strong predictor of JP. Dimensions of OC significantly correlate with the key determinants of organizational citizenship behavior (Rehan& Islam, 2013). In the same year, Tolentino observed the relationship between OC and JP and revealed that OC significantly correlates with the key determinants of organizational citizenship behavior. There is a significant impact of employee-related work attitudes on the JP of employees (Hettiarachchi&Jayarathna, 2014). With reference to this situation, Daxit and Bhati (2012) also clarified that committed employees may perform better than less committed ones. Accordingly, the third hypothesis is formulated as:

H3: *“Organizational commitment is positively and significantly related to job performance”*.

Mediating effect of Organizational Commitment on the relationship between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance: It is logically arrived at that QWL affects JP positively through OC. Thus, QWL is called the independent variable while JP is labeled as the dependent variable. OC is labeled as the intervening variable. In other words, QWL, JP and OC are labeled as predictor, outcome and mediating variable, respectively. OC surfaces between the time QWL operates to influence JP and its impact on JP. Therefore, OC has a temporal quality and

it works as a function of QWL and helps to explain the influence of QWL on the variability of JP. Thus, the fourth hypothesis of this study is posited as follows:

H4: *“Organizational commitment has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between quality of work life and job performance”*.

Methodology

Research Design: A quantitative study was conducted to achieve the expected objectives, and the main focus of the study was explaining the QWL that contributed to the JP of railway workers in SL through OC. The sample frame is considered based on the target population. The sample begins with precisely defining the target population (Sekaran&Bougie, 2013). Hence, the target population might be all the SMs in the railway department throughout the country. That is, the entire group of people to whom the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings. It was also considered as the accessible population of this study. Thus, without any limitation, 1003 of SMs who are attached to the SLR were included in the population. 280 SMs were selected by a stratified sampling technique based on Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. There are three main strata including Grade I, Grade II and Grade III members who are working in different stations among the seven train lines in SLR. Hence, the stratified sampling technique helped to estimate the population parameters among the above identifiable sub-groups. Survey questionnaires were administered among the respondents who work in SLR. The majority of the sample was Sinhalese and the minority was Muslims and Tamils. Initially the questionnaire was developed in English and translated it to Sinhala. English language questionnaires were administered among the Muslims and Tamils. The techniques of data analysis of this study involved univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis using the application of SPSS (Version 22). The proposed hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation, regression analysis and multiple regression analysis

Instruments and Measures: The three variables in the conceptual model, i.e. JP, QWL and OC were measured using the multi-item interval scales, and validated prior to final data collection. The variables were carefully conceptualized and operationalized based on previous literature/ theories, in order to develop the individual measurement instruments. A summary of the number of dimensions, elements and evidence for references are given in Exhibit 1. These elements were used to develop question items in order to capture primary data from participants. The responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5 - strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4) and strongly

agree (5), respectively. twelve questions were related to the demographic profile of respondents. Ninety questions were itemized, together with an open ended question for respondents' feelings, suggestions and comments related to the main variables. Pilot study was conducted by the researcher administering questionnaires among 30 respondents. The result of the internal consistency was considered. The test-retest reliability test was conducted after three weeks. This test was conducted for randomly selected 15 respondents who participated in the pilot study to attest the stability of the measures.

Exhibit 1: Dimensions used for the main variables and the number of question items

| Dimensions used for main variables | Reference |
|--|---|
| <i>Job Performance: 46 of Question Items</i> | |
| <i>Task Performance</i> | |
| - Task performance-result based | |
| - Task performance-behavior based | Murphy (1989); Borman and Motowidlo (1993); Viswesvaran and Ones (2000); Rotundo and Sackett (2002); Stokes (2008); Stewart and Brown (2009); Koopman, et al. (2011); Safety Rules of Railways (SRR |
| - Task performance-trait based | |
| <i>Counterproductive performance</i> | |
| - Organizational level citizenship behavior | |
| - Interpersonal citizenship behavior | |
| <i>Counterproductive performance</i> | |
| - Production related deviant behavior | |
| - Property related deviant actions | |
| - Political deviant actions | |
| - Personal aggression | |
| Quality of Work Life: 31 Question Items | |
| QWL 1- Basic salary and fair compensation | |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| QWL 2- Work conditions | Walton,1975; Saklani, 1979: |
| QWL 3- Safe and healthy work environment | Hosseini, 2010; Stephen and |
| QWL 4- Development of human capacity | Dhanapala, 2012; Tabassum, 2012 |
| QWL 5- Social integration in work organization | and Mirvis and Lawler, 1984 |
| QWL 6- Constitutionalism in work organization | |
| QWL 7- Balance between work and non-work life | |
| QWL 8- Social relevance of work life | |

Organizational Commitment; 12 Question Items

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| CC- Continuous Commitment | Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer, et al., |
| AC- Affective Commitment | 2002; |
| NC- Normative Commitment | Opatha, 2015 |

(Source: Literature Review)

Reliability and Validity of the Instruments:As mentioned by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), several types of validity tests were used for the goodness of fit measures. Internal consistency was considered, and Cronbach's alpha was 0.923 for the overall value of JP, was 0.879 for QWL, and 0.817 for OC. Moreover, a reliability coefficient value of above 0.7 is statistically acceptable for a study (Nunnally, 1978). The test-retest coefficient was 0.931, which is significant at the 99% confidence level. This result suggests that the instruments possess a high degree of test-retest reliability. The values of KMO were above the cut-off point of 0.5, which also indicates a good range of sample adequacy, and the values of constructs were significant as per Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Data Analysis Techniques:Four hundred questionnaires were distributed as part of the survey, of which 280 questionnaires were returned, reporting a 70% response rate. Data were coded, cleaned and treated for missing values and outliers in order to ensure the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the study. Frequencies and descriptive analyses were conducted to

present the main characteristics of the sample. The Pearson product-moment correlation technique (one-tailed test) was used to test the first three hypotheses (H1- H3) and the fourth hypothesis was checked for the mediating effect of employee OC on the relationship between QWL and JP. Multipleregression analysis and procedures recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) were used to test the mediatingeffect of Hypothesis Four.

Results

Demographic Description of the Sample: The uniqueness of this sample was its homogeneity. This is because the majority of railway employees were males who have represented all stations in SL. 200 respondents out of the 280 had experienced more than 5 years of service and they had worked at more than 4 stations during their service period. While the majority of the respondents (236) were in the 25-55 age category, 24 of the respondents were over 56 years. Further, this sample represented all three major ethnic groups, comprising of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims.

Hypotheses Testing:The Pearson product-moment correlation technique was used to test the direct relationships of the conceptual model i.e. hypotheses 1, 2and 3 in Tables 1 to 3.

H1: QWL has a significant positive relationship with JP

Table 1Correlation between QWL and JP

| | Total QWL | Total JP |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .704** |
| Total QWL Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 280 | 280 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data, 2018)

Table 1givesa correlation coefficient value of 0.704, ** significant at the 99% confidence level. This result substantiates the existence of a strong positive and significant relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

H2:There is a positive and significant relationship between QWL and OC.

Table 2 Relationship between QWL and OC

| | | Total QWL | Total OC |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|----------|
| | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .731** |
| Total QWL | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 280 | 280 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data, 2018)

The result of the Pearson product-moment correlation in Table 2 indicates a significant relationship ($P < 0.01$) that is positive, strong and linear ($r = 0.731$). The statistical results justified the fact that a strong positive and significant relationship exists between QWL and OC. Hence, while rejecting the null hypothesis, the alternative hypothesis is formulated for this study.

Table 3 Relationship between OC and JP

| | | Total OC | Total JP |
|----------|---------------------|----------|----------|
| | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .835** |
| Total OC | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 281 | 280 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data, 2018)

The result of the Pearson product-moment correlation technique in Table 3 indicated a correlation coefficient value of 0.835** (Sig. at 0.01) for the relationship between OC and JP. Thus, the statistical results substantiated the existence of a positive and significant relationship between OC and JP at the 99% confidence level. Thus, hypothesis three was statistically established while the null hypothesis was rejected.

H4: OC has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between QWL and JP.

Baron and Kenny (1986), and Frazier et al., (2004) proposed four steps to be performed when testing this relationship. They are:

Step 1- to show that the predictor variable (QWL) is significantly related to the outcome variable (JP): *path c*

Step 2- to show that the predictor variable (QWL) is significantly related to the mediator variable (OC): *path a*

Step 3- to show that the mediator variable (OC) is significantly related to the outcome variable (JP): *path b*

Step 4- to show that the strength of the relationship between the predictor and the outcome is significantly reduced when the mediator is added to the model: comparing path C with *c'*.

The statistical results of the above four steps are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Testing Mediating Effect of OC on the Relationship between QWL and JP.

| Tested steps | B | Sig | R Square |
|--|-------|-------|----------|
| Step 1 : <i>path c</i> | | | |
| Outcome (JP), Predictor (QWL) | 1.115 | 0.000 | 0.495 |
| Step 2 : <i>path a</i> | | | |
| Mediator (OC), Predictor (QWL) | 0.380 | 0.000 | 0.534 |
| Step 3 : <i>path b</i> | | | |
| Outcome (JP), Mediator (OC) | 2.545 | 0.000 | 0.697 |
| Step 4 : Path c' | | | |
| Outcome (JP), Mediator (OC) Predictor (QWL) | 0.318 | 0.000 | 0.715 |

(Source: Survey Data, 2018)

According to Table 4, the unstandardized regression coefficient value (B=1.115) associated with the relationship between QWL and JP (*path c*) was significant ($P < 0.01$). Thus, the requirement for mediation in step-1 was met. Regression of QWL on OC (*path a*) was performed in order to establish that the predictor is significantly related to the mediator (Step-2). The regression coefficient (0.380) associated with this relation was also significant at the $P < 0.01$ level, and thus the requirement for mediation in step 2 was met. The requirement of step-3, the relationship between JP and OC (*path b*) was also met, i.e. the coefficient value was 2.545 at the significance level of $P < 0.01$. The path c of this model was measured simultaneously, while controlling the mediator (OC) in step 4. According to Frazier et al., (2004), when 'Path c' is zero, there is a complete mediation, while otherwise, a partial mediation exists. Here, path c' was 0.318 and this is still significant ($P < 0.01$). As this value was smaller than the value of Step 1 (which was 1.115), there is said to exist a partial mediation. Further, the R Square value of 0.715 is indicated in Step-4 of 'Path c'. It is higher than in the other steps. Thus, it reveals that as an intervening variable, OC enhances the relationship between QWL and JP by 71.5%. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted while the null

hypothesis is rejected. It is possible to claim that OC is a significant and partial mediator of the relationship between QWL and JP of SMs inSLR. Four hypotheses were accepted in the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1, supporting the conceptual model of this study empirically.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study developed an original conceptual model for measuring the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between QWL and JP among SMs who work inSLR. Four hypotheses were developed, addressing four specific research questions leading to the accomplishment of four specific research objectives.

This objective was achieved through H1 (Table 1). The statistical results showed that QWL is strongly and significantly related to the JP of SMs who work in SLR. The findingfor this second objective is that there is a positive, significant relationship between QWL and OC (Table 2) and the strength of the relationship is “high”. This predicts that when SMs have high QWL their OC will be high (when other things remain constant).Thefinding of the third objective showed that OC is positively and significantly related to JP and that the strength of the relationship is “high”. This high strength of the relationship shows that the more SMs are committed to the organization,the higher their JP is going to be. The statistical results of the mediation analysisof the objective four in Table 4 revealed that OC significantly and partially mediated the relationship between QWL and JP.

Accordingly, this study emphasized the positive relationship between QWL and JP among the SMs in SLR. Many research findings have concluded that QWL positively influences on JP. None of them has presented any opposite idea in relation to QWL and JP. Each and every finding showed a positive relationship between both variables. Beh and Rose (2007) studied the relationship between QWL and JP and generalized that any culture depends on the performance of its employees.

As a result of the global findings, railway employees agree with the existing QWL practices provided to them, and they perceive well the existing working condition and work environment (Hosmani et al., 2014; Mazloumi et al., 2014) but in the Sri Lankan context it seems to have an inconsistent to a certain extent. Though the employees have favorable feelings towards QWL they have given lower priority for constitutionalism, working conditions, opportunity for development of human capacity and safe and healthy work environment. Further, this situation is highlighted through the local literature as below. Halpita et al. (2011) conducted a study regarding the Sri Lankan context of Railway and suggested that the manual system is

inappropriate for the modern situation and creates numerous problems for workers and passengers and they mentioned that work related environment should be changed with advanced technology. Kesavan et al. (2011) found that employees have their own grievances related to the work and work related facilities faced by the employees in Sri Lanka context. However, no one has found the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between QWL and JP. Hence, this study is unique for findings related to employees who work in SLR and emphasized that OC mediated the relationship between QWL and JP.

Originality and Contribution to the Existing Literature:

A detailed discussion of QWL, OC and JP uncovers the fact that all concepts are employee related, and are essential for the achievement of goals of a particular organization. The researchers cleared conceptual confusion by means of an extensive literature review (Ramawickrama et al., 2017a and 2017b), and clearly and separately presented working definitions, importance, dimensions and question items of the three constructs. Moreover, the questionnaire was validated appropriately. The conceptual model (Figure 1) is also an original model that has contributed theoretically as well as empirically to the existing literature.

Managerial implications: The results revealed innovative, vital managerial implications related to the impact of the existing QWL practices on JP of SMs working in SLR. Findings of this study highlighted the fact that the existing QWL practices play a vital role in JP and that QWL significantly relates to OC. OC significantly and positively relates to JP as well. Hence, these direct relationships are enhanced further due to the mediating effect of OC. In order to enhance job performance of SMs in SLR, it is vital that QWL is enhanced by the relevant responsible top managers. According to the descriptive statistics, current SMs seem to have become dissatisfied with certain aspects of their QWL, and without addressing those aspects it will not be possible to enhance the OC of SMs and consequently, their JP. Therefore, the OC must be enhanced through the enhancement of the existing QWL practices of the Railway; that is, it should be modernized for the satisfaction of both internal and external customers who now live in a dynamic environment. More specifically, SMs are not satisfied with their existing salaries, work conditions and work environment, archaic rules and regulations and insufficient career development opportunities. Therefore, the existing human resource management practices should be modified and enriched with current, dynamic practices.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research: This study was limited to the railway sector in Sri Lanka, specifically to SMs who are multi task handlers. The study sample was homogenous, being restricted to males. Hence, other studies are needed in relation to QWL and JP in different settings without gender bias, in a variety of industries, in different organizational settings in other countries, in alternative economic systems and in different time periods of an organizational life cycle. Further, Likert type scaling was included throughout the questionnaire, except in the demographic factors. The study respondents were contacted at only one time (cross sectional), and therefore the research was not conducted as a longitudinal study. Since the research was a behavioral study, a longitudinal research design would have been more appropriate. Therefore, the researcher suggests further studies to be done employing the qualitative method and the mixed method in sectors other than the one used in this study.

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