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**Theory and Practice of Human Resource Management: Views of Human Resource Managers in Apparel Sector in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

*University education system is always disparaged by many parties. Especially these criticisms are made about the management graduates. There is no any argument that the management education system and its theories & concepts were brought from the western philosophy. In Sri Lanka, management education has a history of over fifty years. However, many practitioners blame the management graduates regarding their orientation of theory than the practices. Therefore, there is a knowledge gap about to what extent the theory of management applies in to the practices. This is common in the field of human resource management. Therefore, the problem of the study is that whether there is a difference between the theory and practice of human resource management in the practical scenario. Using 80 human resource managers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, researchers tried to find the perception of HR Managers about the differences of theory and practice of human resource management in the apparel industry. 17 areas/activities of human resource management were asked from the selected sample and the closed ended questionnaire was distributed to them. Univariate statistics were used to analyses the primary data gathered from the sample and the main finding of the study is that there was moderate level of differences of theory and practices of human resource management in the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. However, there is a trend of applying the theory of human resource management into the practice in this sector through entering the human resource management graduates.*

*Key words: Theory of HRM, Practices of HRM, HR Managers*

**Introduction**

For organizational success proper practices of management is a prerequisite (Druker, online). It is not an exaggeration to say that management drives the organization towards achievement of its objectives. Therefore the proper transferring of theoretical knowledge of management in to practice is a gate way to accomplish organizational success.

When it comes to business world, many managers believe in practice than the theory. In the modern highly dynamic business context , where managers has to confront with the novel and complex business situations, it often becomes imperative to see the things in different angles and implement new strategies. As a result, employability of many applicants may depend on their ability of transferring the theoretical knowledge in to practice. Hence it is essential to develop skills and attitudes in addition to the knowledge in the prospective managers/undergraduates through a proper education scheme.

However in the Sri Lankan context, the university education system is highly criticized for its extensive theoretical basis (Rathnayake and Kumara, 2008). It is perceived by many practitioners that local curriculum does not provide enough room for undergraduates to expose to the practical world. Hence majority of local graduates are being treated as having lack of skills and attitudes to survive in the business world with their theoretical background.

This view concerns that there is an incompatibility between theory and practice in management. As for any other management functions in the functional segregation of management, this view is common for Human Resource Management as well. Many theories and approaches have been developed for effective and efficient utilization of human resources in an organization to achieve organizational objectives. And all these theories are directed towards achieving its generic purpose, which is to generate and retain an appropriate and contented workforce which gives their maximum individual contribution for organizational success (Opatha, 2009).

However, it is questionable that how far and how well these theories are being applied in the organizations to manage their vital human resources. In the light of above scenario, this paper attempts to examine the link between HRM theory and practice and the reasons thereof, for any discrepancies, giving specific attention to the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

### **Problem and Objective of the Study**

HRM approach seeks to ensure a fit between the management of an organization's employees, and the overall strategic direction of the company. Complicating factors however exist to establish best “fit” trends for the human resources (HR) profession, such as the failing to consider the daily practice of HRM from a researched employee specific point of view. Furthermore, observations by various authors (Kane and Crawford, 1999; Browning and Edgar, 2004) are that numerous studies over the years have tended to exclusively focus on the views of HR staff regarding particular aspects of HRM as it affects employees. Various authors (Kane and Crawford, 1999; Kane, 2001; Burton, 2003; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2003; Nel *et al.*, 2005;) have identified factors, which act as barriers to effective HRM. These could act as cues to direct further research attempts in finding meaningful direction regarding the future of HRM practice. Some of the pertinent issues are:

- Top management has a low priority, and often a short-term view, of what the real issues in HRM and the profession are according to various researchers (Purcell, 1995; Kane and Crawford, 1999; Parmenter, 2002; Burton, 2003).
- HRM practitioners are perceived to lack sufficient knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective HRM practices at various levels in their organisations (Jayne, 2002; Burton, 2003; Nel *et al.*, 2004)
- HR professionals have not been assertive enough to be present in the boardroom to guide HR programmes to achieve long-term impacts on such HR initiatives. This probably also points to a lack of adequate drive and communication to apply strategic human resources management (SHRM) fully. (Kane, 2001; Glade, 2002; Birchfield, 2003; Du Plessis, 2004).

Among these issues, lack of sufficient knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective HRM practices at various levels in their organization address a specific hint to the practitioners. However, in the Sri Lankan context, there are no any empirical evidences to show the differences between theory and practices in human resource management. Therefore, there is theoretical as well as empirical knowledge gap between the applications of theory in the real industrial world in human resource management field. Therefore, the problem addressed by the researchers is: does a practice of human resource management deviate from the theory of human resource management in the Sri Lankan context? Then the main objective of the study is to find the resemblance or divergence of theory and practices of human resource management in the Sri Lankan context.

### **Importance of HRM to Organizations**

Successful management of human resources is one of the keys to the effective operation of an organization (Mathis and Jackson, 2004). In terms of HRM, there is a growing recognition that human capital and the impact of related HRM practices are critical to an organizations success (Kling, 1995, Pfeffer, 1998, Fritzezz, 2000, Hylang and Verreault, 2003). Excellent HR practices (created by HR Managers) influence the business growth and development (Rao, 2000). Huselid and Becker (1997) found that a one standard deviation improvement in HR system index was associated with an increase in shareholder wealth of \$ 41, 000 per employee. The study done by Bilmes, Linda, and Xhonneux (1998) in Germany found that a strong link between investing in employees and the stock market performance of the corporation. Companies that laced workers at the core of their strategies shaped higher long-term returns than those who did not. Delery and Doty (1996) in a study of nearly 200 banks found that different in HR practices accounted for large difference in financial performance. Huselied (1995) concluded that prior empirical work has consistently found that use of effective human resource management practices enhances firm performance.

### **HRM Theory vs. Practice**

Human resource management is both an academic theory and a business practice that addresses the theoretical and practical techniques of managing a workforce (Ahmed et al. 2005). Paauwe argues that HRM is in need of studies that reconsider the conceptualization and measurement of performance. Throughout his suggestions, Paauwe recognized that the impact of HR practices on outcomes is considerably more complex than usually assumed in the HR literature (Janssens and Steyaert, 2009). HRM theory has often been associated with modernist or humanistic philosophical assumptions. But, beyond much of the theoretical appeal, there have been major disconnects in HRM practices with even many conventional western ethical frameworks (Winstanley et al. 1996, Payn. and Waylan, 1999).

The view is that practicing HRM often ignores the sound research about policies, practice or people that is available to help make decisions. Instead, organizations often adopt an HRM procedure because competitors are using its (Bernardin, 2003). Thus management's approach to managing their "most important asset" does not appear to fit with the classical, orthodox definitions of HRM (Boyd, 2001).

The field needs a theory about HRM, a theory about performance and a theory about how they are linked. Paauwe pays considerable attention to the need for theory that links HRM to performance, a concern that is a central issue in the HRM fields (Guest, 1997; Janssens and Steyaert, 2009).

Manuscripts contain theoretical arguments without any practical implications seem like so much puffery. And manuscripts that focus only on issues of practice without some theoretical grounding can seem like the advancement of last fad. It is critical that each manuscripts be grounded in both theory and practice and it would seem appropriate to place much of burden on the author of the manuscript (Darlene and Russ-Eft, 2005).

### **Theory vs. Practice in HRM Functions**

Most of the literature on HRM theory vs. practice is developed under the major functions in HRM rather than as a whole. Thus literature in relevant to the topic can be obtained from research findings and theories developed by academics in separate researches conducted for each functions. Giving evidence to the prolonged argument between academics and practitioners regarding the application of HRM theory and practice, many studies on the subject reveals that there are discrepancies between HRM theory and practice.

*Planning:* The theoretical idea of a balance of demand and supply and equilibrium can occur on paper or on the computer screen. The more likely real –life situation is one of continuous imbalance as a result of the dynamic conditions facing any organization, the behavior of people and the imperfection of computer models (Bratton and Gold, 1994).

*Recruitment:* In general, limited comparative studies on recruitment methods suggest that more informal methods (e.g. walk-ins, referrals) are more likely to lead to longer job tenure than the more formal sources, such as newspaper ads. The internet now exceeds newspaper ads in generating large number of applicants for a position compared to other methods. A study found that people who had worked for the organization earlier had superior performance records, longer job tenure and better attendance. Another study resulted in less than 44% of HR professional responding to a 1991 survey had a formal system for evaluation of their recruitment. Only 41% percent look at job performance of new hires relative to recruitment source (Bernardin, 2003).

*Selection:* According to the theory, reliability and validity are two important concepts that have been of particular importance in measuring success of selection process. In practice validation is a complex process and would require an organization to conduct studies with large no's of candidates. By the time such studies were completed, it is highly likely that the work from which some of the criteria were derived would have changed. Validation also related to the particular environment and context in which performance is carried out. Such problems have not stopped many organizations using test and other selection techniques which have been validated elsewhere (Bratton and Gold, 1994).

*Performance Evaluation:* The 54 interviews of PEs from the five corporations were divided. Acceptability is often considered the most important requirement; any PA

system must have the support of employees who use it. Unfortunately, many PA systems fail because businesses have not put enough effort into attaining support from those who will implement the PA system (Cascio, 1998). PEs with more education and maturity believed PA helped them manage more effectively. However looking at the time they spent to conduct PA, it raises some ethical concerns, particularly for those managers who are older with higher education levels. They are usually in positions of greater responsibility within the corporation and have greater influence on employees' careers. It's very concerning when 20 percent of this PEs is not soliciting feedback about an employee's performance from their peers. This is not only inconsistent with parameters of 360-degree PA, but also suggests a lack of concern about employees' development.

Traditionally, PA is completed once a year and often includes a non-rated mid-year discussion. Research has indicated that this is too infrequent because raters face difficulties remembering what employees did over the previous six-to-12 months (Campbell et al., 1970). Corporations with monthly or quarterly PA assessments outperformed competitors on every financial and productivity measure and got positive feedback from employees about the fairness of the PA system (Juran, 2004). However, frequent PA is time consuming and may make employees feel as though their performance is always being assessed. The amount of time that frequent PA requires is best understood when considered from the perspective of the PE, who has difficulty sequestering time to complete PA assessment once a year. Furthermore, when time is constrained, PEs may revert to familiar objective measures, such as financial metrics and a "tell and sell" approach (Dorfman et al., 1986).

*Health and Safety:* Given that health and safety is a key area covered by HRM, it is surprising that it receives minimal coverage (or none at all) in key HRM texts and journals. This may be attributed to an inherent assumption that people-centered management automatically assures first-class health and safety management. In reality, health and safety is degraded and undervalued by some of the world's largest service industries. This is reflected in study by Carol Boyd on HRM in Air line industry, which is one of the most health and safety sensitive areas. He indicates that, in a highly competitive market where service quality is acknowledged to be a crucial factor, moves by major European airlines to sub-contract work to lower-paid, less well-trained staff appears to run contrary to virtuous company "mission" statements, and could be interpreted as a clear signal that, in reality, cost takes precedence over quality. He concludes that HRM may have provided a smokescreen for irresponsible health and safety management in the airline industry. The findings support critiques which point to the opportunistic nature of HRM, based on the finding that health and safety policies were not realized in actual practice, creating a virtual reality for workplace health and safety (Boyd, 2001).

*Labour Relations:* Good HR practices may increase the motivation of workers (Ichniowski et al. 1997, Wood 1999) and contribute to workers commitment to their tasks and willingness to do a better job (Grip and Sieben, 2009). Also this HRM practices will reduce quit rates which in turn decrease recruitment and selection costs and increase the benefits of investments in firm specific skill (Grip and Sieben, 2009).

Kuvass has identified in his research, that there is a strong and direct negative relationship between perception of developmental HR practices and turnover intention, but perceived procedural and interactional justice moderated this linkage. Concerning the labour relations in an organization, HR practices play a significant role. HR practices such as training and career development which is connected with HRD is significant in reducing turnover intention and voluntary turnover (Kuvass, 2008).

*Training:* Recent advances in technology have positioned simulations as a powerful tool for creating more realistic, experiential learning environment and thereby helping organizations meet these emerging training challenges. Despite their vast potential, there are number of costs and challenges associated with utilizing simulations to deliver training in a practical organizational situation. One challenge is that the fixed cost associated with developing simulations, is high and can be prohibitive for smaller organizations with limited training budgets (Chapman, 2004; Bradford et al., 2008).

Being a developing country Sri Lanka badly needs to practice right HRM in order to accomplish her primary goals. It has been generally observed that there are a considerable number of Sri Lankan organizations that do not practice so called strategic human resource management. Discussions with several practicing human resource managers revealed that yet SHRM has not been practiced significantly (Sajeewani and Opatha, 2007).

### **Method**

To assess the deviation of theory and practices of human resources management in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, survey method was used and the sample was limited to 80 HR Managers who are working in the different apparel organizations. The sample was drawn from medium and large scale apparel organizations and simple random sample was used to gather the primary data. The data were collected through the structure questionnaire and it consisted of 18 areas of human resource management. Descriptive analysis, especially mean and standard deviation were used to analysis the gathered data. The decision rules are given below.

Decision rules

Mean value is 5.00 – 3.67: There is less diverse between theory and practice of HRM

Mean value is 3.66 – 2.34: There is average diverse between theory and practice of HRM

Mean value is 2.33 – 1.00: There is significant diverse between theory and practice of HRM

### **Empirical Data**

The empirical data gathered from the sample are given in below tables.

Opinion 01: According to my practical experience, there is no any deviation from theory of **job design**, when designing a job in the practice.

Table No 01 indicates the opinions of HR Managers regarding the theory against to the practice of job designing in the working environment.

Table 01: The opinion of HR Managers toward the deviation of theory and practice of job designing

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5500
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.74936
Skewness		.976
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-.482
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 01, the mean value is 2.5500 and standard deviation is 0.74936. Then it concludes that the opinion of HR Managers regarding the theory of job designing and practice of job designing is averagely diverse in the practical scenario. However, according to the standard deviation, the trend is led to significantly difference between the theory and practice.

Opinion 02: According to my practical experience, there is no any deviation from theory of **Employee-Job fit** when assigning duty to a worker

Table No 02 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers regarding the deviations of theory and practice of employee – job fit.

Table 02: The opinion of HR Managers towards the theory and practice of employee – job fit

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		3.8000
Median		4.0000
Mode		4.00
Std. Deviation		.75786
Skewness		-1.131
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		1.466
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee – job fit is either average or low. According to the mean value (3.8000), opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee – job fit is less diverse. However, according to the standard deviation (0.75786), the opinion of HR Managers towards this phenomenon is either average or less significant.

Opinion 03: According to my practical experiences, there is no any deviation from theory of **Job Analysis** when analyzing organizational Jobs

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of job analysis in the business scenario is given in table No 03.

Table 03: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of job analysis

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.3000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.46410
Skewness		.907
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-1.242
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The mean value of the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of job analysis is significantly difference or averagely difference. The mean value, according to the table No 03 is 2.3000 and standard deviation is 0.46410.

Opinion 04: There is no any deviation from theory to practices when we are **planning** human resources to the organization

Table No 04 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the difference between the theory and practices of HR Planning.

Table 04: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of HR Planning

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7500
Median		2.5000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.89872
Skewness		.976
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		.068
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of HR Managers towards the differences between theory and practices of HR Planning in the practical scenario is averagely diverse. The mean value is 2.7500 and standard deviation is 0.89872 (according to table No 04).

Opinion 05: There is no any deviation from theory to practice when we are **recruiting** applicants for the vacancies

Table No 05 presents the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of recruitments.

Table 05: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of recruitment

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.6000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.81019
Skewness		.877
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-.882
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 05, the mean value is 2.6000. Then, the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of recruitment is averagely diverse. This is proved by the standard deviation (0.81019).

Opinion 6: According to my experiences, the **selection** process and strategies followed by the company are almost similar to the theory I learned

Table No 06 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee selection.

Table 06: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of employee selection

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5500
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.74936
Skewness		.976
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-.482
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 06, the mean value for the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee selection is 2.5500. Then it concludes

the differences between the theory and a practice of employee selection in practical scenario is averagely diverse.

Opinion 07: In the **hiring** process, there is no any deviation from theory to practice

The table No 07 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of hiring.

Table 07: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of hiring

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.4500
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.59700
Skewness		.963
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		.006
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 07, the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of hiring is averagely diverse. The mean value of the HR Manager opinion to this phenomenon is 2.4500 and standard deviation is 0.59700.

Opinion 08: According to my experience, there is no any deviation from theory of employee **induction**, when inducting employees to the job and organization

Table No 08 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of employee induction.

Table 08: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee induction

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.4000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.67178
Skewness		1.453
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		.862
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee induction is averagely diverse. However the standard deviation for the mean value (2.4000) is 0.67178. It means that there is a trend to less diverse of the theory and the practices of employee differences.

Opinion 09: According to my opinion, there is no any deviation from theory of employee **PE**, when evaluating employee performance

Table No 09 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of employee performance evaluation.

Table 09: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee performance evaluation

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		3.3000
Median		4.0000
Mode		4.00
Std. Deviation		.96609
Skewness		-.295
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-1.329
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

There is average diverse for the theory and practices of employee performance evaluation according to the opinion of HR Managers. The mean value of the responses of the sample is 3.3000. However, standard deviation of the mean value is 0.96609. It means that there is a trend of averagely diverse of theory and practices of employee performance evaluation.

Opinion 10: In the company **training**, I felt that there is no any deviation of the theory I learned with the practice

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practice of the employment training is given in table No 10.

Table 10: The opinion of HR Manager towards the deviation of theory and practices of training

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.4000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.67178
Skewness		1.453
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		.862
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 10, there is averagely diverse of theory and practices of employee training as HR Managers' opinion. The mean value of the responses is 2.4000 and standard deviation is 0.67178.

Opinion 11: According to my experience, there is no any deviation from theory of **pay management** when giving salaries to the employees

Table No 11 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of pay management.

Table 11: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of pay management

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.1000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.30382
Skewness		2.772
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		5.979
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

As HR Manager Opinion, there are significantly diverse of the theory and the practices of the pay management. The mean value of the sample data is 2.1000 and standard deviation is 0.30382.

Opinion 12: In the company, the practice of **safety and health** administration are based highly theoretical aspects I learned

Table No 12 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers of the deviations of theory and practices of safety and health

Table 12: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of safety and health

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		4.0500
Median		4.0000
Mode		4.00
Std. Deviation		.81492
Skewness		-1.291
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		2.098
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of HR Managers towards the theory and practices of safety and health is no diverse. The statistical data of mean value and standard deviation of the sample responses are confirmed the result (mean value is 4.0500 and standard deviation is 0.81492).

Opinion 13: All the **welfare** practices of the company are based on the theory I learned

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee welfare is given in table No 13.

Table no 13: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee welfare

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		3.3500
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.80224
Skewness		-.108
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-.512
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 13, the mean value of the responses is 3.3500 and standard deviation is 0.80224. Then it concludes that the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee welfare is averagely diverse in the practical scenario.

Opinion 14: According to my experiences, there are no any deviations from theory of employee **discipline administration**, when administrating employee discipline

Table No 14 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee discipline administration.

Table 14: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee discipline administration

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		3.2500
Median		3.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		1.10361
Skewness		.196
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-1.344
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

According to the table No 14, the opinion of the HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee discipline administration is averagely diverse. However, according to the standard deviation for the sample (1.10361), there is a trend that the deviation of theory and practices of employee disciplinary administration is low diverse in the practical scenario.

Opinion 15: Our **grievance handling** system is developed based on the theory I learned

Table No 15 depicts the opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of grievance handling

Table 15: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of grievance handling

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		4.1500
Median		4.0000
Mode		4.00
Std. Deviation		.36162
Skewness		2.038
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		2.263
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

There are no diverse between the theory and practices of employee grievances on the opinion of HR Managers. The mean value is 4.1500 and the standard deviation is 0.36162.

Opinion 16: Handling **trade union** by the company management is based on theory I learned

Table No 16 illustrates the opinion of HR Managers for the deviation of theory and practices of handling trade union

Table 16: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of handling trade union

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5000
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.81650
Skewness		1.190
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		2.845
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices, according to the table No 16, is averagely diverse. However, according to the standard deviation of the mean value of the sample (0.81650), there is a trend to be low diverse between the theory and the practices of handling the trade union.

Opinion 17: Handling **Industrial relation** by the company management is based on theory I learned

The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of industrial relations is given in table No 17.

Table 17: The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of industrial relations

N	Valid	80
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7000
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.56387
Skewness		.036
Std. Error of Skewness		.374
Kurtosis		-.503
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.733

The opinion of the HR Managers towards the deviations of theory and practices of industrial relations is averagely diverse. The mean value of the sample, according to the table No 17 is 2.7000 and standard deviation is 0.56387.

### **Findings**

The major findings of the study can be summarized as below.

- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of job design in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee – job fit in the practical scenario is average or less diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of job analysis in the practical scenario is significantly or averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of planning human resource in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of recruitment in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of selection in the practical scenario is averagely difference.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of hiring in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of induction in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of performance evaluation in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee training in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of pay management in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of safety and health management in the practical scenario is less significantly diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of welfare in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of employee discipline administration in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of grievance in the practical scenario is less diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of handling trade union in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.
- The opinion of HR Managers towards the deviation of theory and practices of industrial relations in the practical scenario is averagely diverse.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The research findings reveal that there are only two HRM activities which are no significantly diverse between the theory and the practices. Those HRM activities are

employee safety & health management, and grievance handling. Pay management is significantly different between the real practice and the theory learned at the classroom or explained on the text books. Other all HRM functions are differed from moderately.

The overall blueprint of the findings of the study can be concluded as there is moderate level of the deviation of theory and practice of HRM in the apparel industry. Majority of the companies in this sector run with the requirements fulfilling by the foreign buyers. Therefore, they need to maintain the proper system of HRM and they need to maintain the quality of final products.

In other way that the cultural and social effects of Sri Lanka are different from the theory on text books and articles written by the foreign authors. Therefore, there might be a difference between the theory of HRM and the real practices of HRM. However, as a developing country, sometime it is difficult to apply the real theory developed in the developed countries in the Sri Lankan context. One reason is that the education level of employees is comparatively low and second reason is that the expectations of employees might be differed from the developed countries to the developing countries.

However, researches' opinion is that this trend of utilizing theory into the practical scenario of HRM is explained a new era of developing good practices of HRM. Therefore, as a manager who is responsible to manage the organizational workforce should be followed theories of HRM and has to try apply the theory as possible as in the practical contexts.

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