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Impact of Job Stress on Work Performance of Customer Service Employees in Selected Four Star Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Area of the Study

This research is mainly focused on the job stress and work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels in Sri Lanka.

Problem of the Study

This research study attempts to explore the relationship between stress and work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels in Sri Lanka. Thus, the research problem of this study is; "Does the job relate stress has an impact on work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels.

Method of the Study

The data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 40 customer service employees in selected four stars hotels in the Central Province and used a structured questionnaire, which indicate the statements of stress and work performance with 5 points Likert scale and used personal interviews. The data was analyzed using SPSS computer package and it included the univariate and bivariate analyses.

Findings of the Study

According to the empirical evidence of this study, it is found that there is a positive relationship between job stress and work performance of customer service employees in selected hotels. It indicates the stress level of customer service employees positively contributes to the level of performance.

Conclusion of the Study

Although there is a positive relationship between job stress and work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels the level of stress of customer service employees is in high. Thus, some programs for reducing the level of stress of customer service employees in stars hotels can be recommended. Also a good relationship should be maintained with employees in this hotel.

Key words: *Job Stress, Work Performance, Four stars hotels.*

Introduction

Human Resource is the most important asset in business organizations. It has special characteristics when compared with other resources. Human Resource Management is effective and efficient utilization of human resource to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Opatha, 2010). In order to utilize human resource efficiently and effectively organizations should understand the feeling of their employees about their jobs. One of the most important problems that modern organizations are faced with is stress of their employees. The workplace or job is one of the greatest reasons of stress in human life. A completely stress-free workplace is not possible to achieve, but to achieve the success of the organization employees should be healthy and satisfied with their work and the organization.

Occupational stress is defined as "the perceived difference between professional demands and a person's ability to carry out those demands" (Carr, Kelley, Keaton & Albrecht, 2011). A person allocates a large amount of time of his/her life time on the job. Then, in turn, the job may also be the key factor of his/her stress and it affects his/her job performance.

Problem Background and Problem of the Study

Stress becomes an important determinant to the performance of employees in any kind of organization. When considering about the service organizations, especially with employees who directly deal with customers, stress may be a major factor that determine the employee performance and finally it can affect the organizational performance.

Today, with the speedy growing economy, the hotel industry is also growing rapidly. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka the hotel industry contributes only around 2% to the country's gross domestic product (Illangasekera and Weeralingam, 2011). According to this report the hotel sector recorded around 70% of the average occupancy rate. During the peak periods, these occupancy levels exceeded 90%. Further the employees in the hotel and tourism sector are more than 300,000 in present. But one of the most considerable issues that are faced by this industry is troubles relating to employees. Most of such problems are created because of the stress of employees. But there are no proper records about measuring the stress level of employees in Sri Lankan context. Thus researcher tried to analyze the impact of job stress on the performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotel. Thus, the research problem of this study is; "***Does the job relate stress has an impact on work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotel?***"

Research Framework

In literature, research studies show that there is a direct relationship between occupational stress and job performance of employees who are working in any occupation. There is a great deal of empirical evidence that excessive level and lower level of stress have a negative impact on work performance while moderate stress level create higher work performance (Opatha, 2010; Sadri & Marcoulides, 1997). According a lot of empirical research on work stress and workers' performance in the hotel industry it was found that there is a significant relationship between those concepts. Based on this evidence the research hypothesis of the study can be developed as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between job related stress on the job performance of customer service employees.

The research framework is presented in Figure 1as follows:

Figure 1: Conceptual Model
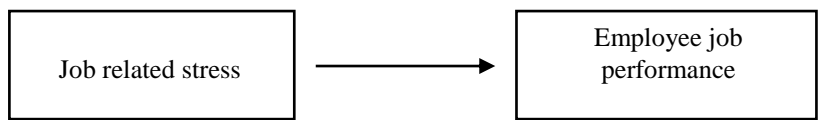
In the above conceptual model in this research study, the independent variable is the job stress of the employees. The second concept of the model is employee job performance. It is the dependent variable of this study.

Method
Study Design
The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between the stress and the work performance of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels and the hypothesis was developed based on this objective. The study was conducted by using a sample of 40 customer service employees in a four stars hotel which is located in the Central province. The sample method of the survey was the convenience random sampling. The type of investigation was experimental and it was cross sectional study. The unit of analysis was individual level where the customer service employees were served as respondents. The survey method that was used to collect the data was a questionnaire and was distributed among 40 customer service employees in selected four stars hotels.

Measures
The variables in the research model such as work performance and job stress were measured through a questionnaire with five point scales (including always, often, sometimes, seldom and never) which were completed by the respondents themselves on their experiences. The variables of the study constitute interval scales.

The research consists of one independent variable and one dependent variable. The questionnaire consists of a number of question items to measure these variables. The questionnaire for measuring work stress of the customer service employees is developed by the researcher. It contained 19 statements to measure various aspect of the job stress such as job task features, organizational climate, role behavior and home work interface. The questionnaire for measuring employee performance is also developed by the author. It contained 12 statements to measure various aspects of the employee performance such as traits and behavior.

Reliability and Validity
The consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach's Alpha test. The results of Cronbach's alpha test are given in Table 1, which suggests that the reliability of each instrument is at a satisfactory level.

Table 1: Reliability statistics of stress measurements

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Job stress	.861	19
Work performance	.754	12

Source: *Survey Data (2014)*

The construct validity of the variables of the study was ensured by the fact that the correlation and regression analysis support the hypotheses formulated linking the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Techniques of Data Analysis

After gathering the data they are analyzed by using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS version 16.0 for validity, reliability and relationship testing. Univariate analysis and bivariate analysis are applied in data analysis.

Results

According to Table 2 total valid respondents are 40 and the mean value of job stress is 2.82. It indicates that the stress level of the customer service employees in the selected stars hotel is "high". The standard deviation of the level of stress is 0.426. It is less than 1 and it indicates that the dispersion is very low and the majority is centered towards the mean. Then it indicates that the level of job stress of the majority of employees is high. The mean value of job performance is 3.84. It is very close to 4 and it indicates that the level of performance is "high". The standard deviation of performance is 0.357. It indicates the majority is centered towards the mean. Then it indicates that the majority of employees' job performance is high.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Job Stress and work performance

N	Valid	40	40
	Missing	0	0
Mean		2.82	3.84
Median		2.82	3.83
Mode		2[a]	4
Std. Deviation		.426	.357
Variance		.182	.127
Skewness		-.074	-.208
Kurtosis		-.229	-.399
Range		2	2
Minimum		2	3
Maximum		4	4

Source: *Survey Data (2014)*

In order to test the hypothesis the Pearson Correlation Technique was used. The desires significant level was 0.05 and one tailed test was used because the hypothesis is non-directional which indicates the significant relationship between the job related stress and the work performance of customer service employees. Table 3 presents the results of the correlation test.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

		Job Stress	Work Performance
Job Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40

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

Source: *Survey Data (2014)*

According to Table 3 the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is positive and it is 0.623. This suggests that there is a positive relationship between the job related stress and work performance of the customer service employees in selected stars hotel. The significant value is 0.000 and it is less than the desired level of significant value of 0.05 or 0.01. Hence, the correlation coefficient is statistically significant at 95% and 99% confidence level.

According to Table 4 and 5 regression equation of the job performance of customer service employees is:

$$\text{Work Performance} = 2.370 + 0.522 \text{ (Job Stress)}$$

The b value of the equation, the gradient of the regression, is 0.522, which is significant at 1% (significant = 0.000). As indicated by R Squared, 38.8 % of the variance of work performance is explained by job stress with the standardized beta of 0.623.

Table 4: Results of regression analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.623	.388	.372	.283

Source: *Survey Data (2014)*

Discussion and Conclusion

It was found that there is a positive relationship between the job stress and the work performance of the customer service employees in selected four stars hotels. The correlation between these variables was 0.623, which is significant at 0.000 level. Discussing the level of job stress of the respondents in the sample, it was found that they have a high level of job stress with the mean value of 2.82 and standard deviation of 0.426. Accordingly, it was found that the stress level of customer service employees in selected four stars hotels is high.

Table 05: Results of regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.370	.303		7.818	.000
	Job Stress	.522	.106	.623	4.907	.000

Source: *Survey Data (2014)*

The findings do not matched with the theoretical arguments given by many researchers such as Bashir & Ramay (2010) and Holkos & Bousinakis (2010) which argue that there is a negative relationship between job stress and work performance of employees.

However the findings of correlation and regression analysis empirically confirm the arguments given by Mathur, Vigg, Sandhar & Holani (2007) and Knight, Kim & Crutsinger (2007). They argued that the increased level of stress positively affect the performance of employees.

The important findings of the study can be identified as follows:
The first objective of the study is to explore the degree of stress level of customer service employee in selected four stars hotel. It was found that the majority of employees posses a high level of stress.

The second objective of the study is to explore the level of the performance of employees in selected hotel. The study was found that the level of the performance of customer service employees is high.

The main objective of the study is to explore the relationship between the job stress and the work performance of customer service employees in selected hotel. Thus, researcher developed the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the job stress and the work performance of the customer service employees. According to the empirical evidence there is a positive relationship between the job stress and the work performance of the customer service employees in selected hotels. It indicates that the stress level of the customer service employees positively contributes to the level of performance.

The main findings of the study was that there is a positive relationship between the job stress and the work performance of the customer service employees in selected four stars hotels. Also, the level of stress of the customer service employees is at a high level. Thus, some programs can be recommended to reduce the level of stress of the customer service employees in four stars hotels. A good relationship should be maintained with employees in this hotel. Otherwise, a better image cannot be maintained.

Although there is a positive relationship between the level of stress and the work performance of the customer service employees researcher has identified that the retention rate of customer service employees is in a low level. They change their organization

frequently. Furthermore if there is a positive relationship between these two variables it may negatively affect the performance of the organization in the long term.

However, there are some limitations in this study. Researcher considers the factors of stress of the customer service employees. But the personnel factors such as personality, locus of control, big five factors may also impact the employee level of stress.

In addition, the research study was taken place in a single organization in the hotel sector and the findings do not support the general conclusion of the relationship between the stress and the performance. In order to expand and generalize this result, multi-institutional longitudinal studies are required to be conducted.

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