

An Empirical Investigation of the Impact of Work Attitude and Organizational Learning Culture on the Perceived Internal Service Quality of Managerial Level Employees in Large scale Garment Industries in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Existing literature reveals a gap in the empirical knowledge in respect of work attitude; organizational learning culture that impact perceived internal service quality (INTERSER) at the large scale garment industries. The present study empirically evaluated four factors that could have impact on the perceived internal service quality namely job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture. The study involved 206 managerial level employees who were selected from ten large scale garment factories in western province in Sri Lanka. Reliability analysis was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the scales. Univariate, Bivariate and Multivariate analysis were carried out. Hypotheses were tested (H₁ -There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and perceived internal service quality, H₂ -There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and perceived internal service quality, H₃ -There is a positive relationship between job involvement and perceived internal service quality, H₄ - There is a positive relationship between organizational learning culture and perceived internal service quality) using Correlation and Regression analysis. The results indicated that all the independent variables; job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture were positively and significantly correlated to the perceived internal service quality. Using step by step regression analysis, all independent variables job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational learning culture were accepted except organizational commitment. Sixty nine percentage of the variability of the dependent variable are explained by the independent variables.

Key Words: perceived internal service quality, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, organizational learning culture.

Introduction

There are theoretical explanations or arguments (Caruana and Pitt, 1997; Hallowell et al., 1996) in respect of effects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture on

perceived internal service quality. It seems that there is a gap between the empirical knowledge available about the impact of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture on perceived internal service quality of managerial level employees in large scale garment industries in Sri Lanka. Empirically service quality had been tested as dependent variable with many independent variables by there was no study had been done on perceived internal service quality in Sri Lanka. Also only few studies have done on perceived internal service quality in other countries. They have focused on various factors that affect perceived internal service quality and there is no direct link with this study. Therefore, the research problem of this study is to find out; Do work attitude; organizational learning culture affects the employees' internal service behaviour (quality).

In specific the following research questions were addressed;

1. Do job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture impact on perceived internal service quality of managerial level employees of large scale garment industry in Sri Lanka?
2. What is the simultaneous effect of these factors on perceived internal service quality in managerial level employees of large scale garment industry in Sri Lanka?
3. Which factor (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture) affect most on perceived internal service quality in managerial level employees of large scale garment industry in Sri Lanka?

The working definition of perceived internal service quality is the attitude that people have towards one another and the way people serve each other inside their organization. Garment industry can be divided as small, medium and large scale (Central Bank Report, 2002). The various levels of employees are engage in this sector such as managerial, clerical and shop floor level. Only managerial level employees of large scale garment industry were considered for the study. Managerial level employees included top, middle and lower level managers (Mintzberg, 1975).

Research Model

Job satisfaction refers the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievements of one's job value. Job satisfaction with performance has been studied by many researchers (Arnold and Davey, 1999; Boshoff and Tait, 1996; Hartline and

Ferrell, 1993; Herrington, 1999).

Balzer et al., (1990) identified that an employee that experiences job satisfaction might be more effective and efficient in completing assigned tasks. It is reasonable to say that an individual's attitude about his or her job should have meaningful implication about how he or she does it. Therefore, many researchers organise that job satisfaction is a driver of performance (McGreger, 1960). Porter and Lowler (1968) concluded that performance in the driver of job satisfactions. However, job satisfaction has often been established as an antecedent of customer oriented behaviour (Hoffman and Ingram, 1992). Greater job satisfaction has also been generally related to organizational citizenship behaviours (Smith et al., 1983). Schneider (1980) found that job satisfaction was one of the major reasons for difference in employee's service delivery levels satisfied employees delivered high quality service component to dissatisfy employees during the service encounter. There is concrete evidence that satisfied employees make for satisfied customers (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Job satisfaction in the nursing profession has also been shown to increase performance since satisfied employees performed high quality cure (Heyman, 1989). In addition, Locke and Latham (1990) completed studies that found satisfied employees were more likely to assist customers. Hence these arguments lead to hypothesis as follows.

H₁ - There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and perceived internal service quality.

Organizational commitment refers the employee's loyalty to the organization. Individuals take some unrelated aspect of their lives on continued organizational membership commitment came into being when a person, by making a side bet links extraneous interest with a consistent line of activity (Becker, 1960). An effective response to beliefs about the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

According to Reichers' (1985) study, employees in an organization might have a number of commitment (foci of commitment) that affect their behaviour and attitudes in their workplace, such as commitment to the organization to the occupation to the union, to the workgroup and to the job. Thus, employees' work behaviour is affected by several commitment not just one. O'Reilly and Chatmon (1986) also mentioned that commitment has different bases (Components of commitment), which motives are causing the attachment to different foci. Each of the commitments will have a different influence on employees' behavioural outcomes, such as job performance, citizenship behaviour turnover intention and absenteeism (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Meyer et al., (1989) also mentioned that employees who are emotionally attached to the organization will perform

differently compared to those employees who stay in the organization because of the high cost of leaving or limited job opportunities. Although committed employees are believed to work harder for a firm than those who are not committed (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Studies conducted recently (Boshoff and Allen, 2000; Richeld, 1996) have shown that the Organizational Commitment of an employee has an important role to play in determining the level of service quality delivered to customers. Pedrick (1998) found that there is a positive relationship between employees' organizational commitment and customer perceptions of service quality. Some studies indicated that there is no relationship between organizational commitment and behaviour related variables (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) while some say there is a negative relationship (Hartline and Ferrell, 1993). Commitment to work has been a topic of interest to researchers for almost two decades as reflected by many studies on the topic (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Based on these arguments the hypothesis for the study is as following:

H₂- There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and perceived internal service quality.

Job involvement defined as motivated to perform well. When job involvement is viewed as a performance self-esteem contingency the following definitions can be given. The term 'ego-involvement' is defined as the situation which the person engages the status seeking motive (Allport, 1947). A person is ego-involved "in a job or task to whatever extent his self-esteem is affected by his perceived level of performance. i.e., involvement exists when a person's feelings of esteem are increased by good performance and decreased by bad performance - (Vroom, 1962). A job holder is motivated to perform well because of some subjective rewards or feelings that he expects to receive or experience as a result of performing well (Lawler and Porter, 1967). When job involvement is viewed as a component of self image, many researchers give the following definitions. The degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work or the importance of work in his total self image (Lodahl and Kejner, 1965). The Psychological identification with one's work as well as the degree to which the job situation is central to the person and his identity (Lawler and Hull, 1970). The degree to which an individual's work role is important in itself, as well as the extent to which it forms the basis of self-definition, self evaluation and success definition by Maurer, 1969. Lawler and Hull (1970) found that there is no significant correlation between the two variables of job involvement and job performance. Also a research carried out by Siegal and Ruh (1973) found a positive relationship between performance/ productivity and job involvement. Therefore job involvement can be described as occupational commitment for his/her job. Developed hypothesis is;

H₃ - There is a positive relationship between job involvement and perceived internal service quality.

Organizational Learning Culture refers to the one that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. Previous studies have linked organizational learning culture to other positive outcomes within the organization, from both an economic and psychological perspective. Organization learning culture is positively related to organizational financial performance at the economic level (Yang, 2003) and motivation to transfer of learning and intention to leave at the psychological level (Egan et al., 2004). Learning organizations differ from other traditional organizations. Like traditional organizations, they are concerned about market share, productivity quality and profitability, but they also clearly know that learning is the key to achieve business success. There is a correlation between the learning organization dimensions and knowledge and financial performance (Watkins et al., 1997; Watkins and Malsick, 1993). Ellinger et al., (2003) showed that seven dimensions of the learning organization explained 10% of the variance in financial performance. Sta Maria and Watkins (2001) argued that learning culture can be seen as a prerequisite for successful organizational change and innovation. Based on the available literature the following is the Hypothesis for the study;

H₄ - There is a positive relationship between organizational learning culture and perceived internal service quality.

Combine influence of the above variables on perceived internal service quality refers to simultaneous effect of the above four variable on perceived internal service quality. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and organizational learning culture were hypothesized as independent variables that positively related to perceived internal service quality. Figure 1 indicates the conceptual framework of the research.

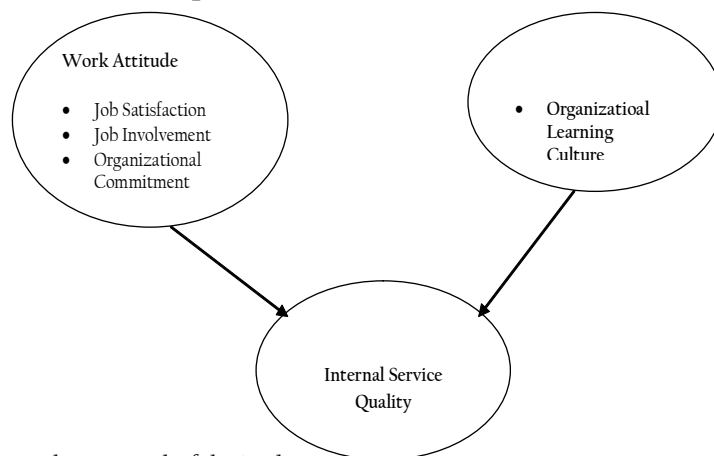


Figure1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Method

Study setting, Design and Sampling

Researchers have found multiple factors that influence on perceived internal service quality (Bitner et al., 1994). Thus, the researchers were interested in explaining the effects of four factors (job satisfaction, organizational involvement, organizational commitment, and organizational learning culture) on perceived internal service quality rather than establishing definite cause effect relationship. Therefore, the type of investigation of this study was correlated.

The survey was carried out in ten large scale garment factories in Sri Lanka (Central Bank Report, 2004). Ten large scale factories are selected from west-ern province by convenience sample techniques. Unit of analysis was at individual managerial level employees. There were 600 managerial level employees in all ten factories. A sample size of 260 managerial level employees 26 from each firm was selected for the study as a convenience sample. The questionnaire for the managerial level employees was distributed in English and Sinhala language. It was possible to collect 206 questionnaires from 10 large scale garment industries.

Measures

Perceived internal Service quality: The perceived degree of internal service quality of an employee was operationalized in to 14 indicators (Caruana and Pitt, 1997). One sample of examples is; I understand the specific need of other employees within this organization. The response to the question were elicited on a 7 point likert type scale of 1- strongly disagree; to 7 – strongly agree.

Job Satisfaction: This independent variable was measured by using a previous tested questionnaire by Egan et al., (2004). The independent variable contains 3 statement and measure with three statements on a seven point likert scale. (1- strongly disagree; to 7- strongly agree) one sample question used is; “I am generally satisfied with kind of work I do on my job.

Job involvement : Job involvement variable was measured by using an indicators developed by Lodal and Kejner (1965) job involvement was measured by using a 15 questions from which responses were elicited on a 7 point likert scale ranging from. 1 Strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree. Two sample questions used are;

I will stay Over Time to finish a job, even if I am not paid for it , You can measure a person pretty well by how good a job he does.

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment was operationalized in to 15 indicators based on Meyer et al., (1990) 15 questions items were used to measure the organizational commitment. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement about the organizational culture according to the 7 point likert scale. (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree) the two sample items used are; I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization, I do not feel a strong sense of “belonging” to my organization.

Organizational learning culture: The variable was measured with an indicators developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993). organizational learning culture was measured using 21 questions from which response were elicited on a 7 point likert scale ranging from 1- strongly disagree 7- strongly agree. The two sample questions used are; In my organization, people help each other learn, In my organization, people are given time for learning.

Reliability and Validity of the instrument

The Cronbach's coefficient alpha value was measured to check whether each questionnaire measures the variable reliably (Fraenkei and Wallen, 1996). Cronbach's alpha were 0.6536 for job satisfaction 0.7547 for the organizational commitment, 0.8613 for job involvement, 0.9807 for organizational learning culture and 0.6583 for perceived internal service quality. Conceptualization of both dependent variable and independent variable was based on models used in researches published previously. This method was used to increase the content validity of operationalizing the research and to increase comparability.

The correlation analysis support the hypothesis formulated linking the relationship between the perceived internal service quality and the independent variables. The acceptance of hypothesis linking the relationship between perceived internal service quality and the independent variables. Suggests that instrument possesses adequate construct validity

Results

The results of Pearson's coefficient of correlation analysis used to test all the null hypotheses are presented in Table 1. As the bivarial hypotheses are concerned with a positive relationship one tailed test was used.

As can be seen in Table 1, all four variables are correlated over 0.380. The correlation coefficient of all the variables were significantly greater than zero, and therefore the null hypothesis proposed for these variables were rejected ($p < .01$). This means that the data support the hypothesized relationship (positive) between each of the variable and perceived internal service quality.

Table 1- Pearson Correlation Matrix for all variables

No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	Perceived internal service quality	1.0				
2	Job satisfaction	0.760				
3	Organizational commitment	0.698	0.656			
4	Job involvement	0.767	0.778	0.930		
5	Organizational learning culture	0.375	0.103	0.302	0.379	

Multivariate analysis evaluates the simultaneous effect of all the independent variable on the perceived internal service quality. The H₃ of this study is concerned with aggregate impact of the four variables on perceived internal service quality. The result of the regression the four independent variables against the dependent variable perceived internal service quality are shown in Table 2.

Table 2- Summary of the fitted Regression

R	R Square	Adjusted RSquare	Standard Error	F	Sig. F
0.835	0.69	0.692	0.217	154.46	.000

The mention adjusted R² 0.696 indicate that the 69% of variance in perceived internal service quality is explained by the four independent variables jointly. The F value is 154.46 that is significant explain 69% of the variance in perceived internal service quality.

A stepwise regression was done in finding out the extent of contribution of each variable to R square value or the total explanatory power of the regression model. The results of the regression model (Table 3) show that there were three predictor variables that could significantly contribute to the R square value.

Table 3- Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of perceived internal service Quality

Variable	R square	Beta	Significant t
Job involvement	0.588	0.767	17.054
Job satisfaction	0.656	0.444	6.337
Organizational learning culture	0.696	0.415	5.196

R²= 69% Adjusted R²= 0.692 F= 154.46

The result of the stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that Job Involvement impact, the perceived internal service quality had the beta value and contribute about 59% ($R^2 = 0.588$) to variance in perceived internal service quality. Job satisfaction of the employee contributes about 68% (change in R^2 0.068 and 0.04) 7%, respectively. Organizational commitment was not found contributing to the explanatory power suggesting that job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational learning culture explained about 69% of variation in perceived in service quality.

Discussion

As hypothesized, it was found that the employees job involvement more impact on perceived internal service quality. According to this, the variable was found to be a significant predictor of perceived internal service quality. The job involvement of employees to be above mid point that management employees of this sector have agreed with the job involvement. Siegal and Ruh (1973) had identified that Job involvement as a motivation to perform well. The present research agrees with these stipulations. Rotenberry (2007) had indicated that Employees' self reported job involvement significantly predicated certain supervisors performance rating above the beyond work centrality. The research result agrees with this statement. Huger (2007) this study was found that commitment and involvement accounted for 31% of the variance in perceived board member performance.

Positive and significant relationship was found between job satisfaction and perceived internal service quality. Also it was found that job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of perceived internal service quality. The job satisfaction variable of the sample gives a satisfactory level, ($M=3.9$, $S.D=1.2$) the job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction is to be close to agree than to neither agree nor disagree. Thus, it explains that employees have job satisfaction. Schneider (1980) had indicated that job satisfaction leads to determine the employee's service delivery levels. The present study supports this statement. Although the linkages between job satisfaction and its outcome behavior (e.g. internal service quality) are not entirely consistent across studies happy and satisfied employees with more likely provide high internal service quality (Czekajewski, 2003). The findings of the present study support Czekajewski's (2003) contention that job satisfaction has a positive relationship with internal service quality. In the service profit Chain model (Heskett et al., 1994), internal service quality is viewed as being a predictor or driver of employee satisfaction, rather than the way the author of this study perceived the relationship.

The organization commitment was found to be positively and significantly related to perceived internal service quality and significant at 0.01% level.

($p, 0.0001$). Further, the correlation coefficient reveals that it appears to be strong correlation to perceived internal service quality. Reichers' (1985) study re-veals the Organizational Commitment that affect the work behavior of the employees. The research result agrees with this statement. Randall (1990) had indicated that organizational commitment has stronger relationship with organizational outcomes. The result of the present study too confirms this statement. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) stated that organizational commitment will have a different influence on employees' behavior outcomes. The research findings agreed with this statement. The present study findings were different from those of Mathieu and Zajac (1990) who identified that there is a no relationship between Organizational Commitment and behavior related variables. Hartline and Ferrell (1993) stated that there is a negative relationship between organizational commitment and behavior related variable. The research result did not agree with this statement. Usually researchers use an affective commitment scale to measure organizational commitment. Since there is a growing recognition that motions play an important role in organization behavior (George, 1990). Czekajewski (2003) found that employees' affective commitment is relatively correlated with customer's perceptions of service quality. Similarly in a Mathieu and Zajac (1990) Meta analysis of antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment researcher found a very weak relationship ($r=0.05$) between Organizational commitment and Job Performance rating. Meyer and Allen (1997) demonstrated that affective commitment has the strongest correlation with performance related measures.

Organizational culture was found to be positively and significantly related to perceived internal service quality. Further, a comparison of the correlation coefficient reveals that it appears to be less strongly correlated to perceived internal service quality than the other independent variables. Huber (1991) stated that Organization Learning Culture effect the change the organization behaviours. The present study supports this statement. Watkins and Marsick (1993) had defined that Organization Learning Culture helps to learns continuously and transforms itself. The above finding is somewhat similar to present study. Worrell (1995) had indicated that Organization Learning Culture helps to individual development as well as achieve the organization plan. The present research agrees with these stipulations. Berthoin and Dierkes (2004) study reveals the importance of organization learning and emphasized that how it helps to change in organizations environment. The result of the present study too confirms this statement. Most of the previous studies organizational learning culture was shown to be related to different financial variables such as, ROA (return on assess) ROE (return on equity) and MVA (market value added), Ellinger et al., (2002) and non financial variables such as knowledge performance and mission performance motivation to transfer of learning and turnover intention

(Egan et al., 2004).

Multivariate analysis identified that out of the four factors, three factors namely job involvement; job satisfaction and organizational learning culture were found to be explanatory factors having significant effect on perceived internal service quality. The implication of the finding is that if garment industry need to enhance perceived internal service quality, job involvement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational learning culture are critical to be considered and various strategies can be applied to enhance perceived internal service quality. Job involvement was found as the strongest predictor of perceived job performance.

Conclusion and Implications

Internal service quality influences on the external service quality, the company growth and profit. Therefore researchers have paid more attention to the internal service quality. The most important conclusion that can be made to the garment industry is that high attention should be paid to improve job involvement of the managerial employees. Managers and that very much attention should be paid to find out the ways to improve the attitudes to job involvement by using the most appropriate criteria. Another conclusion arrived at is the garment industry should pay more attention to improve the level of job satisfaction, not only it has been identified as a key factor related to internal service quality, but it has also been identified as the key source of labour motivation. However, the other variable of employees' organizational commitment should be improved. Organizational learning culture is also significantly related to internal service quality. Thus, if the large scale garment industries ignore it managerial employees' internal service quality may be seriously affected.

The study was limited to investigate the impact of work attitude and organizational learning culture on the perceived internal service quality in large scale garment industries. Further investigation in other types of firms and industries may provide additional insight in to the findings of the study. This research was limited to a particular employee segment (only managerial level employees).

Further, this study should draw more attention of further researchers towards this important field. It is suggested that future studies be looked deeply into the work attitude and organizational learning culture on perceived internal service quality. Further, attention should be paid to compare the managerial employees and non managerial employees perceived internal service quality in future studies. Some researches could be done using different indicators for key variables. This could help to find out whether the analysis is indicator dependent.

Garment industries need to figure out where they are in terms in of the service management system. Then, with proper tools, such as instruments for measuring internal service quality, they can diagnose many problems in industries and set up proper policies to solve them. Top managers and Human Resources managers in Garment industries can use tools mentioned in the study and findings presented in this study to design strategic plan to improve the internal service quality. Improving internal service quality within garment industry is also a key factor in determining its long term success.

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