THE EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STUDENT COUNSELLORS IN THE PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR OF SRI LANKA- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ABC PVT. LTD

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ABSTRACT

Higher education across the world faces continuous transformations which has significantly shaped the manner in which its industry, organizations and people perform. As Chahar and Hatwal (2018) has discussed, Higher education is related to the academic activities, staff, students, administration, research work, financial support by the government and other supporters, activities by students etc. further, private higher education also continue on the academic and non-academic business operation funded with investments and other investment sources. Sri Lanka as a country cannot afford to be left behind in the scheme of things in which private higher education will play a key role. The Student Counselors or Student recruitment officers as key personnel in non-academic caliber in private education institution being relatively target-oriented in nature, focus on the primary responsibility to deliver the number of registrations and income to the business operation. While dealing with such nature of the job, keeping a performance management system to ensure job satisfaction is challenging.

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction among school counsellors has been widely researched in few developed economies. But little is known about job satisfaction among school counsellors in developing countries, which this study and future ones hope to ☐ll.

However, according to Eduwen et al (2014), job satisfaction among student counselors has been researched in a few developed economies pertaining to higher education. However, little is known about job satisfaction among student counselors in developing countries. With such significance the need for the performance management in higher education is identified to be of timely importance. According to Dasanayaka (2021) despite the significance of the performance appraisal process in the higher education sector to enhance the job satisfaction and productivity of their academic staff, and non-academic staff only a limited amount of research work has been reported so far pertaining to this research scope. Thus, the researchers have identified the current need for conducting and extensive study on the research area to address the existing knowledge and evidence gap. The aim of the research is to identify the effect of performance management systems on Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors in the Private Higher Education Industry.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

a. To identify the level of relationship between a performance management system and job satisfaction.
b. To identify the effect of the performance management system fairness on job satisfaction.
c. To examine the effect of clarity of expectations on job satisfaction.
d. To examine the effect of Feedback on job satisfaction.
e. To identify the effect of employee opportunities for development on job satisfaction.
f. To examine the effect of employee recognition on job satisfaction
g. To provide suggestions and recommendations for improving performance management systems in order to increase job satisfaction.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher Education Industry

A country's education system plays a pivotal role in promoting economic growth and shared prosperity (Halil, 2017). Sri Lanka has enjoyed high school attainment and enrollment rates for several decades. However, it still faces major challenges in the education sector, and these challenges undermine the country's inclusive growth goal and its ambition to become a competitive upper-middle-income country. The state and non-state sector higher education providers have played a pivotal role within the industry. Currently there are only 15 statue universities in Sri Lanka. According to webometrics 2023 there are over 59 top ranked private universities in Sri Lanka. Hiran (2023) stated, the non-state

higher education sector has contributed immensely in the past years. However, there are not sufficient formal regulations and standardizations in place to regularly and periodically monitor, maintain compliance and quality in all their teaching and training programmes thus, creates the necessity for research.

Counseling in Education

The educational counseling process is undertaken by a group of specialists at multiple levels in the administrative, supervisory and educational work (Levitt et al, 2015). According to Alkhamaiseh (2021) educational counseling is considered as the advisory services provided by the academic advisor – the faculty member- to develop the student cognitively, academically, and professionally, and solve problems that hinder their academic achievement. However, according to Amutha & Priya (2021), the significant role of a student counselor is to provide information and guidance regarding students' educational plans and personality developments to attain successful enrollment and completion of their higher education programmes.

Performance Management and Performance Management Systems

According to Paposa & Kumar (2016), Performance management is one of the most important human resources development practices and is crucial for every organization. To improve the performance of the employees, it is absolutely necessary to evaluate their performance at regular intervals to understand where they stand, what is being expected from them and what they are actually contributing. Brown et al, (2017) stated that Performance and development agreement form the basis for development, assessment, and feedback in the performance management process. authors define expectations in the form of a role profile, which sets out role requirements in terms of key result areas and the competencies required for effective performance. Pulakos (2014) stated that many researchers and experienced practitioners have identified several characteristics that are prerequisites for effective performance management systems, there are also many decisions that need to be made to design a system ideally suited for a given organization's needs. One such decision is what purposes the system will serve.

Performance Management Systems and Job Satisfaction

According to Jayathilake (2017), Job satisfaction is an important attribute that organizations desire of their employees. In the higher education context, if nonacademic employees are not satisfied with their motivation factors, employee performance is very low, and inefficiency is increased.

According to Halim (2019) job fairness is an important factor that determines job satisfaction and when employees consider a decision as fair, it will have an impact on the emergence of satisfaction and increase a sense of acceptance and motivation to produce a better work performance. According to Nazeer (2023), offering great benefits is an important factor in creating job satisfaction, there are other things you can do to create an engaged and satisfied workforce. One of the best ones is to offer learning opportunities for every employee. A good LMS system can allow organizations to offer different courses for employees to take when they want. Hassan (2013) stated that role clarification is likely to be important in enhancing role clarity in workgroups especially when there is substantial uncertainty about work objectives and performance expectations.

According to Lam, et al (2013), argued that timely and accurate feedback is beneficial to both organizations and individuals, and such feedback is seen to play a significant role in the development of job and organizational attitudes, particularly when it is accepted and comprehended well. According to Ling (2019) stated that Feedback and value are information's with relations to work environment will indicate how well is a subordinate is performing. According to Widodo et al (2023), Seeing the importance of the influence of promotion, career development, work motivation in increasing employee job satisfaction, it is appropriate for promotion, career development, and work motivation to be given by every organization, both private organizations and government organizations.

Provision of promotion, career development, and work motivation is absolutely necessary to encourage employees to excel, which will ultimately facilitate organizational tasks. According to Danish & Ali (2013), argued that the motivation of employees and their productivity can be enhanced by providing them effective recognition which ultimately results in improved performance of organizations. In the recent past several studies were carried out the factors such as training and development, compensation and benefits, flexible working hours, and reported the results on performance management system and its effect on employee job performance and Job Satisfaction. However, factors that affect the performance management system as a whole like Fairness, Clarity of Expectations, Feedback, Opportunities for Development and Recognition positivist approach i.e. with scientific evidence are rarely carried out. Further a comparatives analysis of the said factors among Student Counselors or Student Recruitment Officers in the Private Higher Education Industry has not been carried out and not reported in the research studies. Therefore, this empirical research study has taken the initiative to fill this research gap.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study aims to provide a comprehensive discussion on the effect of performance management systems on job satisfaction of student counsellors in private sector. In order to conduct the study, the researchers have adopted the positivism as the research philosophy; the best fit for the philosophical stance. The deductive research approach is followed where the existing theories in literature were tested out. In the deductive research approach the most commonly used research strategy is Case Study and Survey and hence case-study based survey method following a mono quantitative method is selected. A cross-sectional study is conducted focusing on a given period of time and as the data collection technique questionnaire has been employed. The data analysis followed IBM SPSS 22 statistical data analysis software. The correlation has been tested to analyze the strength and relationship between independent and dependent variables were tested and evaluated using Pearson correlation using two tailed analyses. Regression models and Chi-square were used to test the hypotheses to confirm whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The research study is based on casual design where the researchers has identified the variables of performance management systems, and whether it has an impact to the student counselors' job satisfaction of the ABC Pvt Ltd Company.
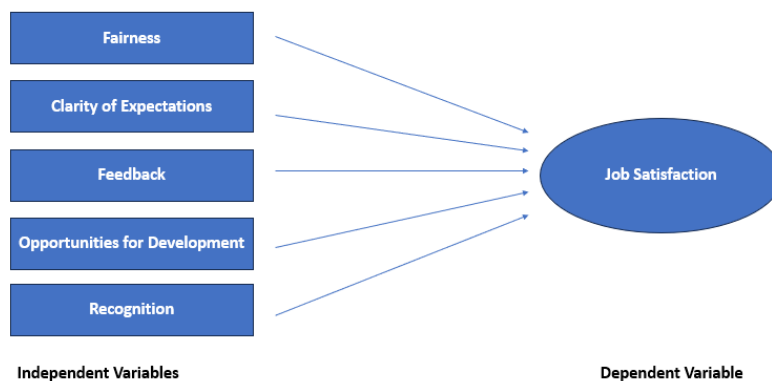
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Authors, 2024)

In order to achieve the objectives of research study following hypothesis statements were made to be tested by empirical findings.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1)

H1 A: There is a relationship between Performance Management System Fairness and Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors.

H2 A: There is a relationship between Clarity of Expectations and Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors.

H3 A: There is a relationship between Feedback and Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors.

H4 A: There is a relationship between Opportunities for Development and Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors.

H5 A: There is a relationship between Recognition and Job Satisfaction of Student

Ethical consideration of the research study was maintained by the researchers through voluntary consent of the participants, providing full information and the maintenance of the confidential status of the data gathered.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the sample of the research 103 student counselors were selected from a population of 140 student counselors across 40 branch networks of the ABC (PVT) Ltd; a leading higher education organization in Sri Lanka.

Table 1 – Student Counselor Population and Sample

Category	Population	Sample
Student Counselors	75	50
Senior Student Counselors	31	25
Student Recruitment Executives	18	15
Student Recruitment Consultant	5	4
Assistant Manager – Student Recruitment	5	4
Manager – Student Recruitment	6	5
Total	**140**	**103**

Source: (Authors, 2024)

Reliability testing

In the SPSS Survival Manual (Pallant, 2013) for the reliability and the validity of a research tool and for a better internal consistency of the research tool the use of Cronbach's Alpha as a measurement of internal consistency is commendable.

Table 2 – Reliability testing Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics		
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Performance Management Systems	.957	2
Fairness	.680	5
Clarity of Expectations	.684	5
Feedback	.640	5
Opportunities for Development	.685	5
Recognition	.640	5

Source: (Authors, 2024)

Based on the above as Cronbach's alpha on all variables are above 0.5 it means they have passed the reliability test. According to Cronbach's Alpha weights of 0.640- 0.957 provides acceptable value of adequate consideration of internal consistency of questions which was used to tested out the hypotheses constructed for the study.

The research study used Pearson correlation, two-tailed bivariate analysis to determine the level and direction of the linear relationship between independent variables (Fairness, Clarity of Expectations, Recognition, Opportunities of Development and Feedback) and Dependent variable (Job Satisfaction).

Table 3 – Inferential Statistics Analysis

Inferential Statistics Analysis					
Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation	Remarks	Chi-Square	Remarks	Rank of the factor
Fairness	0.936	Strong Positive Relationship	0.000	Alternative Hypothesis Accepted	1
Clarity of Expectatcion	0.762	Strong Positive Relationship	0.000	Alternative Hypothesis Accepted	2
Feedback	0.753	Strong Positive Relationship	0.000	Alternative Hypothesis Accepted	3
Opportunities for Development	0.892	Strong Positive Relationship	0.000	Alternative Hypothesis Accepted	4
Recognition	0.825	Strong Positive Relationship	0.000	Alternative Hypothesis Accepted	5

Source: (Authors, 2024)

Table 4 – Summary of the Hypothesis Analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation	Regression	R	R square	Hypothesis
Fairness	Job Satisfaction	0.936	0.166	0.936	0.876	H1 Accepted
Clarity of Expectatcion	Job Satisfaction	0.762	0.579	0.762	0.580	H2 Accepted
Feedback	Job Satisfaction	0.753	0.308	0.753	0.566	H3 Accepted
Opportunities for Development	Job Satisfaction	0.892	0.422	0.892	0.797	H4 Accepted
Recognition	Job Satisfaction	0.825	0.135	0.825	0.680	H5 Accepted

Source: (Authors, 2024)

Based on the above summary, all the hypothesis were positive relationship types according to the regression analysis and the entire hypothesis were positively correlate. However, H2 and H3 only having moderate positive relationship between two variables and all other hypothesis were remain in strong correlation according to Pearson correlation. Therefore, overall image between Performance Management Systems and Job Satisfaction will carry out Strong positive correlation and positive regression among independent and dependent variables. Hence, the study prove that the tested five alternative hypotheses were accepted according to the survey results.

6. CONCLUSION

For any education-based service organization, front line student counselors' job satisfaction is a critical requirement as it might impact on customer satisfaction as well. In such a scenario the knowledge and awareness regarding the performance management and job satisfaction in the context of a higher education organization is important. This knowledge has both theoretical implications and practical relevance to the contemporary industry in enhancing the personnel management and performance enhancement. The objective of this study was to find out how former studies on performance management systems discuss its impact on job satisfaction in the education industry. From the research findings, the research objectives were achieved by identifying the determinants of performance management systems as fairness, Clarity of Expectations, Feedback, Opportunities of development, and Recognition. Therefore, performance management systems effects on job Satisfaction. These two concepts and its factors should work hand in hand to ensure success and survival of the private higher education industry in Sri Lanka. The study accomplished that research question of the level of effect of performance management systems towards Job Satisfaction of Student Counselors.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The management of the organization should open up opportunities to learn new skills by driving non- academic operation of student counselors by forming teams, cross-team learning, job rotation techniques and assign them as team leaders as well.
- Drive on the succession planning on student counselor scope should always need to highlight their succession plans by clearly stating on the job expectation.
- Hold periodic meetings among staff to discuss issues affecting them and their jobs. Encouragement should be given when necessary. This will boost the Student Counselors morale, even sometimes, more than money incentives.
- Introduce a proper employee recognition policy many helps to satisfy employees without financial issues. Allow employees to generate new ideas that save time or effort or positively impact departments and teams
- Develop a competency-based career development programme for self- concept categories for frontline employees (Autonomy, Security, Technical functional competence, General managerial competence, Service, or dedication to cause)

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