



Empirical Review of Performance Lapses of the Managers: Reference to Sri Lankan Government Universalities

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Abstract

Performance of managers greatly affects the product and services of the organization and the lapses in managerial performance will create a drop in the product or service of the particular organization. This paper sets out to understand the managerial lapses of the performance of managers and to give recommendations for future similar studies based on identifying managerial performances and the relationships. Desk research was conducted by means of a preliminary literature survey to investigate the existing managerial performances. Accordingly, the secondary data from the local and international sources were used including the Sri Lankan government organizations like Auditor General Department etc. There were managerial deficiencies associated with the several managerial aspects in Sri Lankan state universities. After analysis of the secondary data it was revealed that major managerial lapses associated with the managerial inefficiencies followed by the non-compliance with the rules and regulations in Sri Lankan state universities. It is recommended to have further investigations based on the identified lapses of the managerial performance, by using different samples of the universities under number of local and global contexts for the betterment of the university community.

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Introduction

Performance of managerial roles by the Managers is an important factor in any organization related to several aspects. The process of performance management in public organizations can achieve a better quality of functionality and it can contribute to enhancing the accountability of public organizations. Performance of a manager depends considerably on how well his or her multiple roles are played and how well these roles played by managers of organization influence the performance of the organization (Khandawalla, 2004) ^[11]. Managerial Roles encourage managers to delegate and create development initiatives, empower and supervise groups within the improvement method (Mintzberg, 1973) ^[16]. Improving the performance of government organizations is one of the most important concerns in the public sector and effect has been made to assess factors that affect organizational performance (Cheng and Kim, 2018.). Further they explained that the performance improvement in public organizations has become a worldwide phenomenon. One of the most important topics in public administration and the process of performance management in public organizations can achieve a better quality of functionality and it can contribute to enhancing the accountability of public organizations. Author further said that the organizational politics and conflicts have negative effect on performance of government organizations.

Fernando, 2006 ^[8] explained that managerial innovation leads to change the existing working pattern, systems, and procedures more efficiently and effectively in delivering public service. Similar to the other public organizations, universities in any country are committed to play a vital role in creating and dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research activity and producing quality graduates for the job market, contributing to the national development as well as economic development (Fernando, 2016) ^[7]. Mech, 1997 ^[15] stated that, the performance of the managerial roles by individual managers is influenced by the

variables such as environment, the job functions, personal characters, and the situation. All the managers perform roles but in different levels. He further stated that the influence of a university service, size, complexity, span of control is influenced on managerial roles and the Chief Administration Officer (CAO), as an internally focused senior level team manager in an organization, trying to develop and maintain a smooth running. The study conducted in Canadian universities, prevalent qualifications were identified in performing Dean's role as administration, communication, fund raising, leadership, personality, problem solving ability, scholarships, sector knowledge, values and vision. Further the same study identified the main prevalent roles of the Deans such as administration, fund raising, leadership, quality, research, strategic direction, student experience etc. (Eric, 2019) [6]. As explained by Azhar *et al* 2013 [4], in his study related to the academic managers in higher education institutes in Pakistan, the higher education contributes to the country's development in different ways and for attending the objectives of the higher education, academic manager's role is very important.

As explained by Fernando, 2016, [7] the university administers motivation to achieve the significant determinant of the managerial innovation and supportive environment, which is mainly supports the academic staff and external environment are significant determinants of managerial innovation in the administration of selected universities in Sri Lanka. Further Fernando, 2016 [7] explains that improving performance of the public service is the key challenge faced by managers. The study conducted in Sri Lankan Universities by Weerasinghe and Fernando (2017), stated that there are very low facilities of the lecture halls, hostels and other welfare facilities maintained by university management especially in rural universities. The researches recommended that the university management should pressurize on governments to prioritize the measures to support the expectation of the students. The administration of the university should convince the services they expect by them in the city development such as walk ways, parking, shopping etc. Sri Lankan government university system consists of about 18 Universities located island wide, serving as the major contributor in the higher education sector in Sri Lanka at present. Sri Lankan universities are producing graduates who have different qualifications, with knowledge, skills and competencies and contribute to the development of Sri Lanka in economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects. The performance lapses of the managers will create huge disturbances to the above said national contributions by the universities.

Research problem

Higher education is the main part of the development of a country. Higher education makes students as the trained and expert assets for the country as well as for the world. It further contributes to the personality development of the students. When considering the management structure of the Sri Lankan state university system, the managerial performance is the critical factor for the daily performance and the future development of the university system. Managerial performance of the academic and administrative staff of the Sri Lankan state university system affect the production of the university graduates, providing the infrastructure and the logistic facilities for the students and the other internal stakeholders, maintaining the Sri Lankan universities and the world rank of the universities, mitigation of the conflicts with the stakeholders, fund raising and the effective fund utilization of the universities, effective auditing, ensure the

wellbeing of the students, staff and other related stakeholders of the university. As explained in earlier section, poor performance of the university administrators (managers) results in various problems in the Sri Lankan state university system. Mahmood, 2013 [14] explained that no society can flourish without significant and sustained higher education system. In today's context in the world, higher education is considered critical factor for achievement of economic progress, political stability and peace.

As explained in Public Investment Programme (2017 – 2020) [18] by Department of National Planning, Sri Lanka, the higher education is the pinnacle segment of the education pyramid, and is supposed to equip students with high level skills by delivering quality teaching, producing useful market oriented commercial researches to contribute to the social and economic development of the country. Further it says that the expenditure for university education as a percentage of government expenditure is 2.1% in 2015.

Several researches were conducted in relation to the problems of the managerial performance in Sri Lankan state universities. But it was observed by the researcher that still there are research gaps related to the deficiencies of managerial performance studies conducted in Sri Lanka. If those lapses of the managerial performances of the Sri Lankan universities could be identified, the future researches in the field of managerial performances can be conducted accordingly as to rectify the managerial lapses. Therefore, the research problem was identified as that there is a need of identifying the existing managerial lapses in the Sri Lankan state universities.

Objectives:

- To identify the existing managerial performance deficiencies (lapses) in Sri Lankan state university system
- To give recommendations for the future similar studies based on the results

Methodology

Desk research was conducted to collect the secondary data by literature survey in this study. Accordingly, the literature based secondary data were collected in this study related to the Managerial performances. The secondary data related to the deficiencies of the managerial performances were obtained from the local and international literature sources such as JSTOR, Emerald, Sedge publications etc. for the past period of 10-20 years. Similarly, the data related to managerial performances and their lapses or the deficiencies related to Sri Lankan organizations, universities were also referred. The secondary data from Department of National Planning, Sri Lanka / Auditor Generals Department, Sri Lanka, were obtained. Those data covered the period 2012 to 2022 in the Sri Lankan universities. Those secondary data were taken into the data base and the data were statistically analyzed to make the related results.

Results and Discussion

Performance lapses of the managers in Sri Lankan state universities

The analysis of the secondary data related to the Sri Lankan state universities revealed the presence of following managerial lapses. They are lapses related to the Accountability and Good Governance; Accounting deficiencies; Delay projects/contracts and capital works; Human Resources Management; Management Inefficiencies; Non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions; Operating inefficiency; lapses in Asset Management and lapses in Library Administration.

Those categorizations were done by the Auditor General's office of Sri Lanka in their annual auditing. The associated

percentages related to those managerial lapses are stated in the figure 1.



Source: Sri Lanka Annual audit reports, 2012-2022

Fig 1: Lapses in Managerial performances

According to the statistical analysis, the main managerial lapse is identified as the management inefficiencies, and it is reported as 30% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan state universities. There were several incidences such as not recovering the bond violation monetary values, delays, wrong decision making, poor supervisions etc. were observed in the secondary data analysis related to the Sri Lankan state universities. The second highest managerial lapse was identified as Non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions, reported as 25%. Some of the incidences reported under this category are not following the related procedures to submit the statutory annual documents, recruitments, waste disposal, physical verifications etc. The third highest managerial lapse is accounting deficiencies, reported as 11%. Some of the reported incidents under the accounting deficiencies are not recovering the loans, not following the accounting standards, incorrect calculation of income and expenditure etc. The lowest value of the managerial lapses was reported as 2% in library administration. Other managerial deficiencies associated in Accountability and Good Governance; Delay projects/contracts and capital works, Human Resources Management; operating inefficiency; lapses in Asset Management were reported in their respective percentages as stated in the figure 1.

It was a proven fact that the existence of the managerial lapses for long period in the organization will result in the poor performance of the organization. Improving the performance of government organizations is one of the most important concerns in the public sector and effort has been made to assess factors that affect organizational performance. Fernando (2006) [8] explained that managerial innovation leads to change the existing working pattern, systems, and procedures more efficiently and effectively to deliver public service. Further the organizational politics and conflicts have negative effect on performance of government organizations (Cheng and Kim, 2018). The study conducted by Estler in

1987, revealed that women demonstrated higher perceived competency demands across administrative roles. Mahmood (2013) [14] explains that academic manager has to deal with number of areas at the same time, patience, visionary and need conflict management ability. He said that the personality of the manager could affect the effectiveness of managers and they can take best decisions if they are psychologically healthy and strong. The study conducted at North Sumatara educational academy Indonesia revealed that conflicts negatively affect employees work performance while the leadership, organizational culture and work ethic have positive effect on employee work performance (Ferine *et al*, 2021). The non-managerial lecturers preferred the avoiding strategy after competition in the conflict management process (Sarpkaya, 2014) [19]. A study conducted by Mech 1997 [15], in higher education institutes revealed that the skills and expertise of chief academic officers (CAOs) may not lead to the managerial performance of CAOs. He stated that more CAOs understand about their jobs, the more sensitivity they can be to their organizations' needs and the result of that is the better managerial performance and the improved institutional effectiveness. Mech, 1997 [15] stated that, the performance of the managerial roles by individual managers is influenced by the variables such as environment, the job functions, personal characters, the situation, and all the managers perform all roles but in different levels. Finding of this study on CAOs managerial roles contribute to the picture emerging from earlier research that organizational rather than personal factors have more influence on the roles of managers. Further the study revealed that the time managers spend in selected managerial roles is related to their performance and organizational effectiveness. The managers whose role performances match their organizations needs and expectations are more successful. Darling and Fogliasso (1999) [5] revealed that it is impossible to eliminate organizational conflicts totally and the manager who try to eliminate conflict will not last long, while those manage it

well will typically experience both institutional benefits and personal satisfaction. A study conducted by Adam and Daniel (2020) ^[1] found that in their conclusions that the present research treads new ground by investigating whether and how mindfulness facilitates constructive conflict management in the workplace. It further showed that the mindfulness increases the collaboration and reduce the conflict avoidance. Results further showed that the cognitive reappraisal explains how mindfulness increases the collaboration.

Sally (2014) ^[20] explored that effective conflict management encourages enthusiasm, boosts morale and stimulates individual and organizational development, while ineffective conflict management produces more conflict and destructively affect the whole organization. According to Obi and Agwu (2017) ^[17], the success or the failure of a business organization depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of management's decision making. Managers' decisions can be personal or organizational. Personal decisions are those which are taken by managers concerning their personal life matters and the organizational decisions are taken by managers in the context of organization according to the objectives of the organization (Maruff, 2018). The study conducted in Nigerian public universities showed that institutional goal attainment was significantly correlated with academic administrators' directive, conceptual and analytic decision-making styles (Maruff, 2019) ^[13]. Further the same study revealed that managers make a variety of decisions that will have a significant impact on their performance, success and subsequent goal achievement.

As explained by Azhar *et al* 2013 ^[4], in his study related to the academic managers in higher education institutes in Pakistan, the higher education contributes to the country's development in different ways. The study revealed that the management effectiveness could occur due to personality of manager and he or she could get decision, if they are psychologically healthy and strong. Further Fernando, 2016 ^[7] explains that improving performance of the public service is the key challenge faced by managers and this research explains that it is necessary for the public sector managers to perform in innovative way in supplying goods and services, as it enhances the managers to play the role in different way leading to efficient and effective public service of the staff.

Conclusion

There are managerial deficiencies and lapses associated with the managerial aspects of Accountability and Good Governance; Accounting deficiencies; Delay projects/contracts and capital works; Human Resources Management; Management Inefficiencies; Non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions; Operating inefficiency; lapses in Asset Management and lapses in Library Administration. The highest reported managerial lapse is Management Inefficiencies which is about 30% of the reported managerial deficiencies. The second highest reported managerial lapse is Non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions reported as 25% and 11% of Accounting deficiencies were also reported. The lowest percentage of the managerial lapses was reported as 2% related to library administration.

Recommendations

It is recommended to have further investigations on the managerial lapses in all Sri Lankan universities and south Asian region and worldwide universities in long term for the betterment of the university community.

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