



Empirical Review of Managerial Lapses of Urban and Rural State universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Managerial performance lapses create a drop in the product or service in any organization. It will greatly affect the education services provided by the universities including Sri Lankan state universities. of the particular organization. This paper sets out to understand the managerial lapses of the performance of managers in both urban and rural universities separately 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 different percentages under the categories of the Urban and Rural locations of Sri Lankan state universities. After analysis of the secondary data, it was revealed that the main managerial lapse is identified as the Non complaints with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions as 30% in Sri Lankan urban universities and the main managerial lapse is identified as the management inefficiencies in the Sri Lankan Rural universities, and it is reported as 36% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan rural state universities. When comparing the managerial lapses reported in between the Sri Lankan urban universities managerial lapses related to Accountability and Good Governance, accounting deficiency, Management Inefficiencies, Asset management lapses were higher in rural universities than urban universities.

In considering the managerial deficiencies of Delay projects/contracts and capital works, financial administration, Operating inefficiency, they were only reported in the urban universities in the selected sample for this study. Management deficiency related to Human resources management, non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions reported in higher percentages in urban universities than rural universities. It is recommended to have further investigations based on the identified lapses of the managerial performance, by using data from all the universities under the categories of under the context of urban and rural universities for the enhancement of the performances of the university community.

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Keywords: Managerial performance deficiencies, lapses, Sri Lankan urban, rural state Universities

Introduction

Higher education plays a key role in Sri Lankan context. It contributes to the personality development of the students while producing the graduates in different professions. Sri Lankan government university system consists with about 18 Universities located island wide, under the University Grants Commission, serving as the major contributor to the higher education sector in Sri Lanka in present. The main established universities are located in main cities of Sri Lanka, that are called Urban universities and the other universities are located away from the main cities of Sri Lanka that are called Rural Universities in general.

There are main three staff categories in the Sri Lankan university system as Academic staff (who involve in lecturing, researching, consultation, administration etc.), Administrative staff (who are involved in administrative and financial activities, research and consultations) and Non Academic staff (who involve in the academic and administrative assistant service). The academic and the administrative staff are handling the managerial positions in the higher education institutes. The performances of all above staff categories are equally important for the proper functioning of the universities.

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. As same, the performance of the managers are important in the university system as well.

Mech, 1997 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. As explained by Fernando, 2016, the

university administers motivation to achieve the significant determinant of the managerial innovation and supportive environment, which mainly, supports the academic staff and external environment are significant determinants of managerial innovation in the administration of selected universities in Sri Lanka. Henegama, 2025 revealed that there are managerial performance lapses in the several aspects of managerial functions in the Sri Lankan university system. This investigation further focused to find the status of managerial performances of the managers in two categories of universities in Sri Lanka as Urban universities and rural universities.

Research problem

In the present-day context, Sri Lankan state universities can be classified as Urban universities and the Rural universities. The main established universities are located in main cities of Sri Lanka, that are called Urban universities and the other universities are located away from the main cities of Sri Lanka that are called Rural Universities in general. The classification based on the location of them in the island and they are illustrated as follows.

Table 1: Urban and Rural universities in Sri Lanka (categorized by location)

Urban Universities	Rural Universities
University of Colombo	University of Ruhuna
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	Eastern University, Sri Lanka
University of Kelaniya	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
University of Moratuwa	Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
University of Peradeniya	Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
The Open University of Sri Lanka	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University	Uva Wellassa University
University of the Visual & Performing Arts	University of Jaffna
UGC (Administrative Body – Urban)	—

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, effective auditing, ensure the wellbeing of the students, staff and other related stakeholders of the university. A poor performance of the university administrators (managers) results in various problems in the Sri Lankan state university system.

As explained by Henegama, 2025, the Sri Lankan state university has reported the 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.

Researcher hypothesised that above identified performance lapses can be vary in two categories of universities in Sri Lanka as Urban universities and Rural universities. Therefore, there is possibility of having differences in the performances lapses when comparing the performances lapses in between urban universities and the rural universities in Sri Lanka. The research empirical gap was identified in the researchers conducted related to the managerial

performances in Sri Lanka in 2 different contexts of locations as urban universities and the rural universities.

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 those managerial lapses by using related mitigating measures related to the relevant context of the University as suitable for urban and rural. Therefore the research problem was identified as that there is a need of identifying the existing managerial lapses in the Sri Lankan state universities based on their context of location as urban and rural universities.

Objectives

- To identify the existing managerial performance deficiencies (lapses) in Sri Lankan state university system based on the context of location of urban and rural
- To make the comparison of the levels of the managerial lapses in between the urban and the rural universities in Sri Lanka
- To give recommendations for the future similar studies based on the results

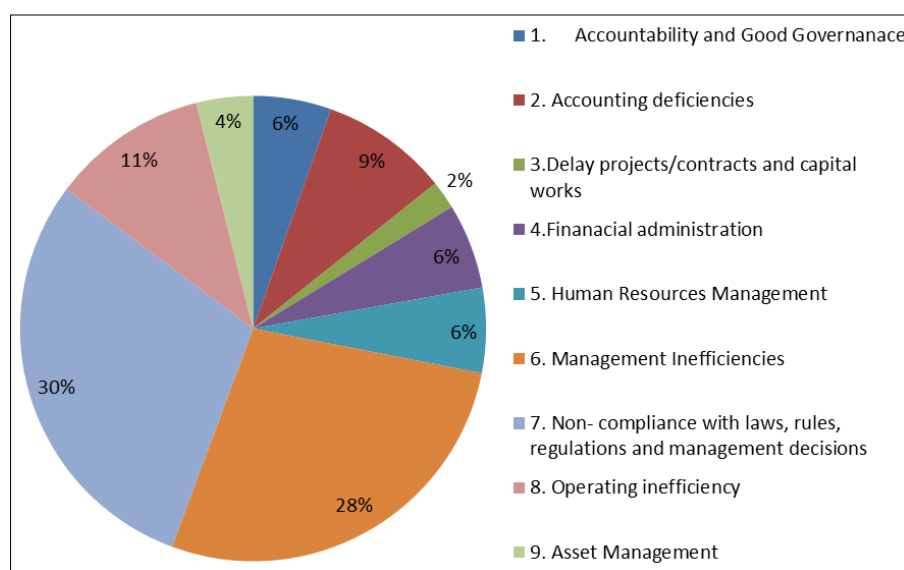
Methodology

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 related matters. 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 were obtained from Department of National Planning of Sri Lanka / Auditor Generals Department of Sri Lanka. 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. Further data related to urban and rural were separated and analyzed severalty to identify the managerial performance related lapses in two categories of universities as urban and rural.

Results and Discussion

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 during the period from 2012 to 2022. Those Managerial lapses were separately analyzed in the contexts of location of urban and rural universities. The associated percentages related to those managerial lapses are stated below separately as urban universities and rural universities.

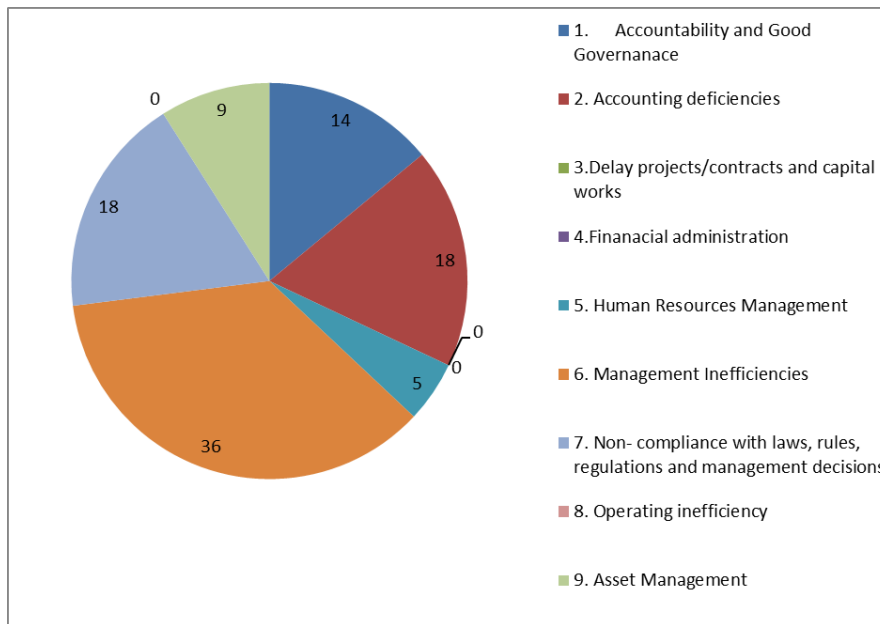


Source: Sri Lanka Annual audit reports, 2012-2022

Fig 1: Lapses in Managerial performances in Urban Universities

According to the statistical analysis, the main managerial lapse is identified as the Non complaints with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions as 30%. 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 second highest managerial lapse was identified as reported as Management inefficiencies, and it is reported as 28% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan state urban 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 this category. The third highest managerial lapse is operating inefficiencies, reported as 11%. The fourth highest managerial lapse is Accounting

deficiencies reported as 9%. 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 managerial lapses of Accountability and Good Governance/Financial administration/ Human Resources Management are shown the 6% of same percentage among the urban universities. The lowest value of the managerial lapses was reported as 2% in delay in projects, contracts and capital works. 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.

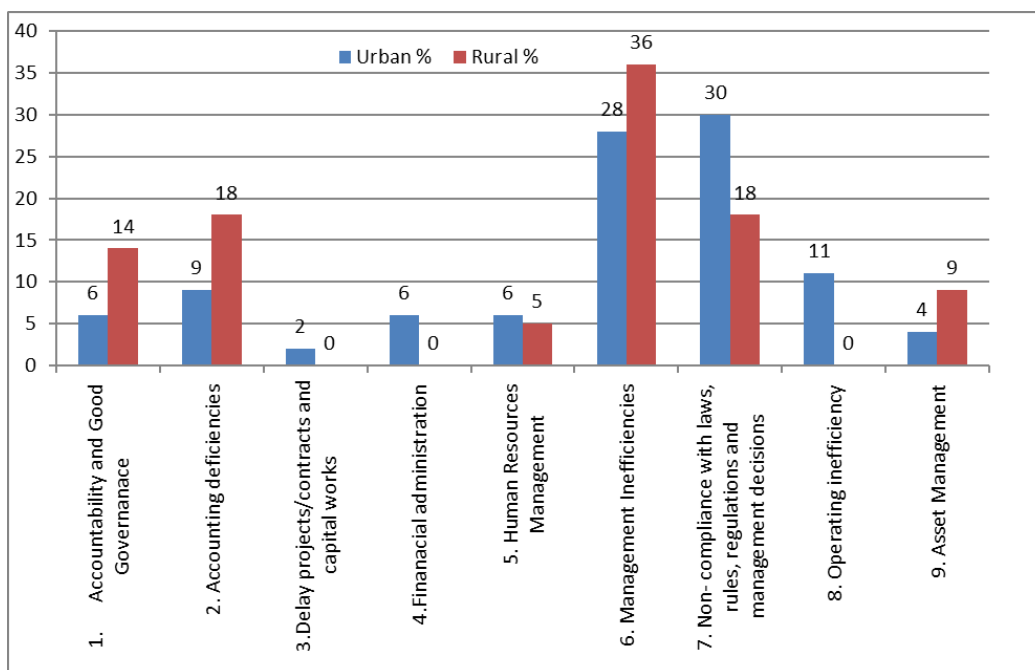


Source: Sri Lanka Annual audit reports, 2012-2022

Fig 2: Lapses in Managerial performances in Rural Universities

According to the statistical analysis, the main managerial lapse is identified as the management inefficiencies in the Sri Lankan Rural universities, and it is reported as 36% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan rural 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 rural Sri Lankan state universities. The second highest managerial lapse was identified as non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions, reported as 18%. 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. Further the managerial lapse of accounting

deficiencies, also reported as 18% in Sri Lankan rural universities. 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. Accountability and Good Governance reported next highest percentage as 14%. The lowest value of the managerial lapses was reported as Human Resources Management as 5%. Other managerial deficiencies associated in; 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 2. The following Figure 3 shows the comparison of the percentages of the managerial lapses in two categories of universities as urban university and rural university.



Source: Sri Lanka Annual audit reports, 2012-2022

Fig 3: Comparison of the Lapses in Managerial performances in Urban and Rural Universities

When comparing the managerial lapses reported in between the Sri Lankan urban universities and the rural universities there were several factors revealed. In considering the managerial lapses related to Accountability and Good Governance, rural universities show the 8% higher percentage of lapses than urban universities. When considering the management lapse of accounting deficiency rural universities shows the 9% higher value than the urban universities. the managerial lapse of Management Inefficiencies is 8% higher in the rural universities than urban universities. As same the Asset management lapses were 5% higher in rural universities than urban university.

In considering the managerial deficiencies of Delay projects/contracts and capital works, financial administration, Operating inefficiency, they were only reported in the urban universities in the selected sample for this study.

Management deficiency related to Human resources management, non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions reported in higher percentages in urban universities than rural universities in the vales of 1% and 12% respectively.

When considering the above results, it is observed that 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. As per the results of the comparison of the managerial performance deficiencies, it is clear that some performance lapses reported in higher values in the the Sri Lankan rural state universities and whereas some managerial lapses reported higher in the Sri Lankan urban state universities. As explained by Henegama, 2025^[10], there were managerial deficiencies associated with the several managerial aspects in Sri Lankan state universities and 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. 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 at North Sumatra 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)^[13]. Mech, 1997^[16] 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. Sally (2014) 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)^[18], 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)^[14].

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.

Conclusion

According to the statistical analysis, the main managerial lapse is identified as the Non complaints with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions as 30% in Sri Lankan urban universities. The second highest managerial lapse was identified as reported as Management inefficiencies, and it is reported as 28% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan state urban universities. The third highest managerial lapse is operating inefficiencies, reported as 11% and the fourth highest managerial lapse is accounting deficiencies reported as 9% in Sri Lankan urban universities. The managerial lapses of Accountability and Good Governance/Financial administration/ Human Resources Management are shown the 6% of same percentage among the urban universities. The lowest value of the managerial lapses was reported as 2% in delay in projects, contracts and capital works. 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.

According to the statistical analysis, the main managerial lapse is identified as the management inefficiencies in the Sri Lankan Rural universities, and it is reported as 36% out of total reported lapses in Sri Lankan rural state universities. The second highest managerial lapse was identified as non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions, reported as 18%. Further the managerial lapse of accounting deficiencies, also reported as 18% in Sri Lankan rural universities. Accountability and Good Governance reported next highest percentage as 14%. The lowest value of the managerial lapses was reported as Human Resources Management as 5%. Other managerial deficiencies associated in; Delay projects/contracts and capital works, Human Resources Management; operating inefficiency; lapses in Asset Management were reported.

When comparing the managerial lapses reported in between the Sri Lankan urban universities and the rural universities there were several factors revealed. In considering the managerial lapses related to Accountability and Good Governance, rural universities shows the 8% higher percentage of lapses than urban universities. When

considering the management lapse of accounting deficiency rural universities shows the 9% higher value than the urban universities. The managerial lapse of Management Inefficiencies is 8% higher in the rural universities than urban universities. As same the Asset management lapses were 5% higher in rural universities than urban university. In considering the managerial deficiencies of Delay projects/contracts and capital works, financial administration, Operating inefficiency, they were only reported in the urban universities in the selected sample for this study. Management deficiency related to Human resources management, non-compliance with laws, rules, regulations and management decisions reported in higher percentages in urban universities than rural universities in the vales of 1% and 12% respectively.

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. Further the comparison studies of the levels of managerial lapses in between urban and rural universities can be investigate including the all the universities in to the study sample.

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