

**PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND
JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: GOVERNMENT
UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA**Wickramasinghe, W.M.K.G.A¹, Khatibi, A², Azam, S.M.F³, Dharmaratne, I⁴¹PhD Student, Management Science University, Malaysia²Professor Dr Ali Khatibi, Management Science University, Malaysia³Dr S.M.Ferdous Azam, Management Science University, Malaysia⁴Dr I.Dharmaratne, Management Science University, Malaysia

Abstract —Psychological empowerment is one of the emerging concepts that has been given much prominence in the recent past. In addition, psychological capital plays dominant role enhancing job satisfaction. This paper aims to determine the impact of psychological empowerment and psychological capital on job satisfaction among administrative staff of universities and the study revealed a positive relationship exist between psychological empowerment, psychological capital and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment, psychological capital, job satisfaction, university admin staff, Regressions

I.INTRODUCTION

Psychological empowerment is defined as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological capital is the positive individual propensities that inspire and support successful completion of work (Luthens et al, 2007). Locke (1996) stated job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive personal state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. Empirical studies have found positive relationship among psychological empowerment and job satisfaction (Al-Ababneh et al, 2017; Alajmi, 2016; Ifran et al, 2016). Further, psychological capital (PhyCap) has also shown positive impact on job satisfaction (Kappagoda, 2016; Appollis, 2010; Luthens et al, 2007)

Sri Lanka is being situated in strategically important location; connecting to global Economy via five hubs is an easy task. It is in a strong position to become regional knowledge hub and as a regional knowledge hub can connect to emerging economies in Asian region, lubricant affluent Middle East, cutting edge economies in western and evolving Africa. Universities are integrated part of a society and also apart from society. Apart means it provide platform to understand world as it is and re imaging the as it have to be. Rio+ Centre established in Brazil is engaging in the creation and dissemination of knowledge both locally and globally. Several UN organizations have supported the launch of Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, committing Universities around the world to:

- Includes sustainable development concepts in to core curriculum across all disciplines and teach ;
- Enhancement research on sustainable development;
- Provide concept of green campus to stakeholders;
- Backing communities for their sustainability efforts ;
- Involve with and disseminates results through global frameworks

(Source : GUNI, 2014)

Universities can play a major role to produce required human capital. Therefore, the administrative staffs who help to produce quality graduates should be happy workers in the system. Identification of their satisfaction levels and actions to mitigate dissatisfaction would be necessity of the hour in order to provide excellence service to stakeholders. Therefore, it is obvious that government universities have to play a major role as they absorbed best students out of advanced level examination in Sri Lanka to produce knowledge workers to knowledge based economy. Administrators of these universities are playing vital role to produce quality and relevant graduates on time. Their satisfaction level is impacting on their efficiency. As such identification of their satisfaction level and taking measure to reduce the dissatisfaction and increase the satisfaction is the need of the hour. Furthermore, after 2010, in the postwar era, there are 21 international universities started their academic activities in Sri Lanka. The external opportunities create many staff to leave the government universities or external applicants to not to apply for key positions in universities such as registrars, bursars and directors. Burnouts, on the other hand, have negative effect to job satisfaction, including emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Ozyurt & Hayran, 2006).

Therefore, increasing the level of job satisfaction among administrators would be beneficial to staff as well as universities to outperform its competitors. There are many vacancies for Registrars and Bursars in the university system.

In addition, many other Administrative post are also vacant Therefore, levels of job satisfaction among staff are to be identified. It is better measure it soon and identify the level of magnitudes to avoid brain drain if the government universities are to run in an efficient way to provide excellent service to its stakeholders. Lives of people inside the organization are affected by job satisfaction. According to the study of Farage, Cass & Cooper (2005), as cited in Tatsuse & Sekine (2010) job dissatisfaction can result to serious mental health problems burnout, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and even some leading to coronary heart disease (Hemingway & Marmot, 1999 as cited in Tatsuse & Sekine 2010; Sales & House, 1971 as cited in Tatsuse & Sekine 2010).

A. Brief history of University System in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka had only one university called “The University of Ceylon” which was incorporated in 1942 by amalgamating The University College and The Ceylon Medical College (1870) at the time we gained independence. This was transplant from England and English was the medium of instruction. The university was autonomous and consists of organs such as The Court, the Council and the Senate. University of Ceylon becomes two separate universities in 1967. In 1958, Vidiyalankara and Vidyyodaya Pirivenas were raised to university status. University of Jaffna, Moratuwa, Ruhna, Eastern and the Open University of Sri Lanka were established under the Higher education Act of 1978. Rajarata, Sabaragamuawa and South Eastern universities were established during years 1998 to 2000. Univeraty of Wayamba, Performing Arts, Uwa Wellassa University were established in the recent past. At present, there are 15 universities under the purview of UGC. The striking feature in the development of our university system has been the establishment of 16 numbers of postgraduate institutes and other institutes during the past 41 years. The universities of Sri Lanka have been governed for the past 36 years by the provisions of the Universities Act No 1978 and the amendments made to it in 1985 and the subsequent years. The enactment of 1978 represents a compromise between the principle of university autonomy which was cherished by influential and articulate sections of university academics and the need for regulating and coordinating university education by agencies of the state, a role in which the government had already exercised responsibility and authority for a period of 40 years since 1966. The re organization of universities under the provisions of this Act proved to be successful and durable (S.Thilakarathna, 2000). However, the autonomy exercised by the universities in the period prior to 1966 was not restored entirely under the new scheme. The elevation of the new campuses established in the period 1972-1977 to the status of universities; the establishment of the University Grant Commission and the University Services appeal board are among the principal changes introduced by this enactment in the university system. One of the principal considerations relating to the autonomy of universities is the power vested in the minister in charge of the university education as specially laid down in the Act. New government is considering the concept of autonomous universities.

B. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the paper are; 1. To determine the effect of Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction, 2. To determine the effect of Psychological Capital on Job Satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Spreitzer (1995a), by putting the Thomas and Velthouse model as a base, operationalized it by emerging a scale to measure the four dimensions of empowerment. Spreitzer retitled meaningfulness cognition to ‘meaning’ and choice cognition was given another name ‘self-determination’. Spreitzer (1995a) conducted a study in an industrial firm and an insurance company and found that the four components of psychological empowerment, namely meaning, competence, self-determination and impact, combine additively to create an overall concept of psychological empowerment that results in managerial effectiveness.

Further, she found that the absence of any one dimension will reduce the effect of empowerment but will not completely eradicate the overall effect of empowerment that would be experienced in a working context. Correspondingly, Spreitzer et al. (1997) establish that a single component of empowerment on its own was not associated with organizational consequence such as satisfaction, effectiveness and low job-related strain. The research team establishes that employee should experience all four components of psychological empowerment in order for an organization to reach its outcome such as contentment, effectiveness and low strain in job related activities.

The study conducted by Ababneh et al (2017) have explored the influence of Psychological Empowerment on Job satisfaction in Five Star Hotel in Jordan using sample of 186 employees working in different departments. It has been found that Psychological Empowerment is a significant predictor of Job Satisfaction. Xiujun Sun (2016) has conducted a research on using employees of various types of Enterprises in China as the population. The sample includes 306 male and 267 females. He has found that four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment correlate each other significantly at 0.01 levels.

B. Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction

There are three views of connotation of Psychological Capital. First one is the “Quality point of view” (Hosen, Lehcher and Cole), second view “State class” represent by Goldsmith, Tettegah and Avolio. Third view “Comprehensive” proposed by researchers Bandura, Carver and Snyder. As far as the structure of Psychological Capital is concerned, there are four views. First one is the two- dimensional structure signified by Goldsmith, Larson and Jensen pioneered in three - dimensional structure .Researchers Judge, Cole, Luthans and Youssef represented the four dimension structure which is the current study is also based on. As an example, Luthans pointed out that wisdom, subjective happiness and creativity are potential psychological capitals. At the selection of which psychological capital structure is to be used , many scholars have used the view of Luthans, Therefore, current study is also based on four – dimension structure .Further, this has been used by few researchers in Sri Lanka as well.

In Canada, Lisa (2012) conducted research on “Linking Psychological Capital, Structural Empowerment and Perceived Staffing Adequacy to New Graduate Nurses ’Job Satisfaction”. Hierarchical multiple regression provided support for the hypothesized model that includes Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction. Variables were entered in blocks based on theoretical consideration. PsyCap was entered as the first block, and accounted for 14% of the variance ($F= 32.58, R^2=.14, p<.000$) in New Graduate Nurses’s Job satisfaction. In Western Cape, Appollis (2010) has conducted a research aims to identify the variables that influence turnover intentions. In particular, this research explored the concept of turnover intentions by investigating the mediating effects of job satisfaction and psychological capital amongst a sample of 70 employees involved in the tourism industry. It has been found that the Pearson correlation measure between job satisfaction and psychological capital among permanent tourism employees indicate a strong, direct relationship between job satisfaction and psychological capital ($r = 0.74; p<0.01$). This is indicative of individuals who have hope, are resilient, have strong levels of confidence and are more optimistic, are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction.

C. Job Satisfaction

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary “Job Satisfaction” is well-defined as “the feeling of pleasure and achievement that you experience in your job when you know that your work is worth doing or the degree to which your work gives you the feeling”. Many researches have introduced clear definitions for the term “Job satisfaction”. Locke (1976) stated it is an outcome of an evaluation of one’s job experiences with special reference to positive individual’s personal state or pleasurable event. Schultz & Schultz, (1994) moving beyond the “positive states” elaborated Job Satisfaction further as the positive and negative feelings and attitudes the people embrace towards their job. Accordingly, job satisfaction could be learned as an emotional state of mind that mirrors an emotional reaction to the job and work situation (Dipboye et al., 1994; Farkas & Tetrick., 1989; Lance., 1991; Russel & Price, 1988). Spreitzer et al, (1997) , improving psychological empowerment theory further ,proposed that four dimensions of Psychological Empowerment can predict the Job Satisfaction of employees and many empirical studies have proved the same.(Ababneh et al., 2017; Xiujun Sun, 2016; Nuray Tetik, 2016; Abdissa and Fitwi , 2016). Further, Luthans , in his Psychological Capital Theory state that four dimensions of Psychological Capital can predict the job performance and job satisfaction. Several empirical studies have confirmed that Psychological Capital is good predictor of Job Satisfaction. (Kappagoda, 2016; Guangi & Shanshan, 2016; Kaplan & Bickes ,2013; Lisa, 2012)

III. METHODOLOGY

A. The Review for the Theoretical Model

The theoretical framework according to Sekaran (2014) imparts the identification of the fundamental variables in the consideration, which are specific for the research problem. The theoretical framework of this study was developed using extant literature, which depicts the underlying disciplines of Spletizer (1995), Luthans et al (2004), Appollis (2010).

B. Establishment of Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was established based on the literature review and the structured questionnaire using Likert scale 1 to 5 (Dehkordi, Kamrani, Ardestani and Abdolmanafi 2011; Wang and Lee 2009; Carless 2004; Spreitzer G. , 1995 b; Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, , 1997; Appollis ,2010; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005 ; Luthans & Youssef,2004). All these studies were based on Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction, Psychological Capital and Job satisfaction , the Likert scale 5 is deemed appropriate for this type of research as well.

C. Definitions for the Study

Definitions for the constructs are to be used for the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Definitions.

Variable/Construct	Definition	Source
Psychological Empowerment (PhyEmp)	The belief that one has necessary knowledge and skills to perform the job well that can make a difference in the organization	Spreitzer, (1995)
PhyEmp -Meaning	A sense of purpose or personal connection to the work goal	-do-
PhyEmp -Competence	A sense of belief that the employees have in their skills and capability to perform their work better”	-do-
PhyEmp -Self Determination	A sense of freedom or autonomy about how individuals do their own work”	-do-
PhyEmp-Impact	A belief that individual employee can influence the system in which they are embedded	-do-
Psychological Capital(PhyCap)	A positive state of mind exhibited during the growth and development of an individual”	Luthans & Youssef, (2004)
PhyCap- Hope	Positive motivational <i>state</i> interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal directed energy)and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)	Snyder (1991)
PhyCap – Optimism	Is associated with a positive outcome outlook or attribution of events, which includes positive(emotions and motivation) and has the caveat of being realistic	Luthans & Youssef, (2004)
PhyCap- Resilience	Positive psychological capacity to rebound to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility	Luthans & Youssef, (2004)
PhyCap- Self-Efficacy	The employee’s conviction or confidence about his or her abilities mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources or courses of action needed successfully execute a specific task within a given context.	Luthans & Youssef, (2004)
Job Satisfaction	As pleasurable or positive personal state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job	Locke (1976) Schultz (1994) Evans (1999)

D. Specific Problem Area

Before 2010, in the prewar era there were only 15 universities under University Grant commission (UGC) of Sri Lanka dominating the higher education sector within the country. In the post war era, with the invasion of foreign universities, the state universities are in the intensified competition to attract students for fee levying programmes in their universities as well as retain their competent staff within the universities to provide quality, relevance and efficient service to the internal students as well as external students. Most efficient academics and administrators are joining the foreign universities as they offer extremely higher fringe benefits than the present remuneration in the state universities. As of today, large no of vacancies exist for both higher grade academic and administrative staff. State universities can’t attract competent personals to takeover these positions as well as retain their key positions staff due to influx of foreign universities. Therefore, the students are affected due to inefficient service.

No specific studies have been undertaken in Sri Lanka pertaining to Job Satisfaction of Administrative Staff of Government Universities. Previous studies in Sri Lanka were focused mainly on the factors contributed to the Job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the importance of demonstrating the significance of Psychological Empowerment and

Psychological Capital on Job Satisfaction has never established within the higher education sector. Therefore, this literature review identified the three variables and constructs belongs to those variables have been incorporated research framework given in Figure I.

The inferences of this review would contribute immensely to the Higher Education sector in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in Asia, helping to identify the specific areas the universities need to focus on if they are to increase the retention of staff and improve the efficiency of their universities.

E. Development of Measures for the study

The Psychological Empowerment were measured using the study of Spreitzer (1995) entitled, “An Empirical Test of a Comprehensive Model of Intrapersonal Empowerment in the Workplace”. The measurement of Psychological Empowerment used a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The respondents were asked to respond to each item in the instrument (1 = strongly disagree ; 5= strongly disagree). The section was consists of 4 die-mentions and each consists of 3 items. The Psychological Capital (PhyCap) was sourced from Kappagoda (2016) and Luthens et. al (2004) entitled,“Human, Social, and New Positive Psychological Capital Management: Investing in People for Competitive Advantage”. This section was consists of four die-mentions each composed of 3 items. Respondents were asked to rate each item (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).Job satisfaction was measured using the work of Locke (1976) as cited by Kappagoda (2016), this section of the measurement instrument is composed of 16 items to be rated (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied). Intention to Quit measurement was taken from studies Tett, R.P (1993) and Elangovan (2003).

F. Research Framework

Based on the extensive literature review, the research framework was developed and it is given below as Figure I.

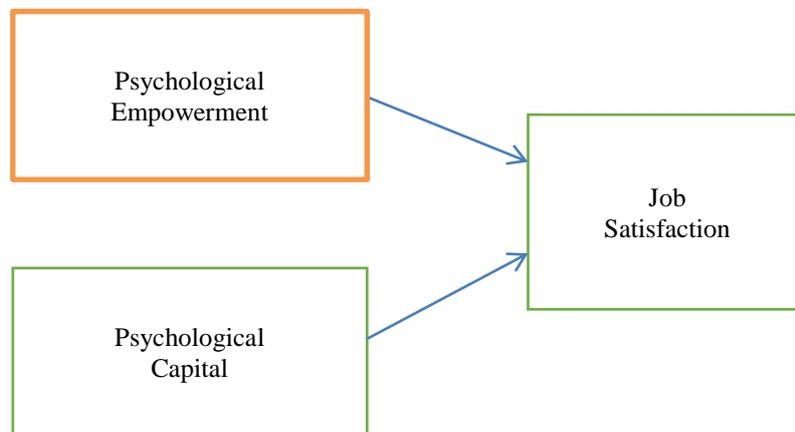


Figure 1 .Research Framework

G. The importance of Pilot Test.

The meaning of carrying out a pilot test is that it enables elimination of variables that do not meet the reliability criteria and recognize any other amendments required to carry out the main research. 35 questionnaires to be sent to Administrative officers of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (SRIJ) 25 and 10 respectively.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Demographic Variables

Personal information of the respondents was collected and frequency analysis was carried out and results are given below;

Table 2. Analysis of Demographics Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
Age	Below 25 Years	2	.7	.7
	25 to 35 Years	70	22.8	23.5
	36 to 45 Years	121	39.4	62.9
	46 to 55 Years	91	29.6	92.5
	56 to 65 Years	23	7.5	100.0
Gender	Male	163	53.1	53.1
	Female	144	46.9	100.0
Education	Diploma	18	5.9	5.9
	Degree	115	37.5	43.3
	Postgraduate	174	56.7	100.0
Position	Junior Management	110	35.8	35.8
	Middle Management	144	46.9	82.7
	Senior Management	53	17.3	100.0
Tenure	Less than 5 Years	74	24.1	24.1
	5 to 10 Years	74	24.1	48.2
	11 to 15 Years	56	18.2	66.4
	16 to 20 Years	49	16.0	82.4
	21 or Over	54	17.6	100.0

B. Multiple Regressions

Further to analyze the causes of job satisfaction multiple regression tool was used in SPSS. The reason of using multiple regression as a tool was that it reveals the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. It is the simultaneous amalgamation of multiple factors to measure how and to what degree they affect a certain consequence. The result of ANOVA is given below;

Table 3. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	46.678	8	5.835	20.146	.000 ^a
Residual	86.307	298	.290		
Total	132.985	306			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Meaning, Self- Determination, Impact, Competence , Hope, Optimism, Resilience, Self Efficacy
- b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

This test is carried out to verify whether the complete regression model is a good fit for the obtained data. According to the above table, F (20.146) and p is .000<.005.

Multiple Regression equation: $Y = C + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \dots + \beta X_n$

Y= Prediction relationship of types of variables toward Job satisfaction

C= Constant value, β = Unstandardized coefficient

X= Dimension of Independent variables, X1: Independent Variable 1 (Meaning Dimension), X2: Independent Variable 1 (Self/Determination), X3: Independent Variable 1 (Impact), X4: Independent Variable 1 (Competence), X5: Independent Variable 2 (Hope Dimension), X6: Independent Variable 2 (Optimism Dimension), X7: Independent Variable 2 (Resilience Dimension), X8: Independent Variable 2 (Self-Efficacy)

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.274	.289		4.409	.000
	Meaning	.199	.047	.246	4.263	.000
	S/Determin	-.294	.063	-.276	-4.656	.000
	Impact	.195	.041	.256	4.787	.000
	Competence	.125	.056	.131	2.229	.027
	Hope	.337	.062	.321	5.466	.000
	Optimism	.046	.049	.049	.940	.348
	Resilience	.085	.073	.072	1.158	.248
	S/Efficacy	-.099	.069	-.084	-1.439	.151

Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction

C. Model Summary

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	p
1	.592 ^a	.351	.334	.53816	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Meaning, Self- Determination, Impact, Competence , Hope, Optimism, Resilience, Self Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Based on the above model summary, the value of R Square is 0.351 which as percentage 35%. The meaning is that two independent variables can explain 35% of variance in Job satisfaction. The independent variable 1 refers to psychological Empowerment which consists of four dimensions: Meaning, Self Determination, Impact and Competence. Independent variable 2 is the Psychological Capital which consist of four dimensions: Hope, Optimism, Resilience and self-efficacy

V. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

A. Suggestions

Improving Psychological Empowerment in the Universities

The amount of the payoff is great for those who achieve psychological empowerment in their organizations even though that it is very difficult for managers to create a situation where their employees experience psychological empowerment; Psychological Empowerment involves preparing the employees by boosting their confidence and competence and at the same time by communicating a clear vision and goals. So many things must be in place for a person to really feel empowered and what works for one employee might not work for another.

Having considering those challenges, many managers have difficulty finding time to focus on the needs of their employees because their jobs are so confused. Nevertheless, empowerment is worth the effort. Effective empowerment of your staff can lead to higher levels of customer responsiveness and innovation, higher levels of employee motivation and satisfaction, lower levels of stress, burnout and intention to Quit for employees.

Therefore, the Universities should improve the psychological Empowerment in the workforce by ;

- Helping employees to achieve Job Mastery
- Allowing more control
- Providing successful role models
- Using social reinforcement and persuasion
- Giving emotional support

Improving Psychological Capital in the Universities

The findings revealed that there is significance positive relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction. The universities can improve psychological capital by ;

- Selecting staff with high Psychological Capital for front-line staff who confront with students
- Establishing family supportive work environment
- Management can create a climate where employees feel regarded as a strategic partner and have a planned career path and job challenges in the universities
- Universities should facilitate special training programs to improve physiological capital in the working environment

B. Scope for future Research

Since this study established that Psychological Empowerment and Psychological Capital having significant relationship on Job Satisfaction, It is recommended that further studies should include more variables like employee engagement as well as more dimensions can be included to variables. Additional information from the third party such as peers, or superiors may provide information regarding the behavior of the employees. This study is based on the higher sector only. The study can be extended to all service industries throughout the country.

C. Limitations of the Study

Though the higher education sector belongs to the service sector, findings generated from the university employees may not be strictly applicable with employees of all groups of service sector such as banks, hospitals, hotels etc. Only government universities were taken for the study. Private and other universities as well as higher education institutes may have different culture and so the psychological empowerment and Psychological Capital effect of job satisfaction on employees of other universities and higher education institutions may be different.

D. Conclusion

Despite the fact understanding the job satisfaction among academic staff and giving prominence to it, is very important, job satisfaction among non-academic staff should also be taken into consideration. (Nawi, Ismail, Ibrahim, Raston, & Jaini, 2016). According to Ismail and Abdul (2012), both the academic and the non-academic staff play an important role in educational institutions. Administrative staff also falling into non-academic staff of universities in the university system in Sri Lanka. Further, the strength of a university is not only dependent on the quality of researching, teaching and learning, but the administration also plays a significant role in managing all matters related to the sphere of administration of the university. There are several studies that focus on job satisfaction among non-academics such as Smerek and Peterson (2006), which examines the satisfaction among the non-academic staff working in a university. However, scant of researches was evident in literature for Administrators' satisfaction. The prime objective of this review to determine if there is a relationship between Psychological Empowerment, Psychological Capital Job Satisfaction among Administrative staff of the university system in Sri Lanka. An extensive literature survey was carried out to form the theoretical premise for the research and research framework was built accordingly.

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