

Factors that Influence Hiring the Right Person for the Right Job in Sri Lankan Service Sector Organizations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the reasons behind the success or failure of the companies in the sample, in hiring individuals with person-job fit and it addressed the research problem “What factors prevent Sri Lankan service sector companies from hiring the right person for the right job?” After reviewing existing literature on the topic, the researchers identified person-job fit to be one of the key types of “fit” and formulated the following research question: “What factors enable Sri Lankan service sector companies to make hiring decisions that ensure person-job fit?” Eight independent variables that were indicated by literary sources to be antecedents of person-job fit were identified and these were categorized under the broad headings of process related variables, people related variables and policy related variables. The sample consisted of 38 companies in seven industries within the Sri Lankan service sector. Likert scale questionnaires were administered to the Heads of Human Resources Management at each of these companies. Several interviews too were held with some of the persons in the sample in order to get qualitative responses and the rationale responses. After analyzing the data, it was found that out of the variables identified, all except the last one had an influence on the level of person-job fit in organizations.

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1. Introduction

People are considered an important source of competitive advantage for any organization. Pfeffer (1994) notes that the "workforce, how it is organized and managed, is an increasingly important source of competitive advantage". Collins (2001) states that the old adage "People are your most important asset" is wrong. He claims that rather than "people", it is the "right people" that make up the best asset of an organization, especially when the company's leaders are trying to transform it from a "good" company into a "great" company. In the Sri Lankan context, Nanayakkara (2003) has extensively dealt with the importance of "hiring the right people for the right jobs" in developing the Sri Lankan economy.

Hiring is a vital aspect of people management since it is the manner in which employees are brought into the organization. The researchers conducted a pilot study using a questionnaire containing challenges faced by human resources professionals identified from websites such as that of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development. This questionnaire was administered to several authorities on human resources management in the country, all of whom identified hiring and retaining qualified candidates as one of the top three challenges they faced. Therefore, attracting the right person for the right job becomes a critical consideration.

2. Research Problem

The management problem identified is that companies do not always succeed in hiring the right person for the right job. This failure can result in many negative consequences such as costs of replacement and costs in terms of lower morale in employees who have to perform the jobs of those who are unable to meet the requirements of the job.

The research problem is *What factors prevent Sri Lankan service sector companies from hiring the right person for the right job?* In assessing whether a person is "right" for the job, the literature mentions many types of "fit"; for example, person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit (Sekiguchi, 2004: 182) and even person-future fit (Collins, 2004:04). However, person-job fit is the kind of fit that is incorporated into most "traditional" approaches to hiring according to Kristof as quoted by Maurer (2006: 28).

3. Objectives

This research had the following objectives:

1. To identify the extent to which service sector organizations are successful at hiring individuals with person-job fit;
2. To gain insights into the selection practices adopted by service sector organizations in the sample; and
3. To make recommendations, based on the research findings, on using certain selection techniques in order to increase the person-job fit.

4. Significance of the Research

The literature indicates that an organization's people can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage for any organization. However, in order for the people to be a source of competitive advantage, the organization must ensure that the right people are doing the right job. Even a talented individual may be a failure in a position that is not suited to his or her specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In service sector organizations, hiring the right people is vital since service delivery, which is the *raison d'être* of a service organization, is carried out by its employees. Therefore, the methods used for selecting people should help the service organization hire effective performers.

The researchers noticed that although there has been considerable research attention focused on other Human Resources Management topics such as performance management and training, not much attention has been paid to employee selection (a vital area for Human Resources practitioners and for businesses) by Sri Lankan researchers. In fact, a detailed study on person-job fit in Sri Lanka could not be found. Thus, it is expected that this study will fill a research gap and contribute to the pool of knowledge on these topics benefiting both researchers and practitioners.

5. Methodology

A predominantly quantitative methodology was adopted. For the purposes of primary empirical data gathering 38 organizations in seven industries were selected using the convenience sampling method. The following industries were identified for the study and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) Annual Report analysis of gross domestic product (GDP) (2006: 5) was used as a guideline for this purpose.

1. Hotel Industry
2. Travel Industry
3. Shipping and Logistics Industry
4. Telecommunications Industry
5. Banking Industry
6. Insurance Industry
7. Information Technology Industry

Questionnaires were administered to the HR personnel in identified organizations within these industries in order to obtain information. The Likert scale questionnaire was focused on obtaining quantitative information whilst interviews were carried out with the Heads of HR of several organizations to obtain qualitative information.

6. Literature Review

6.1 Right Person for the Right Job

In assessing whether the "right person" has been selected for the "right job", the most prominent theoretical concept that emerges is the concept of "fit". Different writers emphasize different types of fit. Sekiguchi (2004: 179) in a review of literature on person-environment fit discusses two types of fit that emerge as the most prominent types of fit: person-job fit and person-organization fit. In pursuing person-job fit, companies seek to match the job holder's knowledge, skills and abilities to the requirements of the job. Companies can ascertain person-organization fit by focusing on how well the individual fits with the culture or values of the company and the individual's capacity to work well with other company employees. Companies can also emphasize person-future fit by focusing on the potential long-term contribution of applicants, often to the extent that they are willing to leave positions open until they find the best and brightest new employees (Collins, 2004: 04). Sekiguchi (2004: 182) also mentions person-person fit, person-group fit and person-occupation or person-vocation fit (2004: 182), which are all different conceptualizations of "fit."

According to Kristof as quoted by Maurer (2006: 28), person-job (P-J) fit is the kind of fit that is incorporated into most "traditional" approaches to hiring. Werbel and Gulliland (1999) reinforce this view by stating that P-J fit is the "the traditional foundation for employee selection". Although other types of fit exist, discussions with several respondents to the pilot study questionnaire indicated that in stating that finding the "right person for the right job" was difficult, what was meant was the difficulty of finding competent people who can meet the demands of the job.

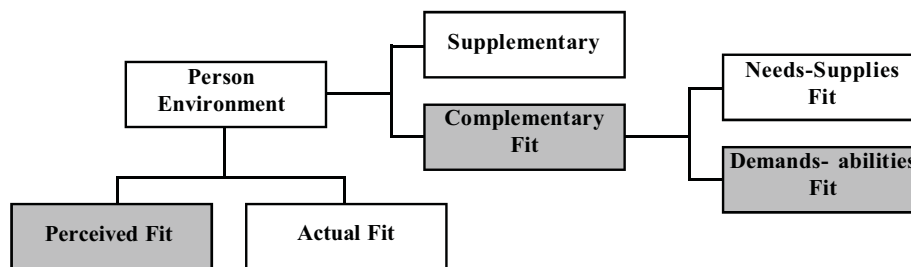
6.2 Person - Job Fit: Definitions

A "job" can be defined as "a set of closely related activities carried out for pay". (Dessler, 2005: 137) The "person", as discussed in the context of person-job fit, is the holder or prospective holder of a job position. The Blackwell Encyclopedic Dictionary of Human Resource Management defines P-J Fit as a "state of congruence between job demands and resources on the one hand, and individual abilities and proclivities on the other."

6.3 Conceptualization of Person-Job Fit

Sekiguchi (2004) outlines several conceptualizations of person-environment fit, which can be applied also to person-job fit since the latter is one of the two components of the former. These different conceptualizations are illustrated and the conceptualizations used in the present study are highlighted in the following figure:

Figure 1: Conceptualization of Person-Job Fit



Source: Sekiguchi, (2004: 179)

Perceived fit can be seen as a judgment that the person fits well in the environment and actual fit as a comparison between separately rated individual and environmental characteristics (Sekiguchi, 2004: 181). In the present study, person-job fit is assessed in terms of the Human Resource Managers' perception of the degree of person-job fit that exists in the organization. As such, it can be seen that the present study has a "perceived fit" rather than an "actual fit" conceptualization of person-job fit.

In the supplementary fit model, the environment is defined in terms of the people who inhabit it. As such, a supplementary fit definition of the person-job fit would infer that the job would be defined in terms of the incumbent of the job. In the complementary model, the environment is defined apart from its inhabitants. In terms of person-job fit, this would mean that the job is defined in a manner that is based on its own requirements without any reference to the incumbent of the position. This second conceptualization is a more apt representation of person-job fit as discussed in the present study.

The other operationalization includes the needs-supplies perspective and the demands-abilities perspective. The needs-supplies perspective operationalizes person-job fit in terms of the desires of individuals such as goals, interests, psychological needs, and values, and the characteristics and attributes of the job that may satisfy those desires. The demands-abilities perspective, on the other hand, consists of the job demands which consist of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform at the required level in the job. The present study uses a demands-abilities perspective of P-J fit.

6.4 Benefits of Ensuring Person - Job Fit

Hiring applicants whose aptitudes and preferences best fit the profile of the available job position allows an employer to gain valued employees who are ready to perform as soon as they are hired, without having to go through extended training periods.

The literature states that a high level of P-J fit has a number of positive outcomes. Sekiguchi (2004) states that, by reviewing the literature of Edwards in this area, he has identified that job satisfaction, low job stress, motivation, performance, attendance and retention as outcomes that are positively affected by P-J fit. When P-J fit is assessed as the match between what an employee wants and receives from performing a job, it is correlated with improved job satisfaction, adjustment, and organizational commitment, as well as reduced intentions to quit.

6.5 Continued Relevance of Person-Job Fit

Sekiguchi states that some academicians as well as practitioners suggest that P-J fit is becoming less important than certain other types of fit like person-organization fit. The rationale for this argument is two-fold. One argument is that in certain instances, although a person is hired for a particular "job", that individual may hold different job roles throughout that person's employment with an organization. Proponents of this view assert that person-organization fit is more important than person-job fit. (Sekiguchi, 2004: 186) Whilst this may be true in a situation where employees seek long-term employment within a single company, this argument may not hold true in a context where individuals are increasingly more loyal to their careers and professions than to a single company.

The second argument against the continued relevance of P-J fit is that the concept is based on outdated ideas about jobs themselves. For example, Dessler (2005: 139) discusses a concept entitled "dejobbing", which is defined as "broadening the responsibilities of the company's jobs and encouraging employees not to limit themselves to what's on their job descriptions". If a job is defined as a stable, well-defined and clearly delineated set of responsibilities, this may well mean that the concept of person-job fit is no longer relevant in employee selection. However, although the range of responsibilities is broadened, it is rare for an individual to be assigned responsibilities

that widely diverge from that person's basic area of work. Even if such an assignment is made, the basis for it may be that the person is expected to acquire such knowledge or skills as a requirement for a future job. As such, it can be argued that the concept of the "job" and hence the concept of "person-job fit" are still relevant, albeit in a wider context.

6.6 Predictors of Person-Job Fit

Sekiguchi (2004: 184) states that applicant self-selection and employee selection practices are major antecedents of P-J fit, and goes on to observe that employee selection practices at most organizations have traditionally focused on ensuring P-J fit. However, applicant self-selection, or the preference for an applicant to work for one organization as opposed to others, may stem from reasons beyond the control of the Human Resources practitioners of that organization (like the company's financial performance or the public image of the organization). As selection practices are within the domain of control of Human Resources practitioners, this study will focus on this aspect of ensuring person-job fit.

Some of the factors that lead to ensuring person-job fit in selection are discussed below under three broad headings as identified by the researchers.

i. Process related variables

Certain variables that are aspects of the selection process were categorized under this heading. Although the literature does not discuss the variables in the context of person-job fit, these factors are mentioned as conditions that lead to effective selection. It is conjectured that, in order for selection methods to be effective, they must ensure that the "right person is selected for the right job". Thus, the variables below were understood to be predictors of person-job fit.

1. Job description / job specification

The availability of updated job descriptions and job specifications and their use in the selection process is considered to lead to effective selection. Dessler (2005: 112) defines job description as a "list of a job's duties, responsibilities, reporting relationships, working conditions and supervisory responsibilities". The definition of a job specification according to Dessler (2005: 112) is a "list of a job's 'human requirements', that is, the requisite education, skills, personality and so on".

2. Screening of applicants using Curriculum Vitae (CV) / application forms (Cushway, 2001: 68)

Effective screening of applicants using CVs or an application form is considered

to lead to effective selection. The CV is more commonly used for senior positions and employees applying for relatively junior positions may be asked to fill in a standard application form prepared by the company.

3. *Level of Effectiveness of Testing (Dessler, 2005:195)*

Different types of tests are available for testing an employee's suitability for a given job. In order to lead to effective hiring, literary sources indicate that they must have the following characteristics.

- a. Valid (Dessler, 2005: 195) - Definition: The accuracy with which a test measures what it purports to measure or fulfills the function it is designed to fill.
- b. Reliable (Dessler, 2005: 195) - Definition: The consistency of scores obtained by the same person when retested with the identical tests or with alternative forms of the same test.

Work sample tests, ability tests and even personality tests have higher validity than a structured interview (Cushway, 2001: 80).

4. *Level of Effectiveness of Interviewing*

Peters et al. (1998: 257) state that the interview remains the main method of assessing P-J fit. Dessler (2005: 246) endorses this view by stating that it is not possible to hire the right people without knowing how to interview properly. The following are stated by various authors as practices that increase the effectiveness of an interview.

- a. Pre interview preparation in terms of reading the CV or application form, reviewing job description and job specification (Cushway, 2001: 73).
- b. Structured interviews (Cushway, 2001: 80):
Definition of a structured interview ((Dessler, 2005: 236): An interview following a set sequence of questions.
- c. Use of situational interviewing techniques ((Dessler, 2005: 249-251)
Definition of situational interviews (Dessler, 2005: 237): A series of job-related questions that focus on how the candidate would behave in a given situation.

ii. People related variables

1. *Using trained interviewers (Cushway, 2001: 73)*

The interviewers being trained in the kind of biases that can prevent optimal hiring decisions (Dessler, 2005: 246), the process and techniques of conducting an effective interview, etc. can increase the effectiveness of the selection decision.

2. *Extent of line and staff coordination (Dessler, 2005: 159)*

A line manager is defined by Dessler (2005: 159) as "a manager who is authorized to direct the work of subordinates and is responsible for accomplishing the organization's tasks". He defines a staff manager as "a manager who assists and advises line managers". Human resource managers, for example, are staff managers.

iii. Policy related variables

1. *Presence of anti-Nepotism policies (Peters et al., 1998: 229)*

Nepotism is defined by Peters et al. (1998) as "showing favoritism toward relatives, spouses or children of current employees when hiring new employees". Policies against this practice, where present, are considered as enhancing the effectiveness of selection and thereby person-job fit.

2. *Extent of preference for internal recruitment (Cushway, 2001: 63)*

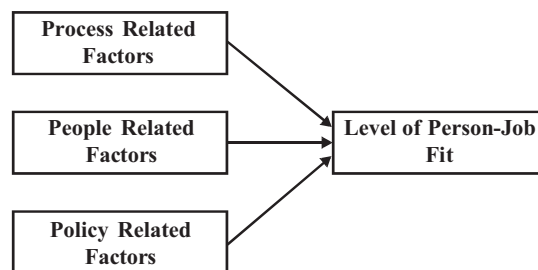
If hiring for mid-career positions is done exclusively from within the organization, it can have a detrimental impact on the organization since the organization may, for example, not get an input of fresh ideas that it may require. This may also mean that selection that maximizes person-job fit may not take place since the candidate-pool is limited.

7. Conceptual Framework

1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 depicts the details.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the researchers

8. Hypotheses

Based on the above conceptual framework, the following hypotheses relating the dependent variable and the independent variables were generated to explain what factors influence the level of person-job fit in an organization.

- **H₁:** Availability of a job description and/or job specification positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₂:** Screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae (CV) and/or application forms positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₃:** Effective testing of applicants positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₄:** Effective interviewing positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₅:** Use of trained interviewers positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₆:** The extent of coordination between line and staff (HR) functions positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₇:** Presence of anti-nepotism policies positively influences the level of person-job fit.
- **H₈:** A high degree of preference for internal recruitment negatively influences the level of person-job fit.

9. Operationalization

The main concepts and variables used in developing the hypotheses were operationalized as follows:

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Table 1: Operationalization of Variables

Concepts	Variables	Source	Indicators	Measure
Person - Job Fit	a. Perceived Level of Person - Job fit	Carless, 2005: 412	a. Perceptions of the HR Manager	a. Likert scale
Availability of an updated job description and/or job specification	a. Availability of Job Description b. Availability of Job Specification	Dessler, 2005: 112	a. Availability b. Degree of Usage	a. Yes/No, b. Likert scale
Screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae (CV) and/or application form	a. Screening using CV b. Screening using Application form	Cushway, 2001: 68	a. Degree of usage in the organization	a. Likert scale
Level of Effectiveness of Testing	a. Attention paid by HR to the validity of tests used b. Attention paid by HR to the reliability of tests used	Dessler, 2005: 195	a. Level of attention paid to the validity of tests used b. Level of attention paid to the reliability of tests used	a. Likert scale b. Likert scale
Level of Effectiveness of Interviewing	a. Pre-interview preparation b. Structured interviews c. Use of situational interviewing techniques	Peters, Greer and Youngblood, 1998: 257	a. Degree of usage	a. Yes / No b. Likert Scale

Using trained interviewers	a. Extent of training in interviewing skills	Cushway, 2001: 73	a. Training in interviewing received by the interviewers within the last 3 years b. Opinion of HR Manager regarding the necessity of training interviewers	a. Average number of hours per interviewer over the last three years. b. Likert scale
Coordination between line and staff functions	a. Extent of coordination between line and staff (HR) functions	Dessler, 2005: 159	a. Opinion of HR Manager regarding the extent of coordination currently present between line and staff functions b. Opinion of HR Manager regarding the extent of coordination that is desired between line and staff functions	a. Likert scale b. Likert scale
Anti-Nepotism policies	a. Availability of policy b. Degree of Implementation of policy	Peters, Greer and Youngblood, 1998: 229	a. Availability b. Opinion of HR Manager regarding Nepotism	a. Yes / No b. Likert scale
Extent of preference for internal recruitment	a. Level of internal recruitment b. Perceptions regarding the use of internal recruitment as opposed is external recruitment	Cushway, 2001: 63	a. Degree of usage of the practice b. Opinion of HR Manager regarding internal recruitment	a. Likert scale b. Likert scale

Source: Developed by the researchers

10. Study Design

The questionnaire administered to the respondents was based on 32 Likert scale questions where the respondents had to mark their responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each question was given a score ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" (SD) and 5 being "Strongly Agree" (SA). However, the above mentioned scoring system changes to the reverse mode in the case of some questions where, a 5 is scored for "Strongly Disagree" (SD) and a 1 for "Strongly Agree" (SA). The interviews were based on an interview schedule, which too addressed the different variables identified.

11. Reliability and Validity of Instruments

The questionnaire that was administered to the sample was developed by the researchers themselves since the researchers were unable to find any previously developed and validated questionnaires that sought to measure the variables being studied. In order to improve the reliability and the validity of the questionnaire, it was administered to three individuals in the field of HR and improved using their feedback.

After data collection, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using SPSS to measure the coefficient of reliability or, in other words, the consistency of the independent variables as against the dependent variable (level of P-J fit). Cronbach's Alpha for the first seven variables was above 0.5 and the reliability of the questions developed to address these variables was established. The most reliable questions were those developed to assess the level of effectiveness of testing. However, the reliability of the questions developed to assess the extent of preference for internal recruitment was found to be very low at 0.0199.

12. Participants and Sample

The following Table illustrates the composition of the sample that the researchers selected for the study. It presents the organizations based on the industries they operate in.

Table 2: Composition of the Sample

Industry	Organization
1.Hotel Industry	• Jetwing Hotels Ltd • Keells Hotel Management Services Ltd. • Trans Asia Hotel • Amaya Resorts and Spas • Confifi Hotels
2.Travel Industry	• Jetwing Travels (Pvt) Ltd • Hemtours (Pte) Ltd • Global Holidays (Pvt) Ltd • Connaisance Travels • Aitken Spence Travels Ltd
3.Shipping and Logistics Industry	• Hayleys Advantis Ltd • Pership Group • Expeditors Lanka (Pvt) Ltd • Ceylon Shipping Lines Limited • Mountain Hawk Express Pvt Ltd • American President Lines • DHL Keells Pvt Ltd
4.Telecommunications Industry	• Dialog PLC • Lanka Bell Limited • Mobitel Limited • Hutchison Telecommunications Lanka (Pvt) Limited • Tigo Pvt Ltd • Suntel PLC
5.Banking Industry	• Seylan Bank PLC • Citibank
6. Insurance Industry	• Asian Alliance Insurance Co. Ltd • Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation • Eagle Insurance PLC • Union Assurance Ltd
7. Information Technology Industry	• Microsoft Sri Lanka • hSenid Software International Pvt. (Ltd.) • Virtusa Pvt Ltd

Source: Developed by the Researchers

13. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using three methods. The first method was the analysis of trends of practice using MS Excel, the second was an analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the third was a qualitative analysis of the data based on the interviews.

The trends of responses for questions addressing different variables were analyzed using MS Excel since this sheds light on specific aspects of selection practices used by Sri Lankan service sector companies. The variation of scores pertaining to each variable across the different industries was also analyzed to understand the extent to which these selection techniques are used by different industries within the service sector. An analysis of the scores obtained by each industry as compared with the service sector as a whole was also carried out.

Interviews with five Heads of Human Resources from the original sample based on their availability for interviews revealed information that helped clarify some of the quantitative responses.

14. Discussion of Findings

H₁: Availability of a job description and/or job specification positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The Table below, developed using SPSS, indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 1

		PJ	JD
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.444*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.011
	N	32	32
JD	Pearson Correlation	.444*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	-
	N	32	32

*** Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

Therefore, it can be stated that there exists a statistically significant relationship between

P-J fit and the availability of a job description and/or job specification. Hence, H1 is not rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

H₂: Screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae (CV) and/or application form positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The following Table indicates the Pearson correlation figures for Hypothesis 2.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 2

		PJ	CV
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.360*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.043
	N	32	32
CV	Pearson Correlation	.360*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	-
	N	32	32

*** Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

According to SPSS results, the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Hence, there exists a statistically significant relationship between P-J fit and the screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae and/or application forms. Therefore, at the 0.05 significance level, H2 is not rejected.

H₃: Effective testing of applicants positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The Table below, developed using SPSS, indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 3

		PJ	TESTS
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	32	32
TESTS	Pearson Correlation	.767**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	32	32

**** Correlation is significant at the .01 level**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

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The two variables indicate a strong statistically significant relationship and this hypothesis is the one that is supported most strongly in this study. Hence, H3 is not rejected at the 0.01 significance level.

H₄: Effective interviewing positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The Table below, developed using SPSS, points out that the hypothesized relationship between effective interviewing and person-job fit does exist.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 4

		PJ	INTW
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.375*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.035
	N	32	32
INTW	Pearson Correlation	.375*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	-
	N	32	32

*** Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

According to SPSS results, the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Hence, there exists a statistically significant relationship between P-J fit and effective interviewing. Therefore, at the 0.05 significance level, H₄ is not rejected.

H₅: Use of trained interviewers positively influences the level of person-job fit

The Table below, developed using SPSS, indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 7: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 5

		PJ	INTR
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	32	32
INTR	Pearson Correlation	.761**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	32	32

**** Correlation is significant at the .01 level**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

Therefore, it can be stated that there exists a statistically significant relationship between P-J fit and the use of trained interviewers. Hence, H_5 is not rejected at the 0.01 significance level.

H_6 : The extent of coordination between line and staff (HR) functions positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The Table below highlights the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable pertaining to the extent of coordination between line and staff functions.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 6

		PJ	LS
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	32	32
LS	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	32	32

**** Correlation is significant at the .01 level**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

According to SPSS results, the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, there exists a statistically significant relationship between P-J fit and coordination between line and staff functions. Therefore, at the 0.01 significance level, H_6 is not rejected.

H_7 : Presence of anti-nepotism policies positively influences the level of person-job fit.

The following Table, developed by the researchers using SPSS, indicates the statistically significant relationship between P-J fit and the preference of anti-nepotism policies.

Table 9: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 7

		PJ	NEP
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.748**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	32	32
NEP	Pearson Correlation	.748**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	32	32

**** Correlation is significant at the .01 level**

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

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The two variables indicate a strong statistically significant relationship at the 0.01 level. Hence, H_7 is not rejected at the 0.01 significance level.

H_8 : A high degree of preference for internal recruitment negatively influences the level of person-job fit.

The Table below indicates the figures pertaining to the hypothesized relationship between person-job fit and a preference for internal recruitment.

Table 10: Correlation Analysis regarding Hypothesis 8

		PJ	IE
PJ	Pearson Correlation	1	.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.954
	N	32	32
IE	Pearson Correlation	.011	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.954	-
	N	32	32

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

This hypothesis was not supported. As such, H_8 is rejected. It is conjectured that this result can be partially explained by the low reliability of the questions that measured this variable. (i.e. Cronbach's Alpha for this variable was only 0.0199.). Another reason may be limitations in the operationalization of this independent variable. The literary sources that recommend that companies maintain a balance between internal and recruitment sources of applicants are Western in origin. It is possible that the Sri Lankan cultural context may have implications that mean that this hypothesis does not hold true. Finally, since convenience sampling was used, this may have introduced biases that had an impact on this hypothesis.

15. Model Summary

The Table below highlights the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable.

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.914 ^a	.835	.778	.20068

a. Predictors: (Constant), IE, INTR, CV, INTE, TESTS, JD, LS, NEP

Source: Developed by the researchers using SPSS

The model summary table above indicates the strength of the relationship between the model developed by the researchers as against the dependent variable. The high value ($R = 91\%$) of R (Correlation Coefficient), which describes the linear correlation between the observed and the model predicted values of the dependent variable, indicates that there is a very strong relationship between the model and the dependent variable.

In addition, the Coefficient of Determination or R Square (0.835), suggests that the model explains a variation of almost 84% in the dependent variable. On the other hand, at the R Square value calculated through SPSS suggests that there are other contributing factors that would explain the remaining 16% of the relationship with the dependent variable. In order to identify such factors either a detailed factor analysis or a larger sample base will have to be considered although the researchers conjecture that certain aspects identified in the literature review like the level of training and socialization of employees can also have an impact on the level of person-job fit.

16. Conclusion and Recommendations

The researchers drew the following conclusions from the findings.

1. *Availability of a job description and/or job specification:* It can be concluded, based on the findings, that the availability of a job description and/or job specification positively influences the level of person job fit. It was also found that this was a practice that was fairly common among the companies in the sample although not all companies had job descriptions and job specifications for all positions in the company.
2. *Screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae and/or application form:* Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that screening of applicants using the Curriculum Vitae and/or application form positively influences the level of person job fit. The data analysis indicated that the use of the Curriculum Vitae was more widespread than the use of application forms. The interviews revealed that this is carried out by HR in certain organizations whilst this responsibility is vested with the line management in others.
3. *Effective testing of applicants:* The effective testing of applicants was found to be a factor that positively influences the level of person-job fit. It was also found that companies pay more attention to the validity of the tests used by them than to the reliability of these tests. The interviews carried out revealed that most organizations prefer to internally develop the tests that are used.

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4. *Effective interviewing:* It was found that effective interviewing of applicants positively influences the level of person-job fit. The researchers concluded that practitioners, contrary to the recommendations of the literature on the topic, did not believe that using a structured approach to interviewing was required. However, preparing for an interview by reading the CV of applicants was found to be a very common practice. Usually the first interview is carried out by HR to assess the general suitability while the next levels of interviewing will be with the line managers, as revealed in the interviews.
5. *Use of trained interviewers:* It can be concluded that effective interviewing of applicants positively influences the level of the person- job fit. The researchers further concluded that most practitioners consider this a useful practice.
6. *Extent of coordination between line and staff functions:* The next conclusion drawn was that the extent of coordination between line and staff functions positively influences the level of the person- job fit. It can also be concluded that the degree of coordination between line and staff functions is currently high but the practitioners also would like this to be still higher.
7. *Presence of anti-nepotism policies:* Based on the research findings, the researchers concluded that the presence of anti-nepotism policies positively influences the level of the person- job fit. Where current trends of practice are concerned, it was found that most practitioners realize the need for impartiality in selection decisions but tend to have a preference for applicants who are known to current employees.

17. Limitations of the Study

The researchers observed the following limitations:

- The study was limited to the service sector of Sri Lanka, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to manufacturing or trading sectors.
- The study was limited to Sri Lanka, and therefore, it may not be possible to generalize the findings to other countries.
- The study was carried out with reference to executive staff, and as such, it may not be possible to generalize the findings to non-executive grades.
- Other types of "fit", such as person-organization fit, person-group fit and person-future fit, although recognized as important areas, have not been addressed in this study
- A convenience sample of organizations was used for ease of accessing information in these organizations. This may introduce a degree of bias.

- The study was carried out over a limited time period of three months and as such did not permit carrying out a wide study, for example, by covering more organizations in each industry.
- Although the response rate of the questionnaires was relatively high at 84%, the failure to obtain a 100% response rate may have introduced bias.
- Due to the use of Likert scale questions, the rationale for certain answers could not be ascertained. The researchers tried wherever possible to get clarifications through telephone interviews but this was not always possible.

18. Recommendations to Practitioners

The following recommendations can be made for practitioners in terms of the hypotheses that were proven in this study.

- Practitioners should ensure that updated job descriptions and job specifications are available for each position and use them in the selection process.
- Curriculum vitae and application forms should be used to support the selection process. However, the specific instances in which the use of CVs and application forms would be appropriate were not identified by the study.
- Practitioners would benefit by using appropriate tests to support their selection processes. However, in using tests for selection, their validity and reliability as well as their appropriateness in predicting performance on the specific job would be important concerns regarding which the study is not able to provide guidance.
- Effective interviewing can assist practitioners to hire the right person for the right job.
- It is recommended that practitioners pay attention to training interviewers who conduct selection interviews, since this can increase the probability that they will make correct decisions in hiring.
- Practitioners would do well to ensure that they receive the required extent of support from line managers.
- Practitioners need to actively pursue anti-nepotism practices. This can perhaps be done by formulating anti-nepotism policies and by educating everyone who has responsibilities in hiring on them and their implementation.

19. Areas for Further Research

In the process of the current study, the researchers uncovered certain areas that would be of interest to other researchers who would attempt to study this area in greater depth.

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The researchers encountered other types of "fit" which can have a bearing on the performance of employees. However, due to time constraints the researchers were unable to study these aspects, especially the construct of person-organization fit that researchers felt could shed light on some important aspects of hiring. Thus, it can be recommended that future researchers pay attention to this area.

Another area of interest from a research perspective is the relative importance of person-job fit and person-organization fit at different stages in the selection process. For example, in an interview situation, Chuang and Sackett (2005: 209) state that the importance of person-job fit decreases and the importance of person-organization fit rises as the applicant proceeds through the interview stages (i.e. between the first interview and the final interview). They maintain, however, that person-organization fit does not become so important as to overshadow the importance of person-job fit at any stage. Although the researchers believed that this aspect of varying importance at different stages could be a point of interest and value to practitioners as well as researchers, the present study did not attempt to cover this aspect since it was beyond the scope of the study.

Further, it may be useful to replicate this study in the manufacturing and trade sectors in order to assess whether the findings are equally applicable in them. If this is the case, the findings can be accepted as general prescriptions in terms of hiring for any sector.

The researchers identified that certain other variables, which were not studied in the present research, may explain 16% of the variation in the dependent variable since the researchers' model seemed to explain only 84% of the variation. As discussed in the literature review, training and socialization of employees can also affect the level of person-job fit and may have contributed to the variation of 16% that is not explained by the researchers' model. Although the researchers consciously restricted their focus to the domain of selection methods, future studies could attempt to assess the impact of such variables on the degree of person-job fit.

20. Conclusion

This study on the factors that influence hiring the right person for the right job in Sri Lankan service sector organizations, focused on a relatively unexplored area, shedding light on understanding the "person-job" fit better. It is expected that the findings and the recommendations are of value to organizations, and especially to HR professionals, in order to enhance the recruitment process, thereby contributing to organizational performance.

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