

## JOB-SATISFACTION FACTORS OF EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKAN EXPORT MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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### Abstract

*Employee job satisfaction becomes one of the most popular research topics which have been examined by the human resource researchers and scientists around the world. It plays a pivotal role in reducing the firms' turnover ratio and enhances the employee efficiency. Considerably, this study conducts in the export manufacturing companies which are well-diversified and rapidly growing business companies contributing more to the economic development of the country. The aim of the study is to determine the factors influencing employee job satisfaction of export manufacturing organizations leading to organizational performance and evaluate the impact of such factors to employee job satisfaction. The findings of this study would help organizations to develop strategies helping policy makers of export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka. Employee job satisfaction is the dependent variables while the level of compensation, degree of supervision, degree of promotional opportunities, relationship of co-workers and job-itself are the predictors of this study. A structured questionnaire was distributed among the 500 employees who work in the export processing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka. The data was analysed by using descriptive statistics and the multiple regression. The results revealed that 97% of the changes in employee job performance are explained by the changes in Level of Compensation (LOC), Degree of Supervision (DOS), Degree of Promotional Opportunities (DPO), Relationship among Co-workers (RACO), and Job-Itself (JIS) referring that all factors included in the study are contributing to the employee job satisfaction. Finally, policy makers as well as company owners & management should pay their greater attention on these factors in order to improve their employee job satisfaction so that, they will encourage to work hard for the institutional development as well as the basis economic development of the country.*

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Sri Lankan Export Manufacturing Companies, Level of Compensation, Degree of Supervision, Degree of Promotional Opportunities,

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## **Introduction**

Job satisfaction has been a matter of concern and attention in any field of business nowadays. Organizations realize that employee job satisfaction is the essential element to increase customer satisfaction and keep their business running, as competition is getting more intense. Employee dissatisfaction will usually spread their problem to their workmates and word of mouth can do a lot of harm to an organization. The dissatisfied employee complaints can be a useful source of information for the organization to develop their business strategies and formulate their tactical decisions.

Employees are the most important factor and the sustainable long-term competitive advantage of an organization. In present day in an intensely competitive global environment, there is a strong demand for workforce and it is important to motivate and satisfy the employees so as to reap out more from them. Main aspects of workforce are motivation and job satisfaction. Employee Motivation on employee's relation and attitude towards work and determines success or failure. Job satisfaction is defined as how many employees like or dislike their work and the extent to which their expectation concerning work have been fulfilled. Also, the employees' job satisfaction is the key indicator of the effectiveness that leads to the efficiency of the organization (Spector, 1997)

As far as the researcher is generally concerned, the employee motivation is very important and it leads to the employees' job satisfaction and finally results to organizational performance. If the employees are doing their duty in order to maximize the organizational wealth, the economic utilization of organizational resources is at the end of perfect organizational productivity. Managers in organizations today are concerned about employee motivation for two reasons. First, many feel responsible for maintaining high level of job satisfaction through employee motivation in their organizations in a working friendly environment. Where people find their work satisfied or unsatisfied, challenging or boring, meaningful or pointless are the strong concerns for the managers whether they have been achieved the level of employee participation thereby achieving scheduled production targets in the organizations. Finally, managers are concerned about the impact that employee satisfaction has on Organizational performance.

Robbins (2003) explains that an individual's relation and attitude towards work and determine success or failure. Herzberg further stated that several characteristics are related to job satisfaction and others to job dissatisfaction. Intrinsic factors, such as advancement, recognition, responsibility and achievement are related to job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction is a result of extrinsic factors; supervision, pay, company policies and working conditions. Herzberg (1969) finally states that a job do not get satisfying by removing dissatisfying factors and therefore dissatisfaction is not the opposite of job satisfaction.

Considering the importance of having the necessity to commit the employee job satisfaction, it is utmost important to the export manufacturing sector, because employee commitment is one of the key predominant factors for business success and economic development of the country. As compared to the sectors of the economy, export manufacturing became successful and popular in Sri Lanka after introduction of open economy to the country in 1977. Hence many of the export processing zones and free trade zones were established and several benefits were granted by the government of Sri Lanka to the investors to encourage the investments and bring the foreign income to the country via Tax relief programs, infrastructure facilities etc.

Export manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka are basically following a fabrication or conversion process. Basically they purchase the different grades of raw material and after the assurance on quality specifications the production process is undertaken by the relevant division. Each organization has own quality inspection at several stages. Finally all of them target the foreign markets to achieve their targets. Present day trend is every organization must be efficient and effective for its growth and face the competition in their markets. Accordingly, this research is based on the factors influencing the employee job satisfaction leading to organizational performance in export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka.

### **Literature Review**

Researches show that the mission of most organizations is to maximize profitability in the short term thereby maximizing shareholders' wealth in the long term effect especially where management may be convinced to make up crucial operational management decisions. The literature also recognized that the employee motivation is

vital to comply with the organizational key production and operational policy and it should cater to extremely appropriate to firm thereby achieving their goals and objectives as well as fulfilling the utmost utilization of human resources. Prior research also revealed that factors affecting job satisfaction explained in above could help managers to have confidence in resulting in good job performance. In addition, studies of job satisfaction reported that the particular those components and employee job satisfaction have been revealed by using the employees' consent and other information of business firms in different countries, in various time frames.

Fred Luthans (2008) has described five facets of job satisfaction concept to analyze the same critically and also considered in order to find the empirical validity of the research. As the theory is connected to the theory “Job Satisfaction”, deeper attempts were made to define the job Satisfaction concepts and five perspectives namely Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Co-Workers, and Work It Self were broadly conceptualized. Theoretical background on Job Satisfaction and the five facets are discussed. The following are the five dimensions influencing Job Satisfaction.

1. Pay – The amount of financial remuneration that is received and the degree to which this is viewed as equitable Vis a –Vis that of others in the organization.
2. Supervision- The abilities of the supervisor to provide technical assistance and behavioral support.
3. Promotion opportunities – The chance for advancement in the organization.
4. Co-workers- The degree to which fellow workers are technically proficient and socially supportive.
5. The work itself – The extent to which the job provides the individual with interesting tasks, opportunities for learning, and the chance to accept responsibility

These five dimensions were formulated many years ago and have been widely used to measure job satisfaction over the years, and a recent meta-analysis confirmed their construct validity. Five facets of job satisfaction concept was mainly used in the literature revive and attempted to analyze the same critically and also considered in order to find the empirical validity of the research.

In the above prescribed aspects in the Luthans model; Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment are two of the most prominent work attitudes examined in the work and organizational literature. These constructs also receive much attention within the more specific work-family literature. Researchers have often included both constructs in their examination of the relationships between work-family issues and work outcomes. Therefore, this entry will review employee job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is defined as “the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). This definition suggests job satisfaction is a general or global affective reaction that individuals hold about their job. While researchers and practitioners most often measure global job satisfaction, there is also interest in measuring different “facets” or “dimensions” of satisfaction. Examination of these facet conditions is often useful for a more careful examination of employee satisfaction with critical job factors. Traditional job satisfaction facets include: co-workers, pay, job conditions, supervision, nature of the work and benefits. Increasing concern about the meaning of work and the belief that the degree of satisfaction at work is related to aspects of work behavior such as productivity, absenteeism, turnover rates and intention to quit, have prompted the growth of a vast research literature on job satisfaction (Tsigilis et al., 2004).

According to Locke (1969), Job satisfaction is “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values”. In the same way he describes job dissatisfaction as “the unpleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as frustrating or blocking the attainment of one's job values or as entailing disvalues”. By referring to Locke (1969), job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing. This theory of job satisfaction is frequently cited in the literature. In this context, some authors view job satisfaction as a narrower term than work satisfaction (Büssing et al., 1999). After having reviewed a large part of the literature on job satisfaction and work satisfaction, the present writer decided to use the more widespread term job satisfaction. However, job satisfaction is, in this thesis, broadly defined as “one's sense of satisfaction not only with the work but also with the larger organizational context within which work exists”

(Büssing et al., 1999; Stamps and Piedmonte, 1986). This definition also includes the larger context of satisfaction at the workplace, for example the relationship between work and non-work processes of socialization at work (Büssing et al., 1999). Despite the large body of research, there are still major shortcomings in job satisfaction research. The definitions referred to above give us an understanding of what is meant by job satisfaction. However, Büssing et al. (1999) argue that most of them do not provide us with a theory of job satisfaction in the sense of an interrelated set of testable hypotheses developed from the framework of a model validating of different forms of job satisfaction originally proposed by Bruggemann (1974). Six forms of job satisfaction (progressive, stabilized, resigned satisfaction; constructive, fixated, resigned dissatisfaction) were derived from the constellation of four constituent variables: comparison of the actual work situation and personal aspirations, global satisfaction, changes in level of aspiration and controllability at work. Achieving job satisfaction, in other words providing good working conditions for the employees, is also an important value within the field of Quality Management.

Pfeffer (1998) describes in his book, 'The Human Equation – Building profits by putting people first', seven dimensions that are important if one wants to put emphasis on the importance of the people. These dimensions were derived from various studies, related literature and personal observation and experience. The author highlighted the factors such as; employment security, selective hiring of new personnel, self-managed teams and decentralization of decision making as the basic principles of organizational design, comparatively high compensation contingent on organizational performance, extensive training, reduced status distinctions and barriers, including dress, language, office arrangements, and wage differences across levels and extensive sharing of financial and performance information throughout the organization in order to fulfill the employee satisfaction which is directly affected increase the employee performance towards the firms' effectiveness. Implementing these practices in isolation may not have much effect, however, and, under some circumstances, it could actually be counterproductive, according to Pfeffer (1998). For instance, increasing the firm's commitment to training activities will not accomplish much unless changes in work organization permit these more skilled people to actually utilize their knowledge. Employment security, too, can be counterproductive unless the firm hires people who will fit the culture and unless

incentives reward outstanding performance. Implementing work teams will probably not, by itself, accomplish as much as if the teams receive training both in specific technical skills and team processes, and it will have still less effect still if the teams are not given financial and operating performance goals and information. Also, Pfeffer (1998) in his publication titled “Why should we want to put our best assets, our people, in the arms of the competition?” Further, Onyett et al. (1997) suggest, based on their study, a need for clearer team goals and the fostering of identification with the team, in order to achieve higher levels of job satisfaction. This team identification is most likely to be achieved where membership of the team is socially valued and promotes a sense of self-esteem.

Parvin and Kabir (2011) explored “Job satisfaction is not the same as motivation, although it is clearly linked. Job design aims to enhance job satisfaction and performance methods include job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment. Other influences on satisfaction include the management style and culture, employee involvement, empowerment and autonomous workgroups. Job satisfaction is a very important attribute which is frequently measured by organizations. The most common way of measurement is the use of rating scales where employees report their reactions to their jobs. Questions relate to relate of pay, work responsibility, variety of tasks, promotional opportunities the work itself and co-workers”. Increasingly, Hunrja et.al, (2010) indicated that a positive and significant link between job satisfaction and human recourse management practices is exist like team work environment, job autonomy and behavior of leadership. They thoroughly emphasized that, it is also inferred that male and female workers have significantly different level of job satisfaction.

### **Problem Statement**

Considering the literature evidence and country's importance economic the problem is identified. During the last 30 years period different type of industries were established and entered into the international business (CBSL Annual Report 2012). Low production cost was the relative advantage to attract the foreign investment to Sri Lanka (CBSL Annual Report 2012). However, employee satisfaction was found totally neglected by the vendors. This was due to the pay systems, promotional aspects, lapses in supervision, lower level of co-worker relationships and finally the nature of jobs. As a result of such a situation the employees are found to be dissatisfied and it could be seen by the;

- ∑ Number of employees recruited to the Organization.
- ∑ Number of employees left from the Organization.
- ∑ Number of reclamations received.

Generally, the employees were found to be delayed to report for their duties and there was high absenteeism rate in the last conflicts have been developed among the production crews and forming informal groups among them to achieve their personal targets. However, employees were found be believed that the managers are less concerned about them and more concerned on profits. As a result of that the management loses the employee trust or the confidence on the management.

Since employees are unsatisfied with their existing work they do not contribute their best to the production and sometimes it leads to some damages to the company (Harvard Professional Group, 1998). As a result of such situations the export companies receive huge painful customer complains such as claims or order cancellations. As pointed out in their recent five year progress report issued by the Federation of International Garment Buying Offices, this situation may be identified by number of reclamation / Complains received from the customers from verseas in last three years and the number of orders cancelled by the customers due to unsatisfied quality.

Since the manufacturing is highly target oriented, the employees were treated as robots line managers, machine operators and general workers were not satisfied with their jobs due to above reasons. Therefore the characteristics were found in such organizations (Company export manufacturing bulletin, 2012) such as *Low performance rat forces*, High level of Absenteeism, High level of wastages, Work stress, Conflicts among the employees, Customer complaints/customer claims etc.

As a result of the consequences, employee behavior transferred into leaving existing jobs and joining with new companies and also switching to foreign jobs. This rested to the scarcity of skilled labor in such organizations. Therefore this research is designed to examine and to evaluate the factors influencing employee satisfaction and to find the appropriate effect on the employee satisfaction towards better performance. In order to achieve the above main research objective, the following research problem is formulated to find the answers for this research gap.

“What are the factors affecting employee job satisfaction of export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka.”



### **Objectives of the Research**

With regard to the aforesaid-problem identified, the following two objectives are determined by the researcher to examine, asses, and to evaluate the causations of the employee satisfaction of the export manufacturing companies in western Province Sri Lanka.

- (1) To study the factors influencing employee job satisfaction of export manufacturing companies leading to organizational performance in Western Province, Sri Lanka.
- (2) To evaluate the impact of such factors to employee job satisfaction and to suggest appropriate means to develops strategies helping policy makers of export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka.
- (3) To study the cause-effect relationship between predictors in the outcome reliable named job satisfaction.

### **Significance of the Research**

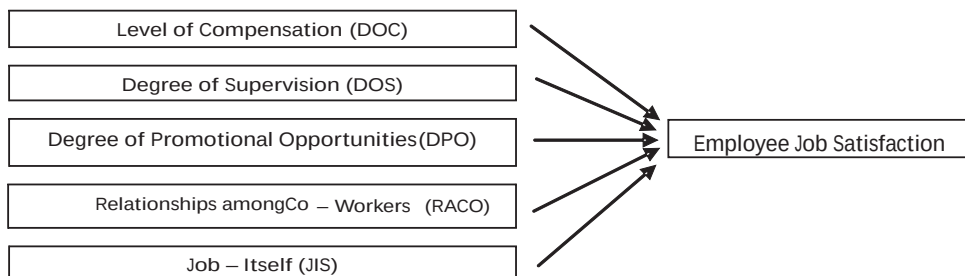
The researcher hopes that this research will contribute to numerous benefits in terms of theoretical, practice, industrial sector and the country.

1. *Theoretical perspective:* In terms of theoretical, this research would help other individual to prove the theory and also support the future research, generates good ideas, and provides better understanding.
2. *Management perspective:* The study could support the management to improve the employees' job performance in the future as well as to improve the job satisfaction.
3. *Industrial perspective:* It caters the export manufacturing companies to direct their employees towards maximum productivity and retain a talented work force while the country will be benefited with better economic growth. Also, most of the export manufacturing companies are situated in Colombo and surrounding areas under the government scheme of export processing zones. Therefore, the government policy makers and other stakeholders could facilitate the employee well-being and safety to motivate employees for better performance..
4. *Country perspective:* This research will benefit to Sri Lanka to use and adopt in their policies on the employee who work in the export manufacturing companies and it could be a reference or guideline for the implementation of each firm policies and procedures.

## Research Methods

Employee job satisfaction is the dependent variables while the level of compensation, degree of supervision, degree of promotional opportunities, relationship of co-workers and job-itself are the dependent variables of this study. Figure 01, demonstrates the research framework for this study. This framework of this research defines the conceptual thoughts in relation with the factors causing employee job satisfaction in the export manufacturing organizations in western province, which was used for empirical survey in the research.

**Figure 01: Conceptual Framework of the Research**



*Source: Model developed by researcher (Deduced from the Literature)*

From the above research framework, the following hypotheses are developed as follows.

1. There is a significant relationship between level of compensation and employee job satisfaction.
2. Degree of supervision is significantly related with employee job satisfaction.
3. Degree of promotional opportunities and employee job satisfaction are significantly correlated.
4. Relationship among co-workers and employee job satisfaction is significantly related.
5. Work itself exhibits a significant association with job satisfaction.

A questionnaire was designed as a technique for data collection and its development is based on the literature review. The questions used Likert scales ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. The questions are borrowed from the previous studies and modified. The purposive sampling method was used for the study. Hundred sets of

questionnaires were distributed among the employees who work in the export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka. The range of the employees is from 18 -55 years old as most of them are in the young generation and they have their own needs and wants. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences with analyses such as descriptive statistics and multiple regression tests after collecting the survey questionnaires from the respondents.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

There are totally 500 respondents involved in this survey. In terms of gender distribution 68% of the respondents are male. The majority of respondents are between 18-35 years old (68.45%). The respondents are from two ethnic groups as Sinhalese (98.2%) and Burger (1.8%). In terms of the educational level, the majority of the respondents are G.C.E. (Advanced Level) level pass qualifiers with technical knowledge and experiences (75%). The 58% of respondent's monthly income are LKR. 32,000.00 to LKR. 56,000.00. In terms of the years of working experience, most of the respondents who participated in this survey have only; less than 5 years working experiences (28%), 6-10 years (47%), 11-15 years (16%) and above 16 years (9%). The table 1 shows the values of range, minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of independent and dependent variables. In the process of comparing the independent variables such as; level of compensation, degree of supervision, level of promotional opportunities, co-worker relationship and job itself and dependent variable; Job satisfaction, all variables have high mean values of more than 3. Out of six variables, five variables have recorded a highest maximum value of 5 marks except level of promotional opportunities which is relatively low amounting 4.5. In that case the standard deviation, all variables recorded high values in a range of 0.70 to 1.00 and the Degree of Supervision is highest amounting 0.95. At the same time, all independent and dependent values have low minimum value in a range of 1.2 to 2.00 and Job satisfaction has low mean value too than other variables. The maximum and minimum values for each measure indicate that the all variables vary considerably among each other.

**Table 01:**  
**Data Analysis Results under Descriptive Statistics on Employee Job Satisfaction**

|                     | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| LOC                 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 3.7367 | .85378         |
| DOS                 | 1.75    | 5.00    | 3.1038 | .94533         |
| DPO                 | 2.00    | 4.50    | 3.2400 | .73829         |
| RACO                | 2.75    | 5.00    | 3.5700 | .71163         |
| JIS                 | 1.75    | 5.00    | 3.3412 | .82474         |
| JS                  | 1.20    | 5.00    | 2.9860 | .89680         |
| No. of observations | 100     |         |        |                |

*Source: Analysis of the survey data*

The multiple regression analysis is applied to identify the impact of the level of compensation, degree of supervision, degree of promotional opportunities, relationship among co-workers and job itself on the employee job satisfaction of the export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka. The regression coefficients for level of compensation, degree of supervision, degree of promotional opportunities, relationship among co-workers, and job itself are expressed according to the designed multiple regression model as in the following table.

**Table 02:**  
**Regression Coefficients of the Factors affecting for Employee Job Satisfaction**

| Model |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. (0.05 level) |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------------|
|       |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |                   |
| 1     | (Constant) | 0.205                       | 0.207      |                           | 0.993  | 0.323             |
|       | LOC        | -0.048                      | 0.072      | -0.046                    | -0.668 | 0.506             |
|       | DOS        | 0.448                       | 0.134      | 0.473                     | 3.338  | 0.001             |
|       | DPO        | -0.255                      | 0.124      | -0.210                    | -2.058 | 0.042             |
|       | RACO       | -0.474                      | 0.124      | -0.376                    | -3.835 | 0.000             |
|       | JIS        | 1.223                       | 0.081      | 1.224                     | 15.027 | 0.000             |

- a. Dependent Variable: JS  
 Source: Analysis of the survey data

Therefore on the basis of the results shown above, the regression coefficients for Regression Coefficients of the Factors affecting for Employee Job Satisfaction can be expressed as;

$$JS = 0.205 - 0.048 (LOC) + 0.448 (DOS) - 0.2550 (DPO) - 0.474 (RACO) + 1.223 (JIS) + \epsilon$$

The t values of above results leading to the acceptance of hypotheses H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> whereas the rejection of hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>. In this connection, it is to conclude that the job satisfaction affects positively to DOS, DPO, RACO and JIS, and negatively to LOC.

**Table 03: Model regression summary of the Factors affecting for Employee Job Satisfaction**

| Model | R                  | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | 0.985 <sup>a</sup> | 0.971    | 0.969             | 0.15772                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), LOC, DOS, DPO, RACO, JIS

Source: Analysis of the survey data

The model summary showed that there is a strong impact of predictors on outcome variable named job satisfaction. Moreover the R square value given that variation among variables shown by the model is due to chance and about 97% of the changes in job satisfaction is explained by the changes in LOC, DOS, DPO, RACO, and JIS.

### **Conclusions and Directions for Future Research**

This study has successfully satisfied the objective set which was to study the factors influencing employee job satisfaction of export manufacturing companies leading to organizational performance and to evaluate the impact of such factors on employee job satisfaction and to suggest appropriate means to develop strategies helping policy makers of export manufacturing companies in Western Province, Sri Lanka. Employee job satisfaction is a very much essential factor for the organizations that are linked with the country's economic development. This study provides in a depth understanding on the employee job satisfaction for the human resource managers and practitioners. The results of the study can be used as an important source of information resulting in addition to more information to the existing pool of knowledge. In present days in an intensely competitive global environment, organizational employees are the most

important factor and the sustainable long-term competitive advantage of an organization. Also, there is a strong demand for workforce and it is important to motivate and satisfy the employees achieving of higher productivity of an organization. The utmost attention for the employee job satisfaction is vital indicating that the production oriented organizations must efficiently and effectively manage all the company operation with an economic utilization of their limited resources in timely accurate and reliable manner in order to fulfill the customer requirements thereby maximizing the organizational wealth. Therefore, all the responsible officers should motivate their subordinates in case of individual and / or collective manner by way of LOC, DOS, DPO, RACO and JIS in order to achieve their goals and objectives. Also, this study can be practiced as a guideline when establishing new rules & regulations and governing existing regulations on improving job satisfaction as well as said independent indicators as would be considered from the policy making perspectives. This research would be an added advantage for the organizational management as an aid for their future planning on employee motivation and performance appraisal Sample size is the main limiting factor for this study due to the unavailability of getting their consent for collecting data during work places at its continuous production flows.. Future studies should carry out the related studies at a larger scale in order to make the results more accurate and sufficient to represent the entire target beneficiaries. Besides that, other data collection techniques such as observation, essay & dialog and interview can be used for future researches in order to obtain more trustful and emotional information. In addition, the researchers found in this study, that there is a significant positive relationship between the LOC, DOS, DPO, RACO and JIS and employee job satisfaction according to the variables substituted. But it is suggested to apply, the control variables as Firm Size and Economic Growth rate (LOS and EGR) to find further strong relationship; because, export manufacturing companies are highly contributed to the national income of the country and it's significant should be linked with these researches for the purpose of appreciating and contributing the employees job performance directly related to the country's development. Therefore, the researchers would elaborate for further research to find out a strong impact on this area or this space will be extended to anyone for future research.

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