Chapter 8

Study of Employee Innovative Behavior in Sri Lankan Software Companies

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ABSTRACT

Along with the advancement of the technology, software companies have to face a huge competition in the global market. To face this competition, innovations can be used as a strategic weapon. As employees are the main driving forces of innovation, their behavior can be a crucial factor in boosting innovation. Innovative behavior is referred as the introduction and application of new ideas, products, processes, and procedures to a person’s work role or an organization. This behavior directly affects innovation performance of an organization. The main aim of this study is to identify the factors that affect employee innovative behavior and their effect in Sri Lankan software companies using a quantitative methodology. Apart from that, this study provides a conclusive summary of the current status of innovative behavior of employees. The initial step mapping study was done to find the past literature related to the research topic. From that study, 17 papers were identified as primary studies.

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INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan software companies have shown a rapid growth since last decades, with the advancement of the information technology (Balasooriya, 2014). Because of this, many local and global investors are willing to invest on this sector. All these software organizations have to operate in a global market where there is a huge competition (Balasooriya, 2014). Innovations are known as a strategic weapon to face this competition. The word “innovation” refers to “something freshly introduced”. Innovation is about putting in ideas to make new results. This result may be a new product, a new approach or even a new application of an old product or approach. Innovation emerges due to new competitive demands (Baragde & Baporikar, 2017). Therefore, to survive in the modern economic climate, organizations must seek innovation to change processes, create different and more effective processes, or improve existing processes. Organizations may go for different types of innovations such as product innovation, process innovation, service innovation, business innovation and all contribute to strengthen the competitive advantage of a certain company (Gamal, Salah, & Elrayyes, 2011).

Employees are the main driving force of the innovation in the industry (Li & Zheng, 2014). So the employee innovative behavior, which can be defined as an act of generating, promoting and applying of innovative thinking in the organization for the purpose of personal and organizational performance is very crucial (Chatchawan, Trichandhara, & Rinthaisong, 2017; Li & Zheng, 2014). As software companies in Sri Lanka are constantly evolving, it is important to know how a company’s ability to innovate can be improved. All innovative activities can be traced back to the behavior of employees. This absolutely makes the employee the center point of attention. It is difficult for innovation to be forged by an individual alone. As a result, a great deal of attention should be paid to the factors affecting innovative work behavior (Chatchawan et al., 2017). In order to understand the state of innovative behavior of employees, it is important to go through difficulties and obstacles which employees meet when they engage in innovative activities. For that we should consider the barriers in both internal and external factors regarding employees. The relationship between factors and barriers is that if a factor affects the subject negatively, it becomes a barrier.

Motivation

Nowadays, innovation plays a key role in facing the vast competition created with technology advancement. This huge competition among companies has created the need of understanding the factors behind the high performance of organizations (Abdel Aziz & Rizkallah, 2015). Many studies identified innovation as one of the
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