

**MOTIVATING IT PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA:  
EXPECTATIONS AND CURRENT PRACTICE**

Elizabeth Anoja Rajasingham

099071T

Master of Business Administration in Information Technology

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

August 2012

**MOTIVATING IT PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA:  
EXPECTATIONS AND CURRENT PRACTICE**

Elizabeth Anoja Rajasingham

099071T

The Dissertation was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Business Administration.

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

University of Moratuwa,

Sri Lanka

August 2012

## Declaration

“I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published, written or orally communicated by another person or myself except where due reference is made in the text. I also hereby give consent for dissertation, if accepted, to be made available for photocopying and for interlibrary loans, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations”

-----  
E.A Rajasingham

-----  
Date

MBA/IT/09/9071

To the best of my knowledge, the above particulars are correct.

-----  
Prof.Sanath Jayasena

-----  
Date

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

University of Moratuwa.

Approved by the examination committee:

MBA in IT,

Department of Computer Science and Engineering,

University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. August 2012

## **Abstract**

Human resources are the most important among all the resources an organisation owns. To retain efficient and experienced workforce in an organisation is very crucial in overall performance of an organisation. Apart from the benefit and moral value of a selfless approach of treating colleagues as human beings and respecting human dignity in all its forms, research reveal that well motivated employees are productive and creative. This in turn can make an organisation competitively more value added and profitable.

Even though there have been various studies on employee motivation, this subject area is still in primitive stages as far as the IT sector in Sri Lanka is concerned. The present study is an attempt to find out the major factors that Sri Lankan IT companies use at present to motivate their employees and how the IT professionals preferred to be motivated.

A carefully analysed questionnaire was prepared and specially numbered. Out of the 400 questionnaires sent to IT professionals of 15 organizations, 390 responded and 382 responses were complete. The organisations selected vary from small to large scale having IT services as their primary business. The participation in the survey was voluntary and confidentiality of responses was ensured.

Results of the study reveal that, all the key notions considered in the conceptual framework are having positive contribution towards a motivated behavior. The statistical analysis showed that different dimensions of work motivation are significantly correlated and have an impact on motivation of the employees. A career path for promotion and growth in the organization was the most preferred motivating factor of the IT professionals.

Implications of the study for managers and policy makers, IT professionals and HR management in the context of human resource practices have been discussed. Limitations and guidelines for future research are also provided.

## **Acknowledgement**

Firstly, I would like to extend by truthful gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Sanath Jayasena from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University for his priceless guidance and continuous advice on my research work.

I would also extend by sincere gratitude to Dr. Chandana Gamage, Senior Lecturer and Course Coordinator for MBA in IT at Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Moratuwa for sparing valuable time and providing continuous support from the identification of the research problem, formulating the conceptual model and advices on data analysis which contributed a lot to carry out the research successfully.

My earnest gratitude is further extended to all the academic and non-academic staff of Department of Computer Science and Engineering, and my colleagues from MBA IT degree program and the staff at Library of the University of Moratuwa for their support in numerous ways.

My heartfelt gratitude is to the management of all the IT companies and their employees who provided their fullest support in data collection and by providing valuable feedback for improvement of the questionnaire.

Lastly, I extend my sincere thank to my beloved husband and daughter for continuous support, without their support this research would not be possible.

E.A Rajasingham



## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures.....	x
1 CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Background and Motivation.....	2
1.2.1 Skilled employees are critical to business.....	2
1.2.2 Cost of employee turnover is high.....	2
1.2.3 Employee Loyalty.....	3
1.3 Problem Identification.....	3
1.3.1 Projects deferred due to the quality of work done and productivity of the employees .....	3
1.3.2 High employee turnover in the IT sector .....	4
1.3.3 The factors in which the Sri Lankan IT companies are failing to motivate their employees and to analyze expectations of the IT professionals .....	5
1.4 Importance of this study.....	6
1.4.1 Find out the gap between how employees are being motivated and how they preferred to be motivated .....	6
1.4.2 Enable higher staff retention .....	6

1.4.3	More innovation and creativity .....	7
1.4.4	Building a better relationship between employer and employee .....	7
1.4.5	Higher levels of productivity.....	7
1.5	Research Objectives.....	8
	▪ How IT professionals in Sri Lanka are being motivated by their employers? ....	8
	▪ How IT professionals prefer to be motivated? .....	8
1.6	Thesis Outline.....	8
2	CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1	Introduction to Motivation .....	9
2.2	Importance of Motivation.....	9
2.3	Literature Review .....	10
2.3.1	Motivation Theories.....	10
2.3.2	Previous Researches on Employee Motivation .....	19
2.3.3	Levels of Motivation.....	21
2.3.4	Motivation and Career Path.....	22
2.3.5	Motivation and Recognition.....	23
2.3.6	Motivation and Rewards .....	25
2.3.7	Motivation and Organisational Culture .....	25



2.3.8	Motivation and Work itself .....	28
2.3.9	Motivation and work-life balance.....	30
2.3.10	Motivation and job security .....	31
3	CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY .....	32
3.1	Introduction .....	32
3.2	Conceptual Framework .....	33
3.3	Definition of Variables.....	37
3.3.1	Independent Variables .....	37
3.3.2	Dependent Variable .....	38
3.4	Hypothesis .....	39
3.5	Research Questionnaire.....	39
3.6	Research Instrument.....	41
3.7	Sample Design.....	47
3.7.1	Population .....	47
3.7.2	Sampling .....	48
3.7.3	Sample.....	48
3.7.4	Procedure and pretests .....	48
4	CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS .....	51

4.1	Introduction .....	51
4.2	Reliability of the survey .....	51
4.2.1	Reliability at Variable level.....	54
4.3	Rules of Coding .....	61
4.4	Demographic Characteristics .....	62
4.4.1	Gender distribution of the sample .....	62
4.4.2	Age distribution of the sample .....	63
4.4.3	Organisation size distribution of the sample .....	64
4.4.4	Job category distribution of the sample .....	65
4.4.5	Highest education level of the sample .....	66
4.4.6	Total work experience distribution of the sample .....	67
4.4.7	Work experience with current employer distribution of sample .....	68
4.5	Analysis of Data Distribution.....	69
4.5.1	Career Path .....	70
4.5.2	Organisation Culture.....	72
4.5.3	Work Itself.....	74
4.5.4	Sense of Achievement.....	76
4.5.5	Recognition .....	78

4.5.6	Other facets of motivation.....	80
4.5.7	Motivated Behaviour .....	82
4.6	Analysis of Hypothesis .....	84
4.6.1	Testing Hypothesis 1 .....	84
4.6.2	Testing Hypothesis 2 .....	86
4.6.3	Testing Hypothesis 3 .....	87
4.6.4	Testing Hypothesis 4 .....	88
4.6.5	Testing Hypothesis 5 .....	89
4.6.6	Testing Hypothesis 6 .....	90
4.6.7	Summary of Hypothesis Testing .....	91
4.7	Generalisation of Hypothesis .....	92
4.8	Analysis on most preferred motivating factor.....	93
4.8.1	Motivating Factor .....	93
4.8.2	Career Path.....	95
4.8.3	Type of Task.....	96
4.8.4	Rewards.....	97
4.8.5	Organisation Culture.....	99
4.8.6	Recognition .....	101

5	CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	103
5.1	Introduction .....	103
5.2	Discussion .....	103
5.2.1	Research Objective 1: How IT professionals in Sri Lanka are being motivated by their employers?.....	103
5.2.2	Research Objective 2: How IT professionals preferred to be motivated?.....	105
5.3	Recommendations.....	106
5.3.1	Recommendations for Managers and Policy Makers .....	106
5.3.2	Recommendations for IT professionals .....	108
5.3.3	Recommendations for HR Management.....	108
5.4	Limitations .....	109
5.5	Guidelines for future work .....	110
	References .....	112
	Appendix A : Survey Questionnaire .....	119
	Appendix B : Rules of Coding .....	128
	Appendix C : Graphical Representations .....	133

## List of Tables

Table 3-1 Variables and their Dimensions for measurement .....	34
Table 3-2 Operationalization of variables for research objective 1 .....	41
Table 3-3 Operationalization of variables for research objective 2.....	43
Table 3-4 Operationalization of hypotheses.....	46
Table 4-1 Coding of questionnaire items .....	52
Table 4-2 Dimensions – coded questionnaire item mapping .....	52
Table 4-3 Reliability Statistics –Career Path.....	54
Table 4-4 Item-Total Statistics – Career Path .....	54
Table 4-5 Reliability Statistics – Work itself .....	55
Table 4-6 Item-Total Statistics – Work itself .....	55
Table 4-7 Reliability Statistics - Sense of Achievement.....	56
Table 4-8 Item-Total Statistics - Sense of Achievement .....	56
Table 4-9 Reliability Statistics -Other facets of motivation.....	57
Table 4-10 Item-Total Statistics Other facets of motivation.....	57
Table 4-11 Reliability Statistics - Recognition .....	58
Table 4-12 Item-Total Statistics - Recognition .....	58
Table 4-13 Reliability Statistics - Organisation Culture .....	59

Table 4-14 Item-Total Statistics - Organisation Culture.....	59
Table 4-15 Reliability Statistics- Motivated Behaviour .....	60
Table 4-16 Item-Total Statistics- Motivated Behaviour .....	60
Table 4-17 Rules of Coding .....	61
Table 4-18 Sample Demographic Statistics – Gender .....	62
Table 4-19 Sample demographic statistics – Age.....	63
Table 4-20 Sample demographic statistics – Organisation size .....	64
Table 4-21 Sample demographic statistics – Job category .....	65
Table 4-22 Sample Demographic statistics – Highest education level.....	66
Table 4-23 Sample demographic statistics – Total work experience .....	67
Table 4-24 Sample Demographic statistics – Experience with current employer.....	68
Table 4-25 Descriptive Statistics of Main variables .....	69
Table 4-26 Descriptive Statistics Career Path .....	70
Table 4-27 Descriptive Statistics –Organisational Culture .....	72
Table 4-28 Descriptive Statistics - Work itself .....	74
Table 4-29 Descriptive Statistics – Sense of Achievement.....	76
Table 4-30 Descriptive Statistics - Recognition .....	78
Table 4-31 Descriptive Statistics – Other facets of Motivation .....	80

Table 4-32 Descriptive Statistics – Motivated Behaviour .....	82
Table 4-33 Correlation of Hypothesis 1 .....	85
Table 4-34 Correlation of Hypothesis 2.....	86
Table 4-35 Correlation of Hypothesis 3.....	87
Table 4-36 Correlation of Hypothesis 4.....	88
Table 4-37 Correlation of Hypothesis 5.....	89
Table 4-38 Correlation of Hypothesis 6.....	90
Table 4-39 Summary of Hypothesis Testing.....	91
Table 4-40 Descriptive Statistics – Motivating Factor .....	93
Table 4-41 Descriptive Statistics – Career Path.....	95
Table 4-42 Descriptive Statistics -Type of Task .....	96
Table 4-43 Descriptive Statistics –Rewards.....	97
Table 4-44 Descriptive Statistics – Organisation Culture.....	99
Table 4-45 Descriptive Statistics - Recognition.....	101

## List of Figures

Figure 2-1 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.....	11
Figure 2-2 Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory .....	14
Figure 2-3 Vroom’s Expectancy theory.....	15
Figure 2-4 Levels of Culture, 2004, Organisational culture and leadership .....	27
Figure 3-1 Conceptual Framework.....	33
Figure 3-2 Variables and their Dimensions for measurement.....	36
Figure 3-3 Overall IT Workforce by Job Categories (Source : National ICT workforce survey 2010) .....	47
Figure 4-1 Distribution of Career Path .....	71
Figure 4-2 Distribution of Organisation Culture .....	73
Figure 4-3 Distribution of Work itself .....	75
Figure 4-4 Distribution of Sense of Achievement .....	77
Figure 4-5 Distribution of Recognition.....	79
Figure 4-6 Distribution of Other Facets of Motivation.....	81
Figure 4-7 Distribution of Motivated Behaviour.....	83
Figure 4-8 Preference of Career path – Organisation size wise .....	94
Figure 4-9 Distribution – Organisation Culture .....	100



Figure 4-10 Distribution – Career development opportunities.....	102
Figure_Apx C-1 Sample Demographic Statistics – Gender.....	133
Figure_Apx C-2 Sample demographic statistics - Age.....	133
Figure_Apx C-3 Sample Demographic Statistics - Organisation Size .....	134
Figure_Apx C-4 Sample Demographic Statistics – Education Level.....	134
Figure_Apx C-5 Sample Demographic Statistics – Total Experience.....	135
Figure_Apx C-6 Sample Demographic Statistics –Experience with current employer	135
Figure_Apx C-7 Sample Statistics – Motivated to be technically competent.....	136
Figure_Apx C-8 Sample Statistics –Growth Oriented Tasks.....	137
Figure_Apx C-9 Sample Statistics – Salary Increment .....	138

