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DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN IT PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SELECTED PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA

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IN

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

University of Moratuwa

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Sri Lanka

December 2007

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DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN IT PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SELECTED PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA

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The Dissertation was submitted to the Department of Computer Science & Engineering of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Business Administration.

Department of Computer Science & Engineering
University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka

December 2007

DECLARATION

I hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under my supervision by Ms.F.N.Sultanbawa entitled "Differences in characteristics between IT Professionals and other selected Professionals in Sri Lanka" be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Business Administration in Information Technology.

Approved by,

UOM Verified Signature ------ 28/01/08

Prof. N.D.Gunawardena (Supervisor) Date
Deputy Vice Chancellor
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation is an outcome of an untiring effort of executing a research for nearly eight months. During this period I have been able to get support and co-operation from many who helped me in numerous ways to make this academic venture a success.

First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Niranjan Gunawardena for his steady support and guidance from the beginning to the completion of the research.

From its inception to its completion, my admiration and gratitude is destined to my ever loving friends who always encouraged and extended support to me in all circumstances. Dear friends, I will always remember those cherished moments.

I take this opportunity to thank each and every individual professional in different disciplines, who participated and contributed their views and responses for the questionnaire, which lead to comprehend my research results. If not for your responses, this research would not have been a success.

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Special thanks extend to Mrs. Visaka Nanayakkara and her staff in the CSE Department of University of Moratuwa for their devotion and commitment towards the MBA course. I also wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to all lecturers who guided me during the entire course for nearly two years.

Last, but definitely not the least, my heartfelt thanks go to my husband who always encouraged and helped me to complete the research on time. Many thanks also extend to my parents and all family members for their help, support and encouragement that have given to me over the years for the completion of the MBA.

Najeeba Sultanbawa

ABSTRACT

To most of the hundred millions of computer users around the world, the inner workings of a computer are an utter mystery. Users expect information technology professionals to help them with their needs for designing, locating, retrieving, using, configuring, programming, maintaining and understanding computers, networks, applications and digital objects. In short, everyone has become dependent on IT Professionals as much as on the information technologies themselves. Hence, it is worth identifying, *Who are the IT Professionals?*, since they have become a vital asset for the technological development in a country. This research is an attempt to identify the differences in characteristics of IT Professionals and other selected professionals in Sri Lankan context by validating the past researches done in other countries in relation to this area of concern.

The significance of this research would be that production of high quality software and the efficiency of the software development process are key issues faced by the industry practitioners whilst this leads to the importance of understanding the characteristics of IS personnel to make sound decisions with regard to hiring, training, job assignments, promotion and change management. Accordingly, in order to distinguish the different characteristics of IT Professionals, this research takes into consideration of characteristics of other professionals from Accounting, Marketing and Engineering disciplines, to be the benchmark for the comparison.

The differences are verified against different dimensions, namely: personality traits, economic & financial behavior and career aspirations & organizational behavior. The personality traits dimension was further classified in to four categories as per Meyer Briggs Type Indicator method, namely; extrovert/introvert, sensing/intuitive, thinking/feeling and judging/perceiving behavior. Economic & financial behavior was further classified as saving patterns, spending patterns and investment behavior whilst organizational behavior was further categorized as career aspirations, peer/superior relationship and career satisfaction. These sub classified elements were considered as the hypotheses of this research which was tested using ANOVA statistical method to comprehend the statistical/scientific output of the research context.

It was evident that there is a difference of IT Professionals from other professionals in terms of their extrovert/introvert and thinking/feeling behavior in the personality trait dimension whilst there was a difference in terms of investment behavior in the economic & financial behavior dimension. It was also identified that in terms of peer/superior relationship too there was a considerable difference depicted by the results of the hypotheses testing.

Accordingly, the identified differences in characteristics of the IT Professionals in relation to the above dimensions would be vital information for the respective HR management personnel in the IT industry in order to adjust their style of HR management in terms of recruiting, managing and retaining IT personnel in the organization upon their characteristics.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance
BLS - Bureau of Labor Statistics
IS - Information Systems
IT - Information Technology
MBTI - Meyer Brigg Type Indicator
OCB - Organizational Citizenship Behavior
PF - Personality Factor
SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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