

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA TELECOM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this research study is to measure effect of the Training & Development on the employees Performance. The main objective of training and development is to improve employee knowledge and the skills for their better performance. The performance is measured in terms of the improvement in Productivity, Absenteeism and the Employee Job Satisfaction. This research study is mainly for identifying the effectiveness of the training and development of the Call Center staff of the Sri Lanka Telecom. A simple random sample is a sample of 226 employees drawn from a population of size 450 employees of the Call Centre division customer care area in such a way that sample size 226 has the same chance of being selected.

A sample of 50 officers was selected from the Call Centers. This sample consisted of 10 from the Managerial grade and the 40 from the Officer's grade. Training and the Development strength was measured with the dimensions of Knowledge and the Skills of the employees. The performance was measured with the dimensions of employees Productivity, Absenteeism and the Job Satisfaction. A structured questionnaire was administered to gather information. The statistical analysis of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between Training & Development and the employee productivity, a significant negative relationship between Training & Development and the employee Absenteeism. And also positive relationship between. T & D and Employee Job Satisfaction.

**KEY WORDS:** Training , Development, Productivity, Absenteeism, Job Satisfaction

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### **Introduction**

Organizations are maintaining their business in a severe competitive environment. In today's business the internal and external environment is continuously changing due to so many factors. Therefore, every organization has to change its internal environment according to external environmental changes. To perform well in such a turbulent environment competitively, they need resources such as capital, methodology, material, machines, men and management information systems. These resources should be used in a very effective way to achieve strategic objectives.

Among these factors, human resource is the most vital factor behind an organization's development. Even though there are many resources in an organization, the human resource is the most important resource any organization cannot survive without human resource. In

every organization, human resources are concerned as the most innovative, creative, significant resources. According to Ricky (2007) point of view, he mentioned, “Without people any organization cannot function in this competitive environment”. Therefore the most crucial and valuable asset of an organization is the human resource.

Today every organization’s top priority is to manage the human resources. The level of the productivity and the efficiency of employees should be increased to take maximum output. Many strategies have been implementing to develop productivity of employees, such as job and organization design, job responsibility, public relation, staffing, motivation, reward, training and development. Among these factors, training and development is the most significant factor to obtain maximum output of human resources. The training and development can be used to improve or develop the job related performances such as knowledge, skills and attitudes of the employees.

As far as today is concerned, we are living in a knowledge era. Learning is most intrinsic desire of on individual. Therefore everyone needs to develop or update his knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop his carrier path. Senge (1990) developed theory of “Learning Organization”. In an organization, people work together to achieve their vision, mission and objectives, therefore the most significant factor of organization development is the development of human resources. As we know learning is the most intrinsic desire of people.

Senge (1990) pointed out that present environment is very turbulent environment and to face these changes it is allowed people to learn and develop themselves. According to the Senge’s point of view, people are born with curiosity of learning. The course of destructions of these intrinsic desires are adversely affecting to HR development and training. Senge (1990) further stated that if anything needed for understanding how organization learn and accelerating that leaning is greater today than ever before. In an increasingly dynamic interdependent on unpredictable work it is simply no longer possible for anyone to figure it all out at the top”. When we consider the development of the human resource of the management, today it is in a very competitive position. Every organization must try to achieve a highest output from their human resources. Strategic human resource management is the latest trend of development of an organization. Therefore many organizations invest huge amount of money on strategic HRM.

Training is one of the major function of the HRM and it is used to change or moderate the behavior and the level of motivation aiming the positive contribution for the Performance and finally for the productivity. If the organization followed T & D program well, the organization would enrich by providing a pool of skilled workers, improvement of moral, motivation and finally improvement of the performance and the customer service.

### **Problem Statement**

The modern business organizations are dealing with the rapidly changing environment, which requires radical changes for the organizations to adapt those changes for the purpose of having a survival. For that the organizations should have an ability of achieving the excellence with competitive advantage. In this process the organizations can use resources such as technology, equipment, human resources and capital. Out of all, the human resource is vital and it is a strategic resource, which gives a competitive advantage.

The performance of the organization is mostly depends on the performance of the human resource. A persons performance is basically depends on the skills, attitudes, motivation and

knowledge and the top management's commitment etc. During the past three decades researches made a tremendous effort to establish the link between training and development and organizational performance. But in Sri Lanka the literature pertaining to T & D and employee performance is lacking. Hence this study is an attempt to bridge the gap in the knowledge. The following are the specific research issues of this study.

### **Specific Research Issues**

1. What is the relationship between the Training and Development and the Employees' Productivity?
2. What is the relationship between Training and Development and employees absenteeism?
3. What is the relationship between Training and Development and the employee job satisfaction?

### **Literature Review and Statements of Hypotheses**

Training and development programs can upgrade employees skills and attitudes at all levels to maximize enterprise effectiveness.(Holton et al 1996)

The aim behind training employees is "achieving cost effective high performance" and good performance brings quality, as according to Deming, (1982), higher quality of employee services implies lower costs and increased their productivity, which in turn provides the firm with a greater market share and enhanced competitiveness levels.

Griffin(1978),Ajibade(1993),and Adeniyi(1995) have drawn the attention of the entire sundry to the inestimable value of training and development. It is an avenue to acquire more and new knowledge and develop further the skills and techniques to function effectively. Scholars, experts, social scientist and school administrators now recognize the fact that training is obviously indispensable not only in the development of the individuals but also facilitate the productive capacity of the workers. Training is not coaxing or persuading people to do what is wanted but rather a process of creating organizational conditions that will cause personnel to strive for better performance.

According to Pitfield (1982) the objectives of training are to: provide the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary to undertake required job efficiently develop the workers so that if he has the potentials, he may progress, increase efficiency by reducing spoilt work, misuse of machines and lessening physical risks.

Staff training and development has been identified by various scholars and anchors to be very crucial to an organization and its effectiveness. In the light of the above, organizations are therefore encouraged to train and develop their staff to the fullest advantage in order to enhance their effectiveness and it also improves the drive, initiative and quality of work of the employees thus assist them to be more committed to achieving the goals and objectives of the organization and this has the tendency of enhancing effectiveness among workers within the organization (MacDuffie, 1995; Dyer and Reeves, 1995).

Nadler has shown specific benefits that an organization receives from training and developing its workers, including: Increased performance,. Reduced employee turnover, Increased efficiency resulting in financial gains, Decreased need for supervision

Based on the above literature it is hypothesised that

## **H1 There is a positive relationship between Training and development and the productivity of the employees.**

Training increases personnel efficiency, professional growth, **reduced lateness and absenteeism**, smooth and more effective organization's operations.

Graig (1976) stated that after having a successful training employees can increase productivity

Improve the quality of work and raise morale, Develop new skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes. Use correctly new tools, machines, processes, methods or modifications thereof. Reduce waste, accidents, turnover, lateness, absenteeism, and other overhead costs, implement new or changed policies or regulations, Fight obsolescence in skills, technologies, methods, products, markets, capital management, Bring incumbents to that level of performance which meets the standard of performance for the job, Develop replacements, prepare people for advancement, improve manpower deployment and ensure continuity of leadership, Ensure the survival and growth of the organization.

According to Akintayo (1996), training enhances the employee's ability to use of tools and machine; reduces waste, accidents, turnover, lateness, absenteeism and other overhead costs, eliminates obsolescence in skills, technologies, methods, products, capital management etc. It brings incumbents to that level of performance which needs the performance for the job.

Based on the above literature it is hypothesised that

## **H2 There is a negative relationship between Training and development and the absenteeism of employees.**

The objectives of training and development are the same. Both enhance the individual's capacity to contribute optimally to the development of the organization.(Oguntimehin ,2001).The quality of service can be maintained by continuous development of employees. One of the way to develop employees is giving them a continuous training in their respective fields as according to Michael Armstrong,(2000)employees can perform better and maximize their natural abilities after following a successful training sessions.

Enhance employee's ability to adopt new technologies. Build a more efficient, effective and highly motivated team, which enhances the company's competitive position and improves employee morale. Ensure adequate human resources for expansion into new programs (Heras, 2006).Training is an ideal way to learn a job and it helps employees to improve their skills to do their duties better than before, and employee development will likely growing the future (Noe, 1999). The benefits of employee development extend beyond the actual skills gained and their contribution to an individual's happiness (Benson,2002).

Oguntimehin (2001) identified the effects of employee training are as follow: increase Employee productivity, improves the quality of their work; and improve skills, knowledge, understanding, satisfaction, motivation and their attitudes.In the mid-1980s Bartel and Lichten Berg stated that, the companies are used employee training programmes to improve the adaptability and flexibility of the workforces and increasing their happiness responsiveness to innovation (Bartel and Lichten Berg, 1987).Training can improve the level of performance of the employees and the capacity to answer the consumer needs

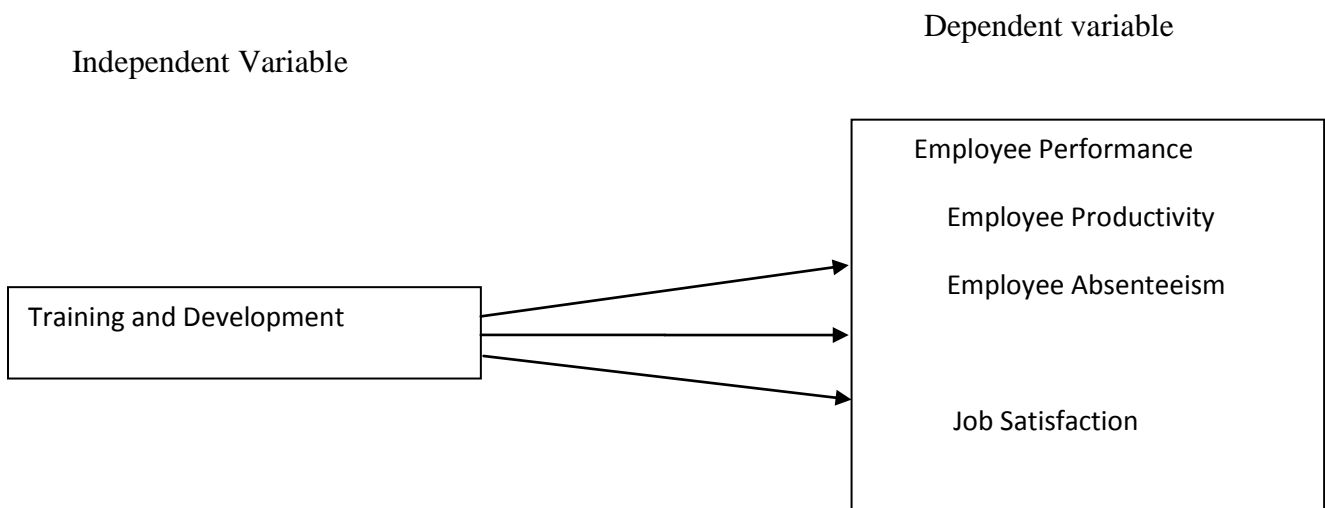
Tsai et al. (2007), found that employees committed to learning showed a higher level of job satisfaction with a positive effect on their performance. Job satisfaction has been defined as

“pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p.1300). Following Rowden’s thinking it would be safe to assume that, employees that perceive their training beneficial will be more satisfied than those who were not trained or training of no value.

Based on the above literature it is hypothesised that

**There is a relationship between Training and development and job satisfaction of employees.**

### Conceptual Framework



This study will continue basing on the above mentioned framework specially it has been mentioned implication of the Training and Development and Performance of the employees. Independent variable of the study is training and development while the dependent variable is employee performance. Employee performance consisted of three dimensions namely; employee productivity, employee absenteeism and job satisfaction. The following table 01 provides working definitions for variables and sub variables.

**Table 01: Working definitions**

| Description              | Definition   |
|--------------------------|--|
| Training and development | Training and development is a learning activity, which leads to acquisition of specific knowledge skills for the purpose of occupation or task which necessary for the development of both the individual and organization.  |
| Employee Productivity    | Productivity is achieving cost effective high performance and good performance brings quality, Higher quality of employee services implies lower costs and increased their productivity, which in turn provides the firm with a greater market share and enhanced competitiveness levels.                          |
| Employee Absenteeism     | Voluntary non-attendance at work, without valid reason. Absenteeism means either habitual evasion of work, or wilful absence as in a strike action. It does not include involuntary or occasional absence due to valid causes, or reasons beyond one's control, such as accidents or sickness.                     |
| Job Satisfaction         | Employee satisfaction is the terminology used to describe whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace. |

### **Research Methodology**

The research conducted at the Call Centre division of the Sri Lanka Telecom head office and is an exploratory study.

### **Population.**

The Population of the sample is limited only to the Telecom industry. This study doesn't represent all the Telecom Institutions/ Operators in Sri Lanka. The selected location for the study is the Call Centre division of the Sri Lanka Telecom Head Office in Colombo . The population of the research study is selected out of the 450 number of employees who are working in the Call Centre division. The call centre division is a very important division as they are the first interface to the customers as to receive the customer complains & or new requests. Proper measurements can be obtained the real effect of the Training and Development on the performance of the Call Centre staff.

This research is mainly focused on the effect developing the Knowledge and skills through an effective Training and Development programs and how it affects to the overall improvement of the Productivity , Absenteeism and the Customer satisfaction through effective training & development. Effect of all such parameters can effectively measured by samples through the Call centre.

### **Sample**

This sample of employees was selected by using the simple random sampling method so that all the employees of the same size have an equal chance of being selected from the entire population. A simple random sample is a sample of 226 employees drawn from a population of size 450 employees of the Call Centre division customer care area in such a way that

sample size 226 has the same chance of being selected. The sample was selected based on the table created by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

### Data Analysis and Testing of Hypotheses

For the management sample, majority of respondents are females and it reaches to 90% of the total. There is a very less representation in the sample for male respondents and it covers 10% only. This deviation mainly arose because the call center functions mainly carried out by the female employees. Males do have shown reluctant to the kind of routine or stereo type job.

In this sample five age groups are identified. The minimum values are ranked in 25-30 range while maximums are included in above 45 ranges. The special characteristic of the sample is the same amount of value is ranged with in several age groups and no one represents the range of 31-35. It is 30% and rest (10%) is occupied in above 45 range that is also the minimum value in the sample. In numbers, same amount, that is 3 includes in several ranges while only one person excesses above 45 ranges.

All primary data were collected through questionnaires and observation. Total of 50 samples were selected, Ten from the management category and 40 from the staff category. 25 questions were prepared and presented to them to obtain their views. The questions were constituted mainly in two categories, Training and development and the employees performance. The independent variable effectiveness of the Training and development is measured through questions build around to measure the knowledge and the skill development. The dependent variables are measured through the questions such as productivity, absenteeism and the employee satisfaction.

### Hypothesis 1

There is a relationship between the knowledge and the skills acquired through the training & development process and the productivity improvement of the employee.

#### Coefficient of correlation

$$r = \frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Independent variable (x)

$$X = X_1 + X_2 \quad \begin{array}{l} X_1 - \text{Development of Knowledge} \\ X_2 - \text{Development of Skills} \end{array}$$

Dependent variable (y) = expected employee performance

$$Y = Y_1 \quad Y_1 - \text{Improvement of Productivity}$$

$$\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y}) = 21.31$$

$$\sum(x - \bar{x})^2 = 28.31$$

$$\sum(y - \bar{y})^2 = 22.98$$

$$r = \frac{21.31}{\sqrt{650.65}}$$

$$r = \frac{21.31}{25.51}$$

$$r = 0.84$$

Bellow Scatter diagram indicates that there is a positive relationship as the points are very close to each other.

### Training and development against the Productivity

The coefficient of correlation shows Strong positive relationship (Very strong positive relationship will range between  $0.7 < r < 1$ )

### Hypothesis 2

There is a relationship between employees' training & development process and improvement expected employee Absenteeism achieving through the Training and development concept.

### coefficient of correlation

$$r = \frac{\sum(x-x)(y-Y)}{\sqrt{\sum(x-x)^2 \sum(y-y)^2}}$$

Independent variable (x) = employees' attitudes + employees' knowledge

Dependent variable (y) = expected employee productivity

$$\sum(x-x)(y-Y) = -3.61$$

$$\sum(x-x)^2 = 28.31$$

$$\sum(y-y)^2 = 19.38$$

$$r = \frac{-3.61}{\sqrt{28.31 * 19.38}}$$

$$r = \frac{-3.61}{23.42}$$

$$r = -0.15$$

The coefficient of correlation indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between two variables. (Very strong positive relationship will rang between  $0.7 < r < 1$ )

### Hypothesis 3

When top management commitment, employees' attitudes and knowledge are higher regarding training & development process, expected employee productivity will also be higher achieving through that concept.



**Coefficient of correlation**

$$r = \frac{\Sigma(x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\sqrt{\Sigma(x-\bar{x})^2 \Sigma(y-\bar{y})^2}}$$

Independent variable (x) = top management commitment + employees’ attitudes + employees’

Knowledge

Dependent variable (y) = expected labour productivity

$$\begin{aligned} \Sigma(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y}) &= 0.40173 \\ \Sigma(x - \bar{x})^2 &= 0.88881 \\ \Sigma(y - \bar{y})^2 &= 0.36809 \\ &= \frac{0.40173}{\sqrt{0.88881 * 0.36809}} \\ r &= \frac{0.88881}{0.57981} \\ r &= 0.7023 \end{aligned}$$

The coefficient of correlation shows that there is a strong positive relationship. (Very strong positive relationship will rang between  $0.7 < r < 1$ )

**Findings , Recommendations and conclusion**

The data acquired through questionnaires, interviews and observations, reveals that top management position holders have a higher commitment regarding the training & development. Following viewpoints emerged from them and they strongly accept that the training & development contributes to-

- (1) Improvement of high quality, high productivity and safety environment.
- (2) Improve team work, moral, motivation, Productivity, quality, safety, job satisfaction and hidden talents etc.
- (3) Improve the productivity through reduced absenteeism.
- (4) Produce a more disciplinary work force.

**The Training & Development**

- (1) Entails many systematic procedures therefore it improves the ability of employees to be aligned with organizational plans, target etc.....
- (2) Can be applied almost everywhere such as any organizations , Schools, Government institutions Universities etc.,

Almost all of them strongly accept that training and development is a good concept and it is very essential to carry out their work efficiently and effectively while facing for the challenges. According to researcher’s observation, all of above positive attitudes that have emerged among top management due to; they have achieved very immersive tangible benefits through successful implementation of training & development. Their work place is well-organized, neat and clean. All of these improve mental condition of employees and motivate them to work with enthusiasm. Employees, they work as a team. All their work has been arranged on team work. The Experience and the knowledge gained through Training & development have been immensely helped for this.

When considering all of the above data, it can be concluded that, they have a very high commitment towards the Training and development, in Top Management position holders. This also can be proved by analyzed data.

By analysing the data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, it is evident that employees strongly believes that, the training & developments contributes to

a) Improve positive attitude towards the achieving company

Objectives target and goals.

b) Improves employees and organizational well being

c) Enhance the mental condition of the employee

d) Create clean, systematic and safe environment

e) Help to complete duties accordingly

it is difficult to apply for every situation, where limited staff is on duty.

Considering the data, gathered regarding training productivity, all final marks have been accommodated within the area of high range. Thus it can be concluded that, Call Center staff of Sri Lanka Telecom Ltd, currently enjoys a high range of training & development in building their Knowledge and the Skills through successful implementation of training & development programs.

There is a relationship between training & development and expected productivity improvements through the training and development. (Hypothesis 01)

To determine the relationship between two variables, coefficient of correlation and is used. Here coefficient of correlation is 0.82. This proves that there is a significance positive relationship. This relationship is also depicted by scatter diagram. This diagram furthermore represent same situation as coefficient of correlation that is, points are not every close to each other, therefore scatter diagram also suggest that there is a very high positive relationship.

It can be concluded that, In order to achieve expected staff productivity through the training development, high level of Skill development and building of knowledge or updating the knowledge is required. Continues programs to be carried out in developing the skills and the knowledge in consistent with the change of environment.

There is a relationship (Hypothesis 02) regarding training & development and effect of employee punctuality of attendance or the impact of the Absenteeism achieving through the training & development concept. To determine the nature of relationship between independent and dependent variable, coefficient of correlation is used.

For this hypothesis, coefficient or correlation is negative 0.15 (-0.15) .It shows that there is a significance negative relationship between Training development and the Absenteeism. That proves there is a negative relationship between two variables. Thus finding reveals that for achieving expected or improvement of punctuality or the attendance of the staff through the, employee's improved knowledge and skill development acquired through training and development concept will play a dominant role.

Through the training & development concept, all procedures are arranged on the self-discipline therefore it is very important to pay much attention for these factors. Since employees engage with such a program at their best when their attitudes and knowledge are high toward that concept.

When top management commitment, employees' Skills and knowledge are higher regarding training & development, expected employee satisfaction is also higher achieving through that concept. (Hypothesis 03)

To identify the nature of the relationship, coefficient of correlation and scatter diagram are used. In case of this hypothesis, the coefficient of correlation is also on a strong place ( 0.66). Also scatter diagram depicts the same situation. That is all points are very close to each other. All this suggestion proves that, there is a very strong positive relationship between two variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that when top management commitment, employees' attitudes and

knowledge are higher toward the training & development concept. In other words, when these factors (top management commitment, employees' attitudes and knowledge) have accommodated on a higher position towards training & development will definitely ensure that expected employee performance will be higher. Therefore. To achieve success from such a program management or relevant authorities should be aware whether these factors are in a favorable position.

### **Recommendations.**

Colombo Call Canter Division in Sri Lanka telecom limited at present enjoys greater employee performance through successful implementation of the training & development therefore the researcher mainly recommends that they should carry out the current situation as much as possible without getting deterioration the situation. They should not decrease their commitment and enthusiasm towards training & development by the time or changing the management commitment and attitudes on strengthening the skill and the knowledge of employees.

Following suggestions can be made for general perception of every organization.

- 1) Before implementing training & development related programs within everywhere, an attitudes survey should be carried out in order to confirm that relevant parties are interested in training & development and holding positive attitudes regarding that concept. Otherwise, the program would fail since the training development is a self-disciplinary oriented program and it needs people's commitment at their best to achieve success. People are not committed towards any program, if they hold negative attitudes for that programme. Implementing training & development in such an environment, the whole program will come to a halt naturally. Thus the company will lose its resources at last whereas nothing has been achieved.
- 2) Before implementing training & development related program, there should be a systematic plan and program to give proper education about the training & developments, how it is implemented. What benefits could be achieved, the importance of it in responding competitive environment, how it contributes to customer satisfaction. And personal development. These awareness programs will facilitate to eliminate negative attitudes and help to increase interesting and knowledge regarding the training & development concept. Before implementing such a program, the education level of employees should be taken into account, since when training or awareness program has been aligned with the education level of employees. The effectiveness of that program will be high. Receiving a feedback from employees is important as well. When implementing the training & developments within the work place, follow up programs

should be implemented after certain period of time to ensure whether the program is fruitful.

- 3) Top management should understand the importance of the training & development and its benefits, how it contributes to uplift organizational personality, mental conditions of employees etc. They should actively participate in training & implementing process, and pay adequate attention for implementing problems and difficulties and respond them in an immediate manner. They should motivate employees to carry out these activities with enthusiasm.
- 4) Employees who are engaging different kind of duties does not have proper knowledge how training & development could be utilize for their activities. Especially for Technical staff, such setbacks should be overcome by conducting special education programs particularly designed for them.
- 5) Annual transfer schemes when transferring staff to different divisions should identify the type and kind of training given to them. Priority should be given for them to transfer to the relevant sections for which the training has been given.
- 6) An incentive scheme should be coupled with the productivity improvements of the employee after the Training and development.

### **Conclusion**

The Research was to study the significance of the Training and development on the employee's performance. Even though there are number of research carried out on this topic, there wasn't a study carried out to see the significance on the Customer Care officers in the field of Telecommunication. This study was based on the Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) Call Center Customer Care Officers. Customer Care Officers are the first meeting point for the customers who are looking for new services or to inquire about the existing services. In SLT there are about 425 Customer Care Officers deployed at the Call Center. Average about 600 to 700 thousand calls per month will be answered by the officers. The Company Image and the progress is mainly depend upon the performance of the Customer Care Officers.

This research findings discussed under the recommendations could be used by the other Telecommunication Operators in Sri Lanka. Also this can be used as a model to study the other organizations behavior where no such study has not been focused yet.

Telecommunication sector development is taking pace rapidly and the Technology is changing fast companies should sustain their growth. It is suggested that this study could further extend with wider dimensions considering the impact of Technological changes, funding and finding knowledgeable resource personal for T & D and the employee retention under the competitive turbulent environment.

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