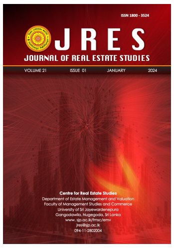

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Scrutinizing Administrative Procedures Towards the Performance of Assessment Tax Generation in the Colombo Municipal Council, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The assessment tax is a crucial revenue stream for the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC). Despite its significance, the CMC consistently fails to meet revenue targets. Hence, this study aimed to explore the factors influencing the performance of the assessment tax administration within the CMC. Primary data was taken into account and data was collected by interviewing all assessors (32) employed in the Assessor Department of CMC using a structured questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS statistics 20.0 software. The results suggest a robust positive correlation between the performance of tax administration and staff deployed for assessment tax and the technology used. However, a weaker positive correlation was observed with the factor of time allocated. The regression analysis unveiled that both staff deployed for assessment tax and the technology used have a positive influence on assessment tax administration, whereas motivation to perform and time allocation show negligible impact. Furthermore, staff deployed for the assessment tax emerged as the most influential factor whereas the technology used appeared relatively weaker in tax administration.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Governments at all levels in countries across the world collect money from their citizens in different manners to provide services to the public, which is known as taxation. The primary purpose of taxation is to increase government revenue to cover government expenditures. Assessment tax is one form of tax imposed by local government and which is also referred to as property tax (Abdullah *et al.*, 2021) and levied on assets such as land and buildings in local authority areas such as; Municipal Council (MC), Urban Council (UC) and Pradeshiya Sabha (PS) (Milhana & Nufile, 2016). While there is no precise definition for the Assessment tax in Sri Lanka, in terms of the provision under section 2 of the Local Government Act 1976 in Malaysia, Assessment tax is a form of local tax imposed on the individual based on ownership of immovable property or real

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estate including residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and bare land within the jurisdiction administered by the local government (Abdullah *et al.*, 2021). It is levied by a local authority under statutory powers and it is the annual amount paid by a landowner to the local government. Accordingly, this tax is known as the price that should be paid by the public to utilize the services offered by the relevant local authority. The rationale of the assessment tax is to levy a percentage from the value of properties that are located within the territory of the local bodies. Accordingly, residents who directly benefit from the services provided by local authorities are required to pay taxes as a legal requirement as well as a liability. These services include water supply, garbage collection and disposal, drainage, street cleaning and maintenance, street lighting, public transit, public recreation, fire and police protection, local streets and roads development and management of common areas, etc. (Kitchen, 2005). Spending property tax revenue on services such as fire, police protection, roads, drainage and street lighting upsurges property values within local government jurisdictions (Nyabakora, Okoth, and Ngomaitara, 2020).

Different bases of Assessment tax can be identified in different countries. Countries like the United Kingdom apply the capital value to levying the assessment tax. Canada, the US, Australia, Indonesia, and Japan levy assessment tax from the public based on the market value of the property while Kenya, New Zealand, Jamaica, and South Africa use site value to levy rates. Besides, France, Morocco, and India use rental value and Israel, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Armenia, and Russia use unit value for the same purpose. Whereas, the recent practice of levying assessment tax in Sri Lanka is based on the Annual Value of the property (Wasantha et al., 2012). To calculate the annual value of land and buildings located within their territory, local authorities use the same practice with minor variations.

The ability of the government to cover expenditures depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of tax administration, which reflects the ability of the existing tax system to generate sufficient revenue (Adnan *et al.*, 2017). Government expenditure reflects the capital expenditure and revenue expenditure. Capital expenditure includes capital outlay and infrastructure outlay while revenue expenditure includes employs, supplies, establishment and miscellaneous, charges and allocations, grants and contribution, capital assets maintenance, and capital financing cost. However, although property tax is a powerful source of local government revenue, the problem of inefficiency and unreliability is a common problem facing local governments, which severely limits their ability to generate sufficient revenue (Balogun, 2019). As stated by Oluwadare and Ojo (2014) cited in Balogun (2019), inadequate knowledge of the spatial distribution of properties and the inefficient manner in which property tax records are kept in criteria that reduce the property tax revenue available to local governments.

Many local authorities in Sri Lanka have been assigned the task of administration of the assessment tax in their area of jurisdiction to the Government Valuation Department and they pay a fee to obtain the relevant service. However, the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) has not granted this authority to the Sri Lankan Government Valuation Department, and it has instead adopted a similar mechanism that is comparable to the approach taken by the Government Valuation Department regarding the assessment tax.

The current practice of the CMC's assessment tax administration procedure appears to have certain flaws and challenges. As a result, the list of properties is not revised properly. It means assessors in the Assessor Department of the CMC are unable to obtain property information exactly during the given period. It leads to reduce the expected income of the assessment tax from the revision of the assessment. This poses a disadvantage for the Colombo Municipality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term “Tax” can be defined simply as “a compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions”. Taxes are levied in almost every country of the world, primarily to raise revenue for government expenditures (Shenkute, 2018; Shagari, 2014).

The earliest historical evidence of taxation has been found in England. In the colonial era, methodologies and concepts of taxation spread around the world. Hence different tax systems are available in many countries. Different forms of taxes are levied by governments. Among them, local taxes are famous and important in the fiscal system of countries. Local taxes are assigned to the local government. Property tax is one form of local tax. In most countries, taxes on land and property are among the oldest forms of all taxes (Olatunji and Ayodele, 2017).

2.1 Theories of Tax Administration

Different theories can be identified from different aspects regarding tax administration. Goal- setting theory and Governance theory play a significant role related to the tax administration. By using theories to explain the relationships between variables, there will be a potential contribution to the future work of research with a correct guide, appropriate logical conclusion, and a concrete philosophical foundation (Miko and Abubakar, 2020).

2.2 Goal-Setting Theory

This theory was introduced by Locke and Latham in mid of 1960. This theory shows that purpose can cause action (Miko and Abubakar, 2020). As per Locke and Latham, many conditions are significant for achieving a successful goal. These goals include goal recognition and adherence, characteristics of goals, the difficulty of goals, and reactions.

As per Miko and Abubakar (2020), the concept of motivation is used as a variable to examine its importance in the administrative efficiency of tax administration in Yemen. For example, the motivations implemented are aimed at encouraging tax collectors to perform their duties with patriotism and diligence as well as taxpayers to comply with tax payments. Also, another important concept that the goal-setting theory places much emphasis on is autonomy. Autonomy permits tax administrators to act independently of any external influences that can endanger their activities. The general vision and structure of goal-setting theory is to motivate individuals and groups to do more and perform better.

2.3 Governance Theory

According to Rainer and Gloppen (2003) cited in Miko and Abubakar, (2020) governance is the process of making decisions and the process by which decisions are achieved. Good governance plays a vital role in tax administration to achieve efficiency and effectiveness or proper implementation of decisions. The study of Stoker (1991) states that tax administration is viewed as a formal governmental structure through which decisions are reached and implemented; Therefore, tax administration decision-making in the absence of good governance mechanisms can lead to corrupt practices (Stoker, 1991). In addition, the theory explained that accountability and transparency are likely to have a more significant impact on tax administration efficiency.

2.4 Factors Affecting the Performance of Tax Assessing

The procedure of tax assessment can be determined by the various factors. In terms of Aziz and Al_Harethi (2018), the important factors that adversely affect the performance and effectiveness of the tax authority are inefficiency in the tax process, lack of autonomy, accountability, poor leadership style, lack of transparency, and lack of motivation.

Kibret, (2021) identified a few important factors that highly affect the performance of tax assessing in general. He has demonstrated that factor under two headings such as Effectiveness of Tax Administration and taxpayers Attitudes toward Payment of Tax. Accordingly, the Effectiveness of Tax Administration is affected by other factors such as employee qualification and manpower, management commitment level, Taxpayers' registration, technology, and information system, and compliance costs while taxpayers' attitudes toward the payment of tax are affected by tax knowledge and tax fairness.

2.5 Employee Qualification and manpower

According to Kibret, (2021)**,** a key factor in determining the effectiveness of tax assessment can be identified as employee qualification and sufficient workforce. The primary issue with tax assessment is due to inadequate tax assortments and academic issues with ineffective tax monitoring. The aforementioned issue is caused by a lack of administrative staff with the required abilities and a high rate of illiteracy among taxpayers and tax collectors.

2.6 Management Commitment level

The managers of the tax process are the people's representatives. Therefore, they are morally bound to achieve the goals, objectives, and public aspirations, and the constitutional governance process in strategic planning Kibret, (2021)**.**

2.7 Taxpayers' registration

A good Tax Administration system should identify all those required to pay taxes, register, recording of tax payer information, and issue unique identification numbers that are fed into a master file upon which updates are made and from which retrievals can be made. As per the Baingana (2011) cited in Kibret, (2021) identification of the taxpayer is the most important aspect of tax administration which more taxpayers are located and registered otherwise evade are reduced. Then, taxpayers are identified and registered results to enhance efficiency and significantly ease revenue collection.

2.8 Technology and Information System

According to Fisman and Gaht, 2013 cited in Kibret, (2021) a cash register is an electronic tool used to calculate and record sales transactions with a cash drawer that will be used to store cash. Computerized processes can reduce errors, standardize operational procedures, and reduce costs. A computerized tax system also reduces the operational cost of revenue collection by prioritizing the needs of society and enhancing the welfare of citizens.

2.9 Compliance costs

Compliance costs are costs associated with obeying the law including planning and administration, direct time, and money spent filing paperwork. The tax laws and regulations are legal documents with legal language which is complicated for ordinary taxpayers to comprehend and given the numerous legal amendments every year, taxpayers lack the necessary expertise to complete the tax returns. Tax laws should be simplified to save time and money SMS businesses to lower both compliance costs and administrative costs, to reduce the uncertainty faced by taxpayers' and to improve the levels of tax compliance (Kasipillai, 2005 cited in Kibret, 2021).

2.10 Taxpayers Attitudes

Tax education is knowledge about tax laws to determine taxpayers' compliance behavior. Tax educations promote taxpayers' understanding of the tax systems, processes, law, and associated penalties for defaulting. This tends to increase people's propensity to comply with tax obligations (Kibret, 2021).

Miko and Abubakar (2020) conducted a study to investigate the determinants of tax administration efficiency in Nigeria. To achieve the research objectives, they sought insights from corporate taxpayers. The tax system in Nigeria is beset with many challenges. The main reason is the poor tax administration. Poor tax administration in Nigeria is fueled by various challenges such as manpower, money, tools, and machinery. Furthermore, poor remuneration and motivation among tax administrators is considered a major problem associated with tax administration in Nigeria. Moreover, the lack of regular training of staff is considered an unfavorable situation in the tax administration in Nigeria. In this context, Miko and Abubakar (2020) identified several challenges that could severely affect tax administration in Nigeria. These are regulatory challenges, the use of computer technology, Strengthening Auditing, Tax Rates, and the Use of Tax Money (Miko & Abubakar, 2020).

2.11 Regulatory Challenges

The complexity of Nigerian tax laws is considered a major challenge affecting tax administration. Additionally, many taxpayers are unaware of the existence of certain taxes. This can be attributed to poor tax education and poor performance by tax authorities in their responsibilities to educate the public (Miko and Abubakar, 2020).

2.12 The Use of Computer Technology

The relationship between computer technology and the tax management system has been able to bring about significant changes in tax administration in Nigeria. Computer technology helps in developing a master file system. The system assigns a unique number to each taxpayer (Miko and Abubakar, 2020).

2.13 Strengthening Auditing

Audit plays an important role in the tax administration of every country. Therefore, tax administrators can often use a mechanism to check refunds from withholding schemes rather than going after the more difficult but higher revenue yield from aggressive audits of self-employed, professional, and business entities (Miko and Abubakar, 2020).

2.14 Tax Rates and Use of Tax Money

Legislation in the tax management system can have a significant impact on tax payments. Also, when there are strong perceptions that tax rates are too high, it can have a significant impact on compliance. Related to this is taxpayers' perception of how wisely a government is spending taxpayers' money. It is worthless if taxpayers understand that the government is wasting taxpayers' money (Miko and Abubakar, 2020).

Olatunji and Ayodele (2017) carried out a study to investigate the Impact of Information Technology on Tax Administration in Southwest, Nigeria. As per them, Information technology is the tools, devices, and resources used to communicate, create, manage and share information. They include hardware (computers, modems, and mobile phones), software (computer programs, mobile phone applications), networks (wireless communication, Internet), etc. (Olatunji and Ayodele, 2017). The use of automated systems has proven to introduce enormous efficiencies into business processes at minimal cost (Wasao, 2014). Tax authorities around the world use electronic tax administration systems to improve the efficiency of tax administration in tax collection, administration, and compliance settings, as well as to interact with the tax-paying public (Edwards-Dowe, 2008).

3. CURRENT ASSESSMENT TAX SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

The current assessment tax system in Sri Lanka was established by the British. The assessment tax system has a very ancient origin. As per the earliest records, Britain's parish had collected labor services instead of cash to maintain a Sea Wall. Furthermore, rates have been levied by Britain parishes from inhabitants to give relief to the poor people. From then onwards, the assessment tax system was originated and systematically formalized within a legal framework. The first legislation related to the assessment tax system was the Poor Relief Act 1601; which was known as the statute of Queen Elizabeth 1. From 1601, the assessment tax system operated for almost 200 years without a definition of "Ratable Value" (Act for the Relief of the Poor, 1601).

The rating system of Sri Lanka was started when since country was ruled by the king. According to Wasantha et al., (2012) in the colonial period, evidence of the collection of revenue through the “Thombo system” existed. However, it was regulated, after the introduction of the Rating and Valuation Act 1925, and the General Rating Act 1967, in England. As a result of that, most of the colonial countries followed these Acts for their taxation system and Sri Lanka also received the regulatory body of rating accordingly. Valuation and Rating Ordinance 1946, which is based on England Rating and Valuation Act 1925, was introduced to Sri Lanka under colonial administration. Under the section I of that Act, local authorities are empowered and authorized to levy rates based on Annual Value of properties. However, this Ordinance was not proclaimed.

The public is always interested in the local government's financial accounts because it is primarily funded by assessment taxes. Assessment tax make for roughly 70% to 80% of all revenue received, excluding fees for licenses, leases, parking lots, and development projects as well as subsidies from the state and federal governments and other sources. The payment of property tax is a required contribution by the tax payer in exchange for benefits from the local government in the form of tangible and intangible services, communal amenities, infrastructure, and development projects for their enjoyment. Government officials and economists explain that the construction of the tax system as a channel and mechanism for increasing national income might cause economic development to expand quickly. Local government reimburses the taxpayer who collected tax from them based on their property by providing services within its administrative boundaries. The ability of local governments to develop a region and offer facilities and services that are required is correlated with the imposition of property taxes.

An assessment tax is levied when an area is declared as a developed area under the Urban Development Authority Act No. 41 of 1978. In addition, there are three main legislations in relation to the Assessment tax in local authorities such as Municipal Council Ordinance No. 29 of 1947 and its subsequent amendments, Urban Council Ordinance No 61 of 1939 and its subsequent amendments and Pradeshiya Sabhas Act no 15 of 1987 (Milhana and Nufile, 2016).

As per the Municipal Council Ordinance No. 29 of 1947, under section 230 (1) Municipal Council shall assess any rate or rates on the annual value of houses and buildings of every description and of all lands and tenements whatsoever within the municipality with the sanctions of the minister. In addition, depending on the services provided, the Municipal Council may impose different rates for different areas or parts of the municipality under section 230 (1A). Furthermore, the Municipal Council may impose a higher rate on premises that are used for commercial purposes under section 230 (1AA). As per section 230(2) of the Municipal Council Ordinance, no 29 of 1947, state properties such as Government schools and educational institutions including laboratories, libraries, and properties used for the supply of services of the municipal council and public places (common wells, wayside resting places, etc.) and also the places of worship approved by the government (temples, churches, mosques) are exempted from paying rates. Moreover, hereditaments, where they are situated within an area where services are not provided by the council, are also exempted from paying rates (Municipal Councils Ordinance, 1947).

“Tax administration is a complex phenomenon embedded in the legal system of a country and is a part of the country's public administration. The way of tax administration is institutionalized is influenced by a country's legal traditions, social norms, and values, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between government and citizens. A better understanding of tax administration requires a holistic view and comprehensive approach. Tax administration is generally understood with various distinct meanings and scopes and is viewed from various perspectives. However, the term tax administration is commonly used to highlight a general tax process from the initiation of taxation to the use of tax revenue by the tax agency (Abdullah et al., 2021).

4. ASSESSMENT TAX ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE OF COLOMBO MUNICIPALITY

This study was based on the performance of the assessment tax administration procedure of Colombo Municipality, Sri Lanka known as CMC. CMC's assessment tax administration process consists of sixteen (16) main stages (Internal Data records of CMC). They are listed as below.

I. Preparation of detailed individual sheets for each property to be assessed. The sheet includes the Assessment number, road name and code, assessment payment account number, ward and ward number, current annual value, quarterly rates and blanks for property description.

II. Ward allocation and distribution of property sheets among relevant Assessors.

III. Sorting the property sheets according to the street name and road side of the property.

IV. Checking the property sheet with Assessment Book which is maintained Assessors department of CMC and making notes for annul value, owners name, annual rent, ward number, street side and its name and property description.

V. Adding blank sheets for new properties.

VI. Preparation of new revision list using the old revision list with the property features such as floor area, type of construction, state of maintenance, use, accommodation etc.

VII. Visiting the field with new revision list, town sheet and the rent schedule.

VIII. Inspecting the property and update the property description together with use, amenities available, tenancy details and owners name…etc.

IX. Update the town sheet.

X. Preparation of data for tone of the list and getting the approved tone of the list from Municipal Assessor.

XI. Calculation of annual value and make adjustments given by Municipal Assessor.

XII. Preparation of final summary of annual value.

XIII. Registration of taxation information and issuing the Assessment notice by Municipal Treasurer's Department.

XIV. Distribution of Assessment Notice.

XV. Grievances management and make adjustments according to the objections.

XVI. Completion of new town sheet and the new revision list.

Generally, the above-listed assessment tasks take the whole year to complete it's all the tasks. Furthermore, plenty of issues come up in the practical scenarios. From instance; from updating the rating card or field sheet to charging rates from the general public, various issues and errors arise from the very beginning of the rating assessment (Wasantha et al., 2012). As per the Internal data of the CMC (2022), generally, the CMC revises assessment in every five years' time. However, the reassessment is properly not revised due to the heavy manual work and lack of real attention for all revised properties as a result of time and manpower constraints. As a result, CMC has lost its assessment tax income to a significant extent.

According to the land use pattern in CMC, the main usage is residential (Internal Data of CMC, 2023). There is a delay in determining the Annual Value and making periodic revisions as provided under the law for which ratepayers are displeased. Further, the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Local Government Reform 1999 pointed out that the present basis of rates (Annual Value) is complicated, cumbersome, and not understood by the ratepayer. In developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the rating valuation is calculated based on the capital value (Wasantha et al., 2012). Hence, following a method in which the capital value is considered as the base instead of the annual value, the rating system would become more attractive and efficient as it helps to increase the level of rating income of local authorities (Wasantha et al., 2012).

5. DATA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study embraced a positivistic philosophical standpoint, exploring the observable industrial reality of the administrative procedure of the assessment tax system in the CMC. The approach encompassed data collection through a questionnaire survey and a statistical data analysis. Both primary and secondary data were utilized and a quantitative research method was employed. The quantitative method employed in this study involved the systematic data collection and analysis of numerical data to investigate the administrative procedure of the assessment tax system in the CMC. Especially it utilized techniques to examine the relationships, patterns, and trends within the data. The study encompassed the entire population of Assessors (32) engaged in assessment tax administration in the CMC to collect primary data using a structured questionnaire. Furthermore, the research framework was developed based on secondary data sourced from journal articles, reports, legislation, websites, and other scholarly works. Employing a pre-tested structured questionnaire, the study sought to explore the nuances of the existing administrative procedure of assessment tax revision in CMC using five-point Likert scale inquiries.

Statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 facilitated analysis incorporating demographic analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multi-linear regression analysis to reach the research objectives. Demographic analysis aimed to verify whether the researcher reached the targeted population appropriately in enhancing reliability and validity in addition to statistical reliability and validity tests. Correlation analysis aimed to explore the relationship between independent (Staff deployed for Assessment Tax, Motivation to Perform, Time Allocated, and Technology Used) and dependent (Performance of the Assessment Tax administration system of CMC) variables while regression analysis aimed to identify factors influencing the administrative procedure of assessment tax in terms of importance.

This research adopted an updated version of Kibret's conceptual framework discussed in the literature survey. Based on the preliminary discussion with the Assessors of the CMC, it was identified some factors such as “number of Assessors, time, manual method used for reassessment, and tax compliance cost” to develop the following conceptual framework for the study.

Research Problem

As per the internal data records, there were 179,693 properties belonging to 47 wards of the CMC by 01.01.2022. Accordingly, the average properties of a ward can be identified as (179,693 / 47) = 3823. However, due to time and manpower constraints, only 10 wards are typically revised each year. The allocated cadre for assessors in the Assessor Department of the CMC is 55. However, there are still 25 vacancies. In this scenario, only 30 assessors are currently engaged in the revision of assessment affairs. Among them, the total number of assessors deployed to inspect the properties as of 2022/01/01 was 10. Accordingly, 10 assessors have to inspect about 38,230 properties annually. As per the schedule given by the Municipal Assessor, assessment revisions commence in March each year. Assessors are tasked with inspecting the properties and preparing reports, and the staff officers are required to finalize the values by July annually. By leaving one month to finalize of values and every Wednesday since it is a public day, the Assessors have to complete the revision of the assessment within 72 working days (Fernando, 2013).

As per the data provided by the CMC as of 01/01/2022, one assessor has to inspect 53 properties per day as shown in the following calculation.

Number of properties to be inspected per day by one Assessor

$$= \frac{38230\ Prperties\ per\ year}{10\ (Assessor) \times 72\ (working\ days)}$$

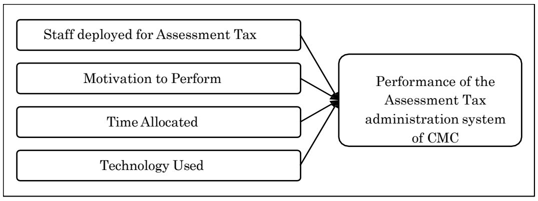
$$= 53$$

Accordingly, one assessor of the CMC has to inspect 53 properties per day. Property inspection is not an easy task. There are several functions associated with it. When inspecting a property, the assessors shall inspect and measure each property and maintain field records manually. Furthermore, the assessor has to deal with critical situations such as bad weather conditions and maintaining regular attendance. Therefore, it is not practical to inspect 53 properties per day. As a result of these challenges, the CMC is falling short of meeting its expected target for assessment tax revenue and it has become a major issue that needs to be addressed immediately.

While CMC grapples with numerous difficulties in assessment tax administration, there is no adequate empirical evidence to investigate the evident research gap within the Sri Lankan context. Even though Wasantha et al., (2012) carried out a study about the rating valuation model for residential properties in Sri Lanka, they have studied only the external facts associated with the revision of the assessment tax process. Although much research has been conducted internationally, existing knowledge of international assessment tax practices provides limited data that is inadequate to understand Sri Lanka's assessment tax system. Furthermore, there are certain limitations in applying data from international experience as each property tax system has different characteristics. Hence, there is an urgent necessity to scrutinize whether the current assessment tax administration procedure effectively leads to the attainment of the maximum revenue envisioned by the CMC. This backdrop served as the inspiration for the research. Consequently, this study sought to explore the factors influencing the efficiency of the assessment tax administration within the CMC.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author (2024)

7. Data Analysis

Before conducting the main statistical analysis such as correlation and regression, descriptive analysis was carried out to ascertain the demographic background of the research participants. This step was crucial in justifying the reliability and validity of the research data from one perspective ensuring that the required population was adequately reached. Consequently, the demographics and analysis of this study can be presented as follows.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Categories	Elements	%
Gender	Male	66%
	Female	34%
Age	Between 25 – 34 Years	38%
	Between 35 – 44 Years	50%
	Above 45 Years	13%
Length of service in assessment Tax	Between 6-10 years	47%
	Between 10 – 15 years	0%
	Between 16 – 20 years	0%
	Between 21 – 25 years	41%
	Above 25 years	13%

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in Table 1, the gender combination of respondents is 66% male and 34% female. This implies that the Assessor Department of CMC holds a huge male workforce rather than female in relation to the assessment tax administration.

According to the age comparison, the majority of the respondents (50%) fall into the 34-44 age range while 38% and 13% of respondents fall into the 25-34 and above 45 age ranges respectively. It implies that the Assessor Department of CMC is mostly powered by middle- In examining the length of service in assessment tax administration, it was found that the majority of the respondents (47%) possess 6-10 years of experience in assessment and administration while 41% have 21-25 years of experience. Notably, 13% of respondents have over 26 years of experience. This suggests that a significant portion of the officers of Assessment tax administration at assessor department of CMC has approximately 6-25 years of experience.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure
Staff deployed for Assessment Tax	Pearson Correlation	0.987**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	32
Motivation to Perform	Pearson Correlation	0.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.331
	N	32
Time Allocated	Pearson Correlation	0.360*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.043
	N	32
Technology Used	Pearson Correlation	0.973**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	32

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the Table 2, Correlation of three variables such as "Staff deployed for assessment tax, time allocated and technology used are significant at 0.000; p-values are less than 0.05. Then, at a 95% confidence level researcher can say there is a significant association between performance of the assessment tax administration procedure and those three independent variables. Moreover, the value of Pearson correlation is reported as 0.987, 0.360, and 0.973 respectively, which mean there is a strong positive correlation between performance of the assessment tax administration procedure and staff deployed for assessment tax and technology used while there is a weak positive correlation between performance of the assessment tax administration procedure and time allocated. However, it is noted that motivation to perform creates an insignificant association with the dependent variable since the sig value exceeded 0.05.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.991[a]	0.982	0.979	.14447755

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technology Used, Motivation to Perform, Staff deployed for Assessment Tax, Time Allocated

Table 3 presents the model summary of the effect of staff deployed for assessment tax, motivation to perform, time allocated and technology used. The table shows R-squared and Adjusted R-squared to be 0.982 and 0.979 respectively. This indicates that these four variables jointly explain about 97% of performance of the assessment tax administration procedure. This also implies that the model is in a good fit.

Table 4: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.436	4	7.609	364.530	.000[b]
	Residual	.564	27	.021		
	Total	31.000	31			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technology Used, Motivation to Perform, Staff deployed for Assessment Tax, Time Allocated

Table 4 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the model. F-statistic has a value of 364.530 and a probability value 0.000 (which is less than the chosen significance level i.e. 0.05). This indicates the reported F-statistic is significant. Since the decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis that "Staff deployed for Assessment Tax, Motivation to Perform, Time Allocated and Technology Used" do not significantly affect the capital structure if F-statistic is significant, this implies that the overall model is significant. In other words, that Staff deployed for Assessment Tax, Motivation to Perform, Time Allocated and Technology Used significantly impact on Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure.

Table 5: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.672E-018	.026		.000	1.000
Staff deployed for Assessment Tax	.714	.106	.714	6.702	.000
Motivation to Perform	-.014	.037	-.014	-.378	.709
Time Allocated	.064	.038	.064	1.671	.106
Technology Used	.264	.108	.264	2.453	.021

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to Table 5, results under the heading of unstandardized coefficients indicate how much dependent variables are caused or affected by independent variables. The impact between Independent Variables & Dependents variables can be indicated by using β Coefficients. β value of the table represents the degree to which extent the dependent variable can be affected by a particular independent variable while other independent variables remain as constant. Unstandardized coefficients (Beta) show how much the dependent variable is affected by independent variables.

As per the result, Staff deployed for Assessment Tax and Technology Used is positively affects the Performance of the

Assessment Tax Administration Procedure while Motivation to Perform and Time Allocated indicates insignificant impact on Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure at the 95% significant level. The values of Beta (Standardized coefficient) show that staff deployed for assessment tax has the highest positive impact on Assessment Tax Administration Procedure with (B: 0.714) while technology used indicated weak positive impact on Performance of the Assessment Tax Administration Procedure in Colombo Municipal Council.

8. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

According to the results of the descriptive analysis, the survey witness's higher participation of male respondents compared to the females. Additionally, there was a notable involvement of individuals in the middle-aged category, surpassing other age groups. Furthermore, a significant majority of the survey participants possessed 6-25 years of experience. Consequently, the conclusion drawn is that the Assessor Department of the CMC is predominantly staffed by individuals who are both middle-aged and male along with a workforce boasting substantial experience in the realms of assessment tax and assessment revision.

In this study, four independent variables were tested; staff deployed for assessment tax, motivation to perform, time allocated, and technology used while the dependent variable was the "performance of the assessment tax administration procedure". The analysis revealed a robust positive correlation between the performance of the assessment tax administration procedure and the staff deployed for assessment tax as well as the technology used. Conversely, there was a mild positive correlation between the performance of the assessment tax administration procedure and the time allocated. Notably, it was observed that the motivation to perform showed an insignificant association with the dependent variable as the significance value exceeded 0.05.

Concluding statistical analysis, the final step involved conducting multiple linear regression. This aimed to construct a model illustrating the linear relationship between explanatory (independent) variables and the response (dependent) variable, deciphering the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. The results demonstrated that four variables such as staff deployed for assessment tax, motivation to perform, time allocated, and technology used collectively account for approximately 97% of the performance in assessment tax administration procedure. This high percentage suggests a well-fitting model.

Furthermore, the finding indicated that staff deployed for assessment tax and technology used positively influenced the performance of the assessment tax administration procedure. On the other hand, motivation to perform and time allocated showed an insignificant impact at the 95% significance level. Notably, the analysis pinpointed that staff deployed for assessment tax posed the most substantial positive impact while the technology used exhibited a relatively positive influence on the performance of the assessment tax administration procedure at CMC.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study successfully met its objectives as indicated by the outcomes of the multiple linear regression analysis with the research aiming to explore the influence of staff deployed for assessment tax, motivation to perform, time allocation, and technology used in the assessment tax administration procedure at CMC. This research aligns with the previous studies (Olatunji and Ayodele, 2017; Miko and Abubakar, 2020) which also found that information technology enhances tax collection and administration efficiency while motivation does not.

To enhance the assessment text performance of the Colombo municipality, it is recommended to implement various policies addressing the issues identified in this study. Regarding staff deployment, immediate steps should be taken to fill existing vacancies, establish an appropriate salary scale based on professional contributions, and provide additional allowances such as incentives and field traveling plans. Field officers should be strategically deployed considering workload, personal competencies, age, and gender to maximize productivity. In terms of technology, the municipality should develop a High-Tech IT Solution and upgrade existing systems (MCAS, ELG, ELR) to enable real-time data capture and system integration for both internal and external users. Collaborative efforts with local and foreign stakeholders should be initiated to obtain funding for comprehensive IT Solutions to develop and establish a digital data bank aligned with the objectives of users and decision-makers.

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