

An Exploratory Study on the Experience Requirements of Key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

It has been generally observed that there is a gap in the empirical knowledge with regard to the experience requirements of key HRM jobs in terms of number of years and contents of experiences in the field of HRM in Sri Lanka. The research questions of this exploratory study are: What are the experiences needed or expected by the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka for key HRM jobs in terms of number of years and contents? and Is it possible to develop a sort of illustration to understand experience requirements of key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka? Objectives of this study are to explore the experience requirements of key HRM jobs in terms of number of years and contents; and to develop an illustration of experience requirements of key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka. In order to achieve the objectives of this research, an exploratory study was conducted by using eight key HRM job related employment advertisements appeared in the Sunday Observer newspaper for the period of 5 years (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010). This study was longitudinal in time horizon. The unit of analysis of this study was HRM related job advertisement. The extent of the researchers' interference in this study was minimal as there had not been any manipulation and control of variables. This study was carried out in a natural (non-contrived) environment where events occurred normally.

Mainly by using comprehensive and systematic content analysis along with descriptive statistics, results and findings were generated. The results of the study revealed that the experience requirement is one of the very important requirements in selecting people for key HRM jobs. At the same time it varies from job to job. When considering the experience requirements for the selected key HRM jobs, the findings revealed that mostly a minimum of

5-10 years experience at senior level (as a HR Manager/Head of HR Department) is needed experience for the post of HR Director. A minimum of 5 years experience is needed for the post of Head of HRM, Group HR Manager, HR Manager and Training Manager mostly. For HR Executive, HR Officer and Recruitment Manager a minimum of 2-3 years experience is expected by the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka.

With regard to the contents (quality) of experiences, eight (08) key dimensions of experience were identified in addition to the number of years (quantity) such as general experience in HRM field, special experience in specific HRM area/function, scope of experience in HRM field (local or international), sector related experience, management level/position related experience, industry related experience, workforce/organisation size based experience and time preference based experience. Based on identified key dimensions of experiences, a model was developed from this exploratory study in order to provide an understanding about the experience requirements of selected key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka. The implications of these findings are useful to all stakeholders of HRM especially current and potential job seekers, organizations and HRM workforce developers in Sri Lanka.

Key Words: Key HRM Jobs, Experience Requirements, Exploratory Study

Introduction

The job experience is one of the very important requirements in selecting a candidate for a job in an organisation. Experience is one of the key human qualifications needed to perform a job efficiently and effectively. At the same time, job experience is a specific requirement to each field in order to perform specific jobs in the respective field such as marketing, accounting, finance, and human resource management etc.

The Research Problem

Organisations which are operating in Sri Lanka expect experienced people in order to manage their HRM activities and functions efficiently and effectively. But there is a gap in the empirical knowledge with regard to requirements of HRM job experience in Sri Lanka. There is no or little research based evidence in Sri Lanka regarding this phenomenon. No clear cut specifications (number of year [quantity], density and timing [quality] for HRM jobs in Sri Lanka seem to be in existence because various organisations state different levels (in years) and contents of experience in their HRM job advertisements. By studying their experience requirements carefully only it is possible to develop a sort of good framework to specify the Sri Lankan organizations' HRM jobs experience patterns and contents.

Therefore to explore the experience requirements of the HRM jobs which are expected by the organizations in Sri Lanka is an important research task in the field of HRM in Sri Lanka. With a view of filling this empirical knowledge gap to a certain significant extent, this research was carried out.

The Research Questions

The research questions of this exploratory study are:

1. What are the experiences needed or expected by the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka for key HRM jobs in terms of number of years and contents? and
2. Is it possible to develop a sort of illustration to understand experience requirements of key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka?

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the experience requirements of key HRM jobs in terms of number of years and contents; and
2. To develop an illustration of experience requirements of key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

According to Opatha (2007, p.75), experience in the field of HRM is very important for HR managers. It was defined as number of years of working in HRM related job/s. Regarding experience requirements for HRM jobs in Sri Lanka, Opatha (2009) has expressed his views in the following way:

“HRM is an academic discipline as well as a practice, and therefore experience becomes indispensable. Experience refers to knowledge and skills in HRM one has gained owing to his/her working in HRM for a considerable period of time. Experience of a job is what a person gains by doing that job. Observations reveal that a minimum of 10 years experience in a recognised establishment at Senior Executive Level (as a HR Manager/Head of HR Department) is needed as the right experience for the post of HR Director/Assistant GM-HR/Deputy GM-HR/Group HR Manager/Group Director-HR (job is in the top management of the organisation). A minimum of 5 years experience is needed for the post of HR manager (job is in middle management of the organization). A large organization usually requires hands-on experience in HRM of not less than 10 years in a leading company”.

Research on the impact of job experience on job performance should be viewed cautiously, however, because most studies have measured job experience as the number of years in an organisation or job. Quinones, Ford, and Techout (1995) pointed out that job experience can be viewed not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. Year of working is a quantitative measure of experience. If job experience is viewed qualitatively, this has to be with the job tasks performed and the relevance to situations one has been exposed to on the job. For instance, if an individual has several years of experience as an accountant, but has conducted few field audits, that person will not necessarily perform better in an auditing position than an individual who has less general accounting experience.

Building on the work of Quinones et al. (1995), Tesluk and Jacobs (1998) proposed that job experience can also be viewed in terms of both the density and timing of job-related experiences. When experience has high density, the employee is exposed to many “developmental experiences” in a relative short period of time. These may include increased

responsibilities, and perhaps even being required to perform under very difficult conditions. The timing dimension has to be with the fact that certain experiences might have more or less, developmental value, depending on whether they occur at the beginning, middle, or latter stage of one's career. For most employees, mistakes have a greater developmental impact when they occur at the early (as opposed to latter) stages of one's career. The more important point from the work of Quinones et al. (1995) and Tesluk and Jacobs (1998) is that job experience is a complex variable, and much theoretical and empirical work needs to be done before fully understanding and appreciating it.

Job Experience is a variable that is used so frequently in organisational psychology that it is easy to forget about it. Typically, most researchers do not pay too much attention to it because they measure it either for descriptive purposes or to use as a control variable in statistical analyses. In the vast majority of studies, experience is measured simply as the number of months or years that a person has been employed on a particular job or in a particular organization.

In a review, Tesluk and Jacobs (1998) pointed out that organisational or job tenure is not likely to capture the complexity of job experience. They pointed out, for example, that the same length of tenure may be very different in terms of both the density and time of job-related experiences. A good example of the density dimension is a surgeon who performs in a war zone. This individual would typically do surgeries for many hours per day, and would thus acquire more surgical experience in three months than a surgeon at a regular civilian hospital would acquire in three months or even in six months. A good example of timing is a manager who has to take over a poorly performing department immediately after completing his or her training. Such an experience would undoubtedly have a greater impact on this individual now than it would later in his or her career.

Many organisations recognize complexity of experience and attempt to structure the assignment of high-potential managers in a way that maximizes their developmental value. For the most part, however, researchers have treated experience in a very simplistic fashion. In the future, this is likely to be a very fruitful area of research in organizational psychology (Tesluk and Jacobs, 1998).

Regarding job experience also, there is no or little research based evidence in Sri Lanka. No clear cut ranges or specifications (number of year [quantity], density and timing [quality] for HRM jobs are in existence in Sri Lanka. Different levels (in years) and contents of experience in HRM job advertisements are stated by various organisations. There is a need of exploring these differences and reaching towards a framework that specifies general features of the experience requirements.

Methodology

An exploratory study was conducted by using eight key HRM job related employment advertisements appeared in the Sunday Observer newspaper for the period of 5 years (2006,

2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010) in order to achieve the objectives of the research. Time horizon of the study was longitudinal and the unit of analysis of the study was HRM related job advertisement. Because of the reason that any manipulation and control of variables had not been done, the extent of the researchers' interference in this study was minimal. In a natural environment where events occurred normally this study was carried out.

Findings and Discussion

During the study period, a total of 3374 HRM job advertisements were collected from the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka in all the sectors and out of which 1429 were related to the selected key HRM jobs which included Director-HR, Group Human Resource Manager, Head-HRM, Manager-HRM, HR Executive, HR Officer, Training Manager and Recruitment Manager. Results and findings were generated by exploring all the data in the light of research objectives.

Table 1 gives number of job advertisements and number of job vacancies relating to the advertisements for the selected 08 key jobs under study. According to the Table 1, the key job that had the highest number of job advertisements and vacancies is HR Manager. HR Executive is the key job that had the next highest number of advertisements and vacancies. These two jobs are critical for a person who wants to excel in the HRM profession. Generally the job of HR Manager becomes a long term career goal and the job of HR Executive becomes a short term career goal for a person who wishes to have an excellent career in the field of HRM. Tables from 2 to 17 provide experience requirements for the eight key HRM jobs in terms of years and contents.

Table: 1 Key HRM Jobs: Number of Job Advertisements/Vacancies

Selected Key HRM Jobs	Year					Total
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
HR Director						
No. of Job Advertisements	07	20	11	05	13	56
Number of Job Vacancies	07	20	11	05	14	57
Group HR Manager						
No. of Job Advertisements	07	06	05	02	05	25
Number of Job Vacancies	07	06	05	02	05	25
Head-HRM						
No. of Job Advertisements	08	08	07	06	05	34
Number of Job Vacancies	08	08	07	06	06	35
HR Manager						
No. of Job Advertisements	116	139	130	63	114	562
Number of Job Vacancies	122	147	160	68	121	618
HR Executive						
No. of Job Advertisements	101	120	102	40	91	454
Number of Job Vacancies	117	159	132	46	102	556
HR Officer						

No. of Job Advertisements	27	35	28	27	41	158
Number of Job Vacancies	35	36	30	53	44	198
Training Manager						
No. of Job Advertisements	12	14	27	04	23	80
Number of Job Vacancies	14	14	27	04	27	86
Recruitment Manager						
No. of Job Advertisements	08	10	15	08	19	60
Number of Job Vacancies	08	11	17	08	20	64
<i>Note: Excluding Repetition</i>						

1. Director Human Resources and Related Jobs

Table: 2 Experience and Director-HR and Related Jobs in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Frequency	(%)
Minimum 05 Years	20	36
Minimum 06 Years	01	02
Minimum 07 Years	01	02
Minimum 08 Years	05	08
Minimum 10 Years	11	20
Minimum 15 Years	11	20
Minimum 18 Years	01	02
Minimum 20 Years	01	02
Years Not specified	05	08
Total	56	100

Table: 3 Experience and Director-HR and Related Jobs in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Experience in HRM/HR Field/Function	52
02	Experience in Senior Management Level/Position	29
03	Experience in Administrative/ Administrative Function	16
04	Experience in Leadership position/Strategic Leadership position	08
05	Experience in Management/Managerial Capacity/Position	07
06	Experience in Executive Capacity/Level	07
07	Experience in Public/Government Sector Organisation	06
08	Experience in Recognized Public/State/Gov. Corporation	05
09	Experience in Private Sector Organisation	05
10	Professional Experience	05
11	Experience in INGOs/NGOs/ Service Oriented Organisation	04
12	Experience in Manufacturing Organisation/Firms	03
13	Experience in Multi-Cultural and Multinational organisations (MNCs)	02
14	Expatriates in donor funded product implementation-Experience	01
15	Experience in Banking Industry	01

2. Group Human Resource Manager (GHRM)

Table: 4 Experience and GHRM in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Frequency	(%)
Minimum 03 Years	04	16
Minimum 04 Years	01	04
Minimum 05 Years	10	40
Minimum 06 Years	01	04
Minimum 10 Years	04	16
Minimum 15 Years	02	08
Years Not specified	03	12
Total	25	100

Table: 5 Experience and GHRM in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	HRM/HR Field/Function	22
02	Experience in Similar Capacity	09
03	Senior Management Level/Position	07
04	Garment Industry/Manufacturing	06
05	Experience in a reputed/recognised organisation/company	05
06	Experience in Management/Managerial Capacity/Position	03
07	Experience in Service Oriented Organisation	02
08	Experience based on workforce size (e.g. 4000)	02
09	Expatriates in a Blue Chip Company	01
10	Experience in Banking Industry	01
11	Experience in liaising with the EFC, BOI and handling negotiation with TU	01

3. Head of Human Resource (Head-HRM)

Table: 6 Experience and Head-HRM in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Frequency	(%)
Minimum 04 Years	01	03
Minimum 05 Years	22	65
Minimum 10 Years	04	12
Minimum 15 Years	01	03
Years Not specified	06	17
	34	100

Table: 7 Experience and Head-HRM in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Relevant work experience/similar capacity (as Head of the HR function)	23

02	Experience in a managerial capacity/position/level	12
03	Experience in handling and managing the HR functions of an organization	09
04	Senior management level experience	09
05	Industry/sector experience (finance/banking/manufacturing/service oriented organisation/related field/ others)	08
06	Experience in developing and implementing modern HR practices	05
07	Experience at a large/Medium sized or reputed organization	04

4. Human Resource Manager (Manager-HRM)

Table: 8 Experience and HR Manager in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Total	(%)
Minimum 01 Year	07	01
Minimum 02 Years	24	04
Minimum 03 Years	104	19
Minimum 04 Years	18	03
Minimum 05 Years	193	35
Minimum 06 Years	07	01
Minimum 07 Years	10	02
Minimum 08 Years	13	02
Minimum 10 Years	39	07
Minimum 12 Years	04	01
Minimum 15 Years	02	00
Minimum 18 Years	02	00
Years Not specified	139	25
Total	562	100

Table: 9 Experience and HR Manager in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Experience in HRM/HR Field/Function	299
02	Similar Capacity/Position (As HR Manager)	165
03	Experience in Specific HR Functions/Areas	127
04	Experience in Manufacturing Organisation/Firms	53
05	Experience in Senior Management Level/Position	49
06	Experience in Garment/Apparel Industry	47
07	Experience in Management/Managerial Capacity/Position	43
08	Experience in MNCs/Large MNCs Work Experience	34
09	Hands on Experience in ... (Last ..2 Years)	34
10	Experience in Well Reputed Establishment/Firm/Organisation/Company	31
11	Experience in Factory/Plant Work Environment	26
12	Experience based on Size of the Workforce (E.g. Over 1000/1500, etc.,)	23

13	Experience in Administrative Function	23
14	Experience in Hotel/ Tourism/ Hospitality Trade	16
15	Experience in Private Sector Organisation	13
16	Experience in Executive Capacity/Level	12
17	Leadership Experience	12
18	Experience in Recognised Public Enterprise/Organisation	11
19	Experience in BOI Approved Factory/Company	09
20	Experience in Large Size/Scale Organisation/Corporation	09
21	Experience in Reputed Service Sector Organisation	09
22	Experience in HR Generalist Role	08
23	Experience in HRD	08
24	Experience in INGOs/NGOs	08
25	Experience in ICT/Software Industry	07
26	Experience in Banking/Insurance Industry	06
27	Experience in Group HR Operations	06
28	Experience in Construction Industry	04
29	Experience in Export/Import Related Industry	04
30	Experience in Middle Level Management	04
31	Experience in Multi-cultural team	04
32	Armed Service Experience	03
33	Experience as a Manager	03
34	Experience in a Senior Executive Level	03
35	Experience in Hospital/Health Care Sector	03
36	Experience in Similar Sized Organisation	03
37	Experience in Telecommunication Sector	03
38	Experience in Handling Projects	02
39	Experience in Retail Sector	02
40	Experience in Blue Chip Company/Organisation	01
41	Experience in Comparable Organization	01
42	Experience in Marine Company	01

5. Human Resource Executive (HR Executive)

Table: 10 Experience and HR Executive in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Total	(%)
Minimum 06 Months	01	00
Minimum 01 Year	33	07
Minimum 02 Years	130	29
Minimum 03 Years	122	27
Minimum 04 Years	12	03
Minimum 05 Years	44	10
Year(s) Not specified	112	24

Total	454	100
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Table: 11 Experience and HR Executive in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Experience in HRM Function/Field	343
02	Similar Capacity/Position (As HR Executive)	135
03	Experience in Manufacturing Organisation/Firms	64
04	Experience in Specific HR Functions/Areas	57
05	Experience in Garment/Apparel Industry	49
06	Experience in Administrative Function	28
07	Hands on Experience in ...(Last ..2 Years)	25
08	Experience in Handling HRIS/MIS/IT/Computerized Environment	21
09	Experience in Well Reputed Establishment/Firm/Organisation	21
10	Experience in Factory/Plan Work Environment	18
11	Experience in Hotel/Tourism/Hospitality Trade	18
12	Experience in MNCs/MNCs Work Experience	12
13	Experience in Executive Capacity	09
14	Experience in Reputed Service Sector Oriented Organisation	09
15	Experience in Current HR Practices	08
16	Experience in an Industrial Setting and Mercantile	07
17	Experience in HRD	07
18	Experience in Large Size/Scale Organisation	07
19	Experience based on Size of the Workforce (E.g. Over 6000)	06
20	Experience in ISO Certified Company and Quality Management System	06
21	Experience in a Well Organised Effective HR Dept./Division	05
22	Experience in Recognised Public Enterprise	05
23	Experience in 5S/Productivity Related Work	04
24	Experience in BOI Approved Companies	04
25	Experience in Private Sector	04
26	Experience in Recognize Commercial Enterprise	04
27	Experience in Construction Industry	03
28	Experience in a Blue-Chip	02
29	Experience in Exporting Organisation	02
30	Experience in Hospital/Health Care Sector	02
31	Experience in Retail Trade	02
32	Experience in Similar Organisation	02
33	Experience in Structuring/Restructuring the HR & Admin	02
34	Experience as HR Assistant	01
35	Experience in a Junior Executive Capacity	01
36	Experience in Accounting	01

37	Experience in Attached to a Dynamic Organization/Company	01
38	Experience in Banking Industry	01
39	Experience in Comparable Organization	01
40	Experience in Food Industry	01
41	Experience in HR Generalist Functions	01
42	Experience in ICT Industry	01
43	Experience in Managerial Level	01
43	Experience in Middle Level Management	01
45	Experience in Organising Events	01
46	Experience in Recognised Organisation	01
47	Experience in Marketing	01

6. Human Resource Officer (HR Officer)

Table: 12 Experience and HR Officer in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Total	(%)
Minimum 01 Year	12	08
Minimum 02 Years	35	22
Minimum 03 Years	33	21
Minimum 04 Years	01	01
Minimum 05 Years	31	19
Year(s) Not specified	46	29
Total	158	100

Table: 13 Experience and HR Officer in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Experience in HRM Function/Field	68
02	Experience as a Junior Executive or Supervisory Level/Capacity	29
03	Experience in a mercantile organization	27
04	Experience in a Reputed Organisation	20
05	Experience in a Well Organized Effective HR Dept./Division	08
06	Experience in Administrative Function/Administration	07
07	Experience in Executive Level	05
08	Experience in Garment Manufacturing Industry	04
09	Experience in Government Organisation	04
10	Experience in Hotel Industry	04
11	Experience in International Organisation	02
12	Experience in Large Size/Scale Organisation	02
13	Experience in Manufacturing Organisation/Firms	02
14	Experience in Multi-Cultural Teams	02
15	Experience in non-governmental organisation	02

16	Experience in Office Management	02
17	Experience in Policy/Procedure development and implementation	02
18	Experience in Professional Organisations	02
19	Experience in Project Management works	02
20	Experience in Public/Private Sector organisation	01
21	Experience in Similar company/organisation	01
22	Experience in Specific HR Functions/Areas	01
23	Hands on Experience in ...(Last ..2 Years)	01
24	Management Experience	01
25	Related Work Experience	01
26	Similar Capacity/Position (As HR Officer)	01

7. Training Manager

Table: 14 Experience and Training Manager in Terms of Years

Experience in Years	Total	(%)
Minimum 02 Years	12	15
Minimum 03 Years	06	08
Minimum 04 Years	06	08
Minimum 05 Years	18	22
Minimum 06 Years	02	02
Minimum 10 Years	03	04
Year(s) Not specified	33	41
Total	80	100

Table: 15 Experience and Training Manager in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Similar Capacity/Position (As Training Manager)	28
02	Experience in Specific Industry (Hotel, Manufacturing, Service, banking etc)	22
03	Experience in Training and Development	19
04	Experience in HRM Function/Field	13
05	Experience in Training Role	11
06	Hands on Experience in ...(Last ..x Years in Training)	03
07	Experience in Senior Manager	02
08	Experience in Reputed Institute	02
09	Experience in non-governmental organisation	02
10	Managerial Experience	02
11	Managerial Experience in Training	01
12	Experience in TTT (Train the Trainer)	01
13	Experience in Blue Chip Companies	01
14	Experience in Government Organizational Training	01

15	Experience in Managerial Capacity	01
16	Experience in Administrative Function	01
17	Experience in Manufacturing Organisation	01

8. Recruitment Manager

Table: 16 Experience and Recruitment Manager in Terms of Years

Number of Years	Frequency	(%)
Minimum 2-3 years	03	05
Minimum 3 years	04	07
Minimum 3-4 years	02	03
Minimum 5 years	02	03
Specified but number of years not mentioned	30	50
Not specified	19	32
Total	60	100

Table: 17 Experience and Recruitment Manager in Terms of Contents

#	Contents	Count
01	Exp. in foreign employment/overseas recruiting agency	25
02	Experience in recruitment function of HR	16
03	Hands on experience in recruitment functions	05
04	Recruitment experience in reputed organisation	03
05	Recruitment experience in a labour intensive industry	02

8. Discussion

Regarding the concept of HRM job experience there are two main ideas emerged from this study such as years of experience and contents of experience. In this discussion, first researchers discuss about years of experience expected by the organizations and then focus on contents of experience.

The following Table shows the summary of high frequencies of years of experience for each job from the earlier presentation.

Table: 18 Key HRM Jobs and Most Frequently Required Years of Experience

#	HRM Jobs	Frequency (Overall)	(%)	Minimum number of years
01	Director-HR/HRM	20 out of 56	36%	05 years
02	Group HR Manager	10 out of 25	40%	05 years
03	Head of HR	22 out of 34	65%	05 years
04	HR Manager	193 out of 562	35%	05 years
05	HR Executive	130 out of 454	29%	02 years
	HR Executive	122 out of 454	27%	03 years

06	HR Officer	35 out of 158	22%	02 years
	HR Officer	33 out of 158	21%	03 years
07	Training Manager	18 out of 80	22 %	05 years
08	Recruitment Manager	04 out of 60	07%	03 years
	Recruitment Manager	03 out of 60	05%	02-03 years

With regard to experience requirements for HRM jobs in Sri Lanka, what Opatha (2009, p.51) has expressed based on his observations is confirmed by the findings of this study. He stated that a minimum of 10 years experience in a recognised establishment at Senior Executive Level (as a HR Manager/Head of HR Department) is needed as the right experience for the post of HR Director/Assistant GM-HR/Deputy GM-HR/Group HR Manager/Group Director-HR (job is in the top management of the organisation). According to this study, as the accumulated experience to become a Director-HR/HRM or similar senior position, a minimum of 10 years experience in a well reputed or recognized organisation (private/public) is needed in Sri Lanka. In addition, he pointed out that a minimum of 5 years experience is needed for the post of HR Manager (job is in middle management of the organization). That is also true, because evidence from this research confirmed that as well.

Other important aspect in experience is contents of experience in addition to the years of experience (number of years of experience). According to this study, under the data analysis of each selected job, the expected contents of experience were presented. After careful investigation of those contents, certain key factors/elements have been identified regarding generalized HRM jobs. In connection with selected HRM jobs, organizations have expressed in their job advertisements in respect of contents of job experience in the following ways (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1 Contents and Emerging Dimensions of HRM Job Experience

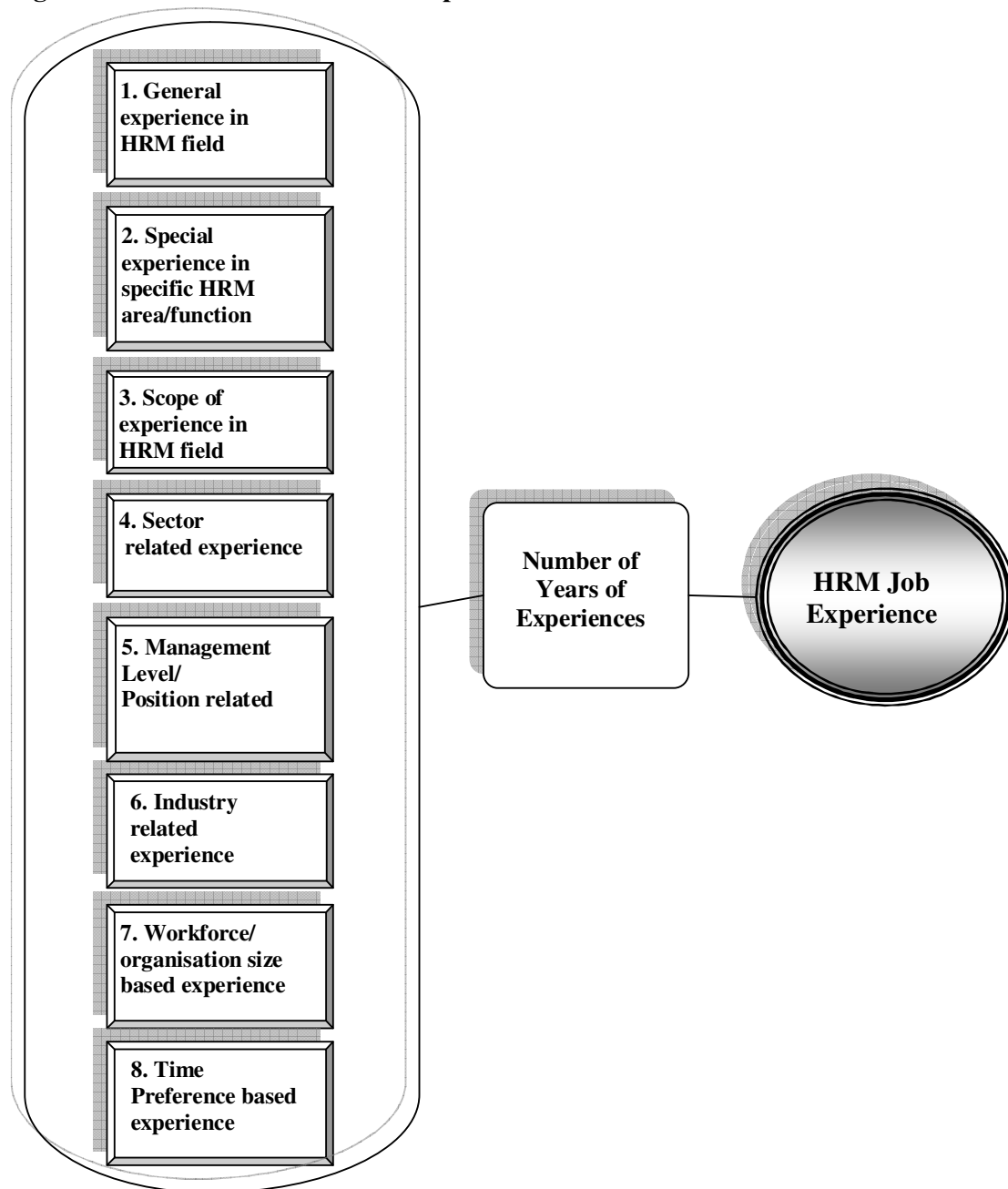
#	Real world requirements of HRM job experience	Emerging Perspectives/Dimensions
01	3 years working experience in a similar capacity/minimum of 3 years experience in the HRM field.	1.HRM Field related experience in General(Generalization)
02	The ideal candidate must possess a minimum of 8 years experience in a generalist HR role within the garment industry.	
03	Candidates must have 5 years experience in HRM especially in Industrial Relations.	2. Function within the field or specialized experience within field. (Specialization related experience)
04	Candidates should have at least 5 years of relevant experience at the national or international level in HRM.	3. Scope related experience (Local/National HRM or International HRM)
05	Candidates must have 10 years	4. Sector related experience

	experience in Private sector/Private sector organisations.	(Private/public/NGO/INGO)
06	Minimum of 10 years post qualifying experience, of which at least 5 year should be in a senior management position.	5. Level/position related experience(Senior/Middle/Operational level)
07	Previous experience in a similar position is preferred and experience in the hotel trade is an added advantage.	6. Industry related experience (Hotel/Banking/Garment/ Manufacturing etc.)
08	Minimum of 3 years experience in a similar capacity, preferably in a manufacturing plant is also required.	
09	The position called for an individual with experience in handling a workforce of over 500 employees.	7. Workforce size based experience
10	Recent/Current hands on experience	8. Time preference related experience

From the above real requirements of the organizations, after conducting content analysis it was possible for researchers to formulate a model of HRM job experience contents in the Sri Lankan context. The Figure 1 shows the emerging model of HRM job experience contents developed from this exploratory study. Even though organizations use number of years in a particular job or organization as a common measurement, really the HRM job experiences contain multiple dimensions and perspectives. Experience contents for specialized HRM jobs such as Training Manager or Recruitment Manager etc include experience in respective area as very important in terms of scope as well as depth.

Findings of this study lead to accept view points of Quinones et al (1995) relating to quantity and quality of job experience. As far as quality or content of experience in HRM jobs is concerned, this study has gone beyond one step further from their views and confirmed that HRM job experience is not only a complex variable but also a multidimensional and broader concept framing eight (08) dimensions which were emphasized by the organizations in assessing quality of HRM job experience in Sri Lanka (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Dimensions of HRM Job Experience



9. Conclusions

With regard to experience for top level HRM jobs (Director-HR/HRM, Group HR Manager, Head of HR,) a minimum of five years of experience in senior positions is the most frequently (commonly) expected/needed level of experience by the organizations in Sri Lanka. However, in the perspective of accumulated experience to the top/senior HRM positions, a minimum of 10 years is required. Regarding HR Manager and Training Manager, a minimum of five years of experience in similar positions is the most frequently (commonly) expected/needed level of experience by the organizations in Sri Lanka. Here

also in the view of accumulated experience, it is a minimum of 05-07 years in Sri Lanka. For HR Executive, HR Officer and Recruitment Manager an experience of 02-03 years is the most frequently (commonly) expected/needed level of experience by the organizations in Sri Lanka.

Career progress/advancement in the HRM field can be earned by gaining experience in different levels. The content of HRM job experience is a multidimensional and broader concept for HRM jobs. In connection with contents of HRM job experience, eight dimensions have been identified from this study including general experience in HRM field, specialized experience in specific HRM area/function, scope of experience in HRM field, sector related experience, management level/position related experience, industry related experience, workforce/organisation size based experience and time preference based experience. In respect of experience contents for specialized HRM jobs such as Training Manager or Recruitment Manager etc, experience in his/her respective area is very important in terms of scope as well as depth.

HRM job experience is one of the essential human qualifications for HRM jobs, and therefore current HRM job holders and potential HRM job seekers should know about these requirements to progress in their HRM career in a successful manner. At the same time, regarding experience contents of generalized HRM jobs, to understand the dimensions required by the organizations in Sri Lanka, and to plan based on that understanding in order to acquire or gain expected experience contents are of very importance to the current HRM job holders and potential HRM job seekers in Sri Lanka. Findings of the study will be useful for career planning and development of persons who choose HRM field as their career field.

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