

# Bank Managers' Attitude about Human Resources: A Univariate Study in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

Little theoretical and empirical research done, contextual gap and intellectual curiosity caused to carry out a systematic study with regard to attitude about human resources (AHR) of managers which is critical in determining managers' behaviour and performance management of their subordinates. Deriving from five research questions five objectives of the study were formulated and they had a focus on performing a conceptualization and an operationalization of AHR of managers, exploring and describing the degree and the specific nature of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study, investigating whether the average degree of the AHR of bank managers is lower significantly than the ideal degree of the AHR of managers prescribed by the general theory, and finding out the effect of gender on the degree of AHR of bank managers. As respondents, 129 senior and chief managers by title who are middle managers by level working in a large bank were utilized. The empirical findings revealed that majority of senior and chief managers in the bank under the study are individuals with positive AHR, managers' responses on 10 attitudinal items were not congruent with the overall average response in case of the specific nature of AHR, degree of AHR of bank managers in the selected bank is lower than that of bank managers in general theory, and degree of AHR of male managers is not different from that of female managers. Possible reasons and implications of the findings were also discussed.

**Key Words:** Attitude, Bank Managers, Gender, Human Resources, Sri Lanka

## Introduction

Human Resources (HR) are employees working in an organization. Basically, there are managerial employees and non-managerial employees in an organization that has goals to be achieved and these employees are unique, compared with other resources, owing to at least eight reasons including: (1) It is animate, active and living; (2) It has the ability to think, feel and react; (3) Its value appreciates with the passage of time (because of experience, training etc.); (4) It has the ability to influence on determining its cost (pay); (5) It has the ability to

organize (as unions, teams etc.); (6) Its behaviour is complex and may be unpredictable; (7) It has the ability of creativity and innovation, which cannot be found in any other resources; and (8) It makes decisions in respect of all other resources (Opatha, 2009). HR are the most important resource that managers utilize to achieve goals of an organization (Tripathi, 1992; Opatha and Ismail, 2001; Opatha, 2021). Employees determine the organization's objectives and they run the operations that allow the organization to reach its objectives (Kleiman, 2004). Employees remain the only competitive advantage that cannot be copied by others (Joshi, Sunny and Vashisht, 2017). It is true that every employee may not be right in terms of job performance, and some employees may be destructive for the success of the organization. Here, the term *employee* means a right person who works for an organization; an appropriately qualified, committed, motivated, and engaged employee.

Right managers are indispensable for survival and growth of any organization and they are supposed to manage their subordinates towards the achievement of their organizational goals. Managers are personnel who get things done through non-managers. Every manager is a people manager or a HR manager because he or she has a certain group of subordinates to be managed (Werther and Davis, 1989; Opatha, 2009). All levels of senior management are involved in managing HR (Schuler, 1998). It is true that all managers are not experts in HRM and are not supposed to be so. In order to get things done successfully through subordinates and to work with subordinates to accomplish organizational goals fully managers must possess a right attitude about their subordinates and even other peers and superiors. Attitude about Human Resources (AHR) is a psychological concept and indeed critical for a manager to be successful in managing. It is argued that every manager working in an organization possesses an AHR which has a significant impact on his or her behaviour (actions and activities in managing employees).

Attitudes predict future behaviour (Glasman and Ablarracín, 2006) and the attitudes people hold determine what they do (Robbins and Judge, 2019). As predictors of likely behavior, attitudes attract serious attention (Kinicki and Fugate, 2018). Thus, AHR of managers predict their future behaviour towards their subordinates and other employees in the organization, and AHR managers hold determine what they do in managing employees. A manager's AHR can be either positive or negative. When a manager has a positive AHR he or she deals with managing his or subordinates in the way that is favourable and constructive rather than unfavourable and destructive. Managerial assumptions about workers refer to beliefs and attitudes of managers in general and the more positive are the managerial assumptions about workers the more favourable is the perceived labour-management relationship (Opatha and Zakaria, 2002).

In this study it is argued that AHR of managers contributes to Human Resource Management (HRM) which determines heavily the success and growth of the organization. It seems that little research has been done with regard to the degree and specific nature of managers' AHR. In Sri Lankan context it reveals that managers' AHR has not been researched theoretically and empirically as well. It reveals that there is a gap in the empirical knowledge with regard to the degree and specific nature of managers' AHR locally and perhaps in the Asian context too.

Further a gap exists in the empirical knowledge of the effect of gender on managers' AHR. For the purpose of knowing whether female managers and male managers differ in terms of the degree of managers' AHR, it needs to be investigated. Furthermore, in fact the researchers are curious intellectually to know the degree and specific nature of AHR of bank managers in Sri Lanka and its difference with gender.

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

In line with the above-mentioned research gaps five research questions were formulated and they are:

1. What is AHR of managers and how is it conceptualized and operationalized?
2. What is the degree of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study?
3. What is the specific nature of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study?
4. Is the average degree of AHR of bank managers who are working in the organization under study lower significantly than the ideal degree of AHR of managers prescribed by the general theory?
5. Does the degree of AHR of bank managers get differed significantly in terms of gender?

This study consists of two types of research questions, i.e., conceptual and empirical. The first question mentioned above is conceptual while other four questions are empirical. Five objectives were established by being consistent with the five research questions of the study and they are:

1. To perform a conceptualization and an operationalization of AHR of managers and construct a working definition and an operational definition of AHR of managers.
2. To explore and describe the degree of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study.
3. To explore and describe the specific nature of AHR of bank managers in the selected organization for the study.
4. To investigate whether the average degree of AHR of bank managers who are working in the organization under study is lower significantly than the ideal degree of AHR of managers prescribed by the general theory.
5. To find out whether the degree of AHR of bank managers gets differed significantly in terms of gender.

### **Conceptualization of Attitude about Human Resources**

Conceptualization involves specifying precisely what we will mean when we use a particular term (Babbie, 1986). Here the term is AHR. Three classic authorities namely Glueck (1979), Umstot (1984), and Luthans (2008) respectively define an attitude: as a characteristic and usually long-lasting way of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward an object, idea, person, or group of persons; as a tendency to react in a favourable or unfavourable way toward some

object, person, group, or idea; and a persistent tendency to feel and behave in a particular way toward some object. Deriving from these classic defining, AHR is a long-lasting way of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward HR; is a manager's tendency to react in a positive or negative way toward HR; and is a persistent tendency to feel and behave in a way that is optimistic or pessimistic toward HR. Davis and Cosenza (1985) give a constitutive definition about attitude, i.e., a learned predisposition to respond in a consistent manner. Thus, AHR of a manager is a tendency to view employees in a consistently positive or negative manner.

AHR is a work-related attitude. The nature of AHR of a bank manager may be either positive or negative. In other words, it may be either good or bad. Basing on the view of Dunham (1984), an attitude has three components including cognitive (beliefs), affective (feelings or liking or disliking), and behavioural (intention to behave). A manager may have good or positive beliefs regarding HR, good or positive feelings about HR, and good or positive intentions to behave towards HR or otherwise (bad or negative). Our overall attitudes toward someone or something are a function of the combined influence of three components: (1) the affective component (the feelings or emotions one has about a given object or situation); (2) the cognitive component (the beliefs or ideas one has about an object or situation; and (3) the behavioral component (how one intends or expects to act toward someone or something); and these three components influence our behavior (Kinicki and Fugate, 2018).

The researchers of this study conceive that AHR is a psychological and abstract concept and it has general beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies possessed by the bank manager about his or her subordinates and other employees. AHR of a manager is an HRM phenomenon that represents his or her beliefs, feelings or opinions about people at work and can range from positive to negative.

Following working definition was formed for the construct, i.e., AHR:

“Attitude about Human Resources is the extent to which the bank manager believes, feels, and intends to behave towards employees positively.”

### **Operationalization of Attitude about Human Resources**

AHR is a construct. A construct is a specific type of concepts which exists at higher level of abstraction and is invented for some special theoretical purpose, and it is not directly tied to observables, and therefore is inferred by some indirect method such as a questionnaire according to Davis and Cosenza (1985). Hence, AHR is an abstract concept, and according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) reduction of abstract concepts to render them measurable in a tangible way is called operationalizing the concepts. Hardly is seen a popular instrument to measure AHR. In Sri Lankan context only one instrument is available in the established local literature and it was developed by one of the authors of this research paper (Opatha, 2015). This instrument was adapted for the purpose of measuring AHR under this study. Another reason for using the instrument is that it was short and distinct. Also, the researchers assumed that Sri Lankan managers selected for the study would be able to understand it better. The instrument had the interval scale as its level of measurement with ten attitudinal statements

in respect of the object *Human Resources*. The operational definition for the variable *AHR* was the summated rating of *AHR* received on a 10-item, 5-point Likert scale. Some relevant information about the instrument is given in Exhibit 1 deriving from the literature (Opatha, 2014; Opatha, 2015).

### Exhibit 1. Some Relevant Information of the Instrument for AHR

Dimension	Elements	Question Statement/Item
Cognitive (Beliefs)	Considering humans as the nature's most precious gift	Humans are the most precious gift of the nature.
	Having confidence in human capability	We can't work more than we can.
	Acceptance of employees' performance as the organizational performance	An organization cannot perform more than what its employees perform.
	Taking any person as worthy of developing	Some people cannot be developed.
Affective (feelings or liking or disliking)	Relative importance of human resources compared with other organizational resources	Human resources are the most important resource in an organization.
	Comparative value of humans over time	Time is more important than humans.
	Intense dislike of people	I hate people generally.
	Appreciating humans' value	If there are no humans there will be no need for negotiation.
Behavioural (intention to behave)	Tendency of trusting people	People tend to change most of the time. So I intend not to trust them.
	Tendency to interact with people	I wish I could live in a place where no humans are.

By using 10 question statements which represent the ten elements which come under the three dimensions, responses of the respondents were obtained on a 5-point Likert scale (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The composite indexing and then transforming the variable into a different variable (with new values from 1 to 5) were performed with the SPSS. For the purpose of transforming the following scale was used:

#### Points

10 – 18 = Very negative AHR

19 – 26 = Negative AHR

27 – 34 = Indifferent or Moderate AHR

35 – 42 = Positive AHR

43 – 50 = Very Positive AHR

#### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

From the point of rational approach to measurement, content validity is vital (Werther and Davis, 1989), and it refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Sekaran, 1992; Opatha, 2003; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). In developing the instrument for variable of *AHR*, an attempt was made to have one question item for each element of the dimensions which cover the meaning domain. Conceptualization and operationalization procedure adopted for the study ensured an adequate degree of content validity of the instrument that measured *AHR*. Hence it is possible to mention that the

instrument contained a sufficient degree of content validity. To ensure another type of validity, i.e., construct validity, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was done and the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) for the construct AHR was .64. This value is above the cut-off point (0.5). In case of Bartlett's Test for the construct (Approximate Chi-Square=272.767; df=45; Significance = 000), it was also found to be significant. Thus, the ten question items used to measure the construct of AHR are related suggesting a good construct validity. Test-retest method was adopted to examine the external aspect of the reliability of the instrument. A two-week time interval was chosen to minimize the memory effects and the likelihood of true rating changes and this was performed with 10 respondents. The test-retest co-efficient was 0.89 suggesting an adequate degree of external reliability. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of the instrument was .71 suggesting that internal reliability of the instrument was adequate. Furthermore, the following qualities were possessed by the instrument and they contributed to increase the instrument's goodness.

1. 10 items were used to measure the construct instead of one item or only few items such as 3.
2. Each dimension had at least 2 items.
3. Use of jargons, double-barreled items and unclear ones were avoided when wording the items.
4. The tendency of respondents to check the items mechanically toward one end of the scale was minimized by using some items which were negatively worded.

### **Hypotheses**

There is no previous empirical evidence with regard to the degree and specific nature of AHR of managers working in organizations in Sri Lanka according to the researchers' knowledge. It is very important for manager to have a right attitude about employees or subordinates. Theory X and Theory Y developed by Douglas McGregor (1957) is a useful theory that recommends to have a right attitude within the manager about employees. This theory is a well-known theory and very useful for managers (Lawter, Kopelman, and Prottas, 2015). The theory gives two sets: conventional set (called Theory X) and modern set (called Theory Y). Theory X includes (1) The average employee dislikes work and will avoid it if possible; (2) Because they dislike work, most subordinates must be coerced, controlled, directed, or threatened with punishment to get them to exert effort toward achieving organizational objectives; and (3) The average subordinate prefers to be directed, wants to avoid responsibility, has little ambition, and wants security above all while Theory Y includes (1) The average employee likes work and the expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest; (2) Subordinates will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of organizational objectives to which they are committed; (3) Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement; (4) Average subordinate learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility; and (5) Widely, not narrowly subordinates have the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems (adapted from McGregor, 1960 as in Rue and Byars, 1992). According to Theory Y, it is implied that employees or human resources are more valuable and more important than other resources.

Managers having Theory X assumptions about subordinates are pessimistic about subordinates' abilities and skills, and on the other hand, managers having theory Y beliefs are more optimistic about the qualities of employees (Hitt et al, 1979). For good leadership and high performance, managers should possess right AHR following Theory Y (Szilagyi, 1981). Theory Y results in high job satisfaction, high participation and high job performance of subordinates (Rue and Byars, 1992). Thus, ideally managers must have a very positive AHR. Thus, the following alternative hypothesis along with the relevant null hypothesis was formulated:

*Alternative Hypothesis 1: Degree of AHR of managers in the selected bank is lower than that of managers in general theory.*

*Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in AHR between managers in the selected bank and managers in general theory.*

No theoretical and empirical evidences exist with regard to gender difference on AHR. Gender is a variable that refers to the fact of being male or female, alternatively sex according to Collins Birmingham University International Language Database (Cobuild) English Language Dictionary (1987). According to Mary and Williams (2013) Sex is the biological differences between female and male, at a basic level, but Gender is socially constructed and practiced. Gender refers to the characteristics of women and men. Two major types are masculinity (assertiveness, performance orientation, success, and competitiveness) and femininity (quality of life, close personal relationships, caring, and concern for others) (Arvey, Bhagat and Salas, 1991). According to a study done by Powell and Butterfield (1979) it was failed to support the hypothesis that a good manager would be seen as androgynous (possessing both masculine and feminine characteristics). Further the study found that the good manager was described in masculine terms, and graduate women described themselves in masculine terms. Traditionally, men and women managers were characterized with different qualities and men are always accorded with aggressiveness, competitiveness while women are the opposite (Rasdi, Ismail, and Uli, n.d.). Further, they observe that studies on the differences between men and women managers in terms of their management style concluded that men managers are more inclined toward command-and control style, whereas women managers are more inclined toward participative and relational style. Mcgregor and Tweed (2001) found a pattern of both similarity and difference in the managerial competence of male and female manufacturers in technology uptake and tentative support for the androgynous manager model. A study done by Parida (2018) found that, whether true or false or right or wrong, gender is perceived to have an impact on management and the management function.

Based on the above empirical findings and arguments, the second alternative hypothesis (along with the relevant null hypothesis) for this study is formulated as follows:

*Alternative Hypothesis 2: Degree of AHR of male managers is different from that of female managers.*

Null Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference between male managers and the female managers with regard to degree of AHR.*

### **Method**

The desk research strategy was applied to answer the first research question and the systematic survey strategy was applied to find answers for the four empirical research questions of the study. As there was one construct being a univariate study, the developed instrument to measure the variable of AHR formed a self-administered questionnaire. As the quantitative research strategy was adopted, epistemological orientation was natural science model, in particular positivism and ontological orientation was objectivism.

### **Respondents**

The study focuses on AHR of bank managers in Sri Lanka. In general, managers play a major role in determining the success or failure of an organization (Saumya, Thevanes, and Arulrajah, 2021). For the purpose of this study, a commercial bank which is the largest and very successful in Sri Lankan banking sector was selected. This bank is one of the largest organizations in Sri Lanka. The selected bank was a bank for which one of the authors in this research paper served as a resource person. This connection resulted in obtaining the support of respondents to provide data. The bank has a managerial hierarchy consisting of 11 ranks or levels of managerial jobs. They are from bottom to top: Management Trainee, Junior Executive, Executive, Senior Executive, Assistant Manager, Manager, Senior Manager, Chief Manager, Assistant General Manager, Deputy General Manager, and General Manager. Out of these jobs, the job of Senior Manager and job of Chief Manager are in the bank middle management and they are critical because they manage individual branches of the bank located throughout the country. About 130 managers in this middle management were serving at the time of collecting data and exactly 129 managers provided their responses. As Senior and Chief Managers the respondents provide a significant contribution to manage branch affairs of the bank successfully and they are required to possess the potential to assume duties and responsibilities of higher jobs in the future in addition to the competencies needed to perform the current jobs' duties and responsibilities.

### **Study Design Decisions**

The study had a unit of analysis that was individual level: Senior or Chief Manager/Middle Manager. The study's time horizon was cross-sectional as the data for the study were collected only at one point of time. The extent of researchers' interference with the study was minimal as studying the variables was done at their normal occurrence. The study did not involve manipulation of a variable, control of a variable, and a simulation. An artificial setting was not created for the study and therefore its setting was non-contrived.

### **Findings**

#### **The Degree of AHR of Sri Lankan Bank Managers under Study**

The second research question and the second objective of the study are respectively: "*What is the degree of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study?*" and "*To explore and*

describe the degree of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study.” The number of respondents who provided data were 129 senior and chief managers in the selected bank and Table 1 provides the relevant descriptive statistics.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

Mean	4.1550
Standard Deviation	.44105
Minimum	3
Maximum	5
Range	2

The mean is the most frequently used measure of central tendency of a variable, and the mean of AHR of bank managers under the study was 4.1550 (given in Table 1). The average value of the distribution of figures in respect of AHR of bank managers was above 4 but less than 5 or 4.7. Thus, the resultant finding is that majority of bank managers in the bank under the study are individuals with positive AHR. As a very small or very large value can affect the mean, it is important to examine the standard deviation. The standard deviation offers an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013), and it is .744105 which is less than 1. This figure indicates that the dispersion is not much suggesting that the mean is good to represent the typical value serving as a yardstick for all observed managers. The range is 2 showing that there are no values numbered 1 (very negative) and 2 (negative). For frequencies, refer to Table 2.

**Table 2. Frequencies of AHR**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3	04	03.1	3.1	3.1
4	101	78.3	78.3	81.4
5	24	18.6	18.6	100.0
Total	129	100.0	100.0	

The first row of Table 2 is for the composite response *Indifferent AHR* (neither positive nor negative) as coded in the data with the value 3; the second row is for the composite response *Positive AHR* (coded in the data with the value 4); and the third row is for the composite response *Very positive AHR* (coded with the value 5). Respectively 04 bank managers have an indifferent AHR (as a percentage it is 3.1); 101 bank managers are having a positive AHR (as a percentage it is 78.3); and 24 bank managers have a very positive AHR (it is 18.6 as a percentage). More than 100 managers out of 129 possess a positive AHR. Accordingly, the majority of Sri Lankan bank managers under study have a positive AHR.

### **The Specific Nature of AHR of Sri Lankan Bank Managers under Study**

The third research question and the third objective of the study are respectively: “What is the specific nature of AHR of bank managers in the organization under study?” and “To explore and

describe the specific nature of AHR of bank managers in the selected organization for the study.” As far as this study is concerned, the specific nature refers to sort of responding separately to the 10 items measuring AHR. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of each item of the construct of AHR. Negatively worded items (4, 6, 7, 9, and 10) were scored reversely.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the 10 Items of the Construct of AHR**

Item/Question Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Range
1. Humans are the most precious gift of the nature.	4.58	.348	2	5	3
2. We can't work more than we can.	2.95	1.096	1	5	4
3. An organization cannot perform more than what its employees perform.	3.48	1.105	1	5	4
4. Some people cannot be developed.	3.69	.891	1	5	4
5. Human resources are the most important resource in an organization.	4.86	.348	4	5	1
6. Time is more important than humans.	3.77	.825	1	5	4
7. I hate people generally.	4.71	.454	4	5	1
8. If there are no humans there will be no need for negotiation.	3.93	.962	1	5	4
9. People tend to change most of the time. So I intend not to trust them.	3.42	.807	1	5	4
10. I wish I could live in a place where no humans are.	4.83	.378	4	5	1

According to Table 3, the means of 4 items numbered 1, 5, 7, and 10 are more than 4 meaning that the managers' responses are positive. In fact, items 5, 7, and 10 have the means which are more than 4.7. If the mean value is 4.7 or above, it is ruled to interpret that the response is very positive. Only the item numbered 2 got the mean value of 2.95. Average response for the item is less than moderate though it is near the moderate value that is 3. Responses for other items are at moderate level. Except two items numbered 2 and 3, the standard deviation is less than 1 for each of 8 items suggesting that the dispersion is not much and most of the responses are centered around the mean. The range is 1 for items numbered 5, 7, and 10 showing that there are no responses which are moderate, negative, and very negative with regard to the represented attitude elements.

### Testing Hypothesis 1

The fourth research question and the fourth objective of the study are respectively: “Is the average degree of AHR of bank managers who are working in the organization under study lower significantly than the ideal degree of AHR of managers prescribed by the general theory?” and “To investigate whether the average degree of AHR of bank managers who are working in the organization under study is lower significantly than the ideal degree of AHR of managers prescribed by the general theory.” In line with the fourth question and the fourth objective of this study, a hypothesis was formulated and it is: *Degree of AHR of managers in the selected bank is lower from that of managers in general theory.* In order to test the validity of the alternative hypothesis the One-Sample T Test (Norusis, 1997) was used. As per the general

theory, ideally the managers must have a very positive AHR. Hence, the test value was taken as 4.7. After performing the test, the results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results of the One-Sample T Test**

Test Value = 4.7						
Degree of AHR	t	df	Sig. (1-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	-.14.034	128	.000	-.54496	Lower	Upper
					-.6218	-.4681

The hypothetical population mean is 4.7 which is the test value and the sample studied has the mean which is 4.1550. Descriptively it is possible to note that the observed mean is lower than the hypothetical population mean. According to Table 4, the difference between the observed mean and the hypothetical population mean is -.54496. This difference is statistically significant because the observed T-statistic is -.14.034 which is higher than the appropriate table value that is 1.65. This means that the mean difference is significant. The Table 4 shows that the observed significance level (.000) is higher than .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is statistical evidence to say that the degree of AHR of bank managers in the selected bank is lower than that of bank managers in general theory.

### Testing Hypothesis 2

The fifth research question and the fifth objective of the study are respectively: “Does the degree of AHR of bank managers get differed significantly in terms of gender?” and “To find out whether the degree of AHR of bank managers gets differed significantly in terms of gender.” The relevant hypothesis which was consistent with the final research question and objective of the study is: *Degree of AHR of male managers is different from that of female managers.* For the purpose of testing the validity of the hypothesis, the Independent Sample T Test (Norusis, 1997) was used. The desired level of significance is 0.05 (95% confident level) and two-tail test was applied as the hypothesis 2 was a non-directional one. The Table 5 shows the results of the test.

**Table 5. Results of Independent Sample T Test of AHR of Bank Managers and Gender**

Mean-Male bank managers	4.1333
Mean-Female bank managers	4.1739
t (Equal variances assumed)	-.520
t (Equal variances not assumed)	-.528
Mean difference	-.04058
df (degree of freedom)	127
Sig (2-tailed)	.604
Number of male bank managers	60
Number of female bank managers	69

It is noticeable in Table 5 that the mean value of male bank managers is lower than that of female bank managers. Hence, there is a difference descriptively. In order to find out whether this difference is statistically significant or not, the test called Independent Sample T Test was applied. Results of the Test show that Levene's test for equality of variances is insignificant with  $F = 3.371$  (sig .069). Hence, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis that the two population variances are equal, and therefore, T Test for equal variances are assumed was considered (Norusis, 1997). The T value for equal variances assumed is  $-.520$  that was insignificant at 95% confident level (sig = 0.604 which is higher than 0.05). Since the t value is statistically insignificant, the relevant null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Hence, the hypothesis 2 cannot be accepted. Thus, there is no statistical evidence to claim that Degree of AHR of male managers is different from that of female managers. Both male managers and female managers are the same in terms of AHR.

### Discussion

AHR is a work-related attitude and the nature of which of a manager may be either positive or negative. It is a construct which was nominally defined as the extent to which the bank manager believes, feels, and intends to behave towards employees positively. It was operationally defined as the summated rating of AHR received on a 10-item, 5-point Likert scale. The items represent three dimensions such as cognitive, affective, and behavioural. It was empirically found that majority of senior and chief managers in the bank under the study are individuals with positive AHR. This is a good condition for the bank as managers' positive AHR is instrumental for producing right managerial behaviours and results. Grievances can arise owing to variety of causes (Opatha, 1994). One cause may be negative AHR. Positive AHR may result in that subordinates get right supervision and fair treatment which can reduce employee grievances. It was found that only 24 bank managers (as a percentage it is 18.6) have a very positive AHR. This suggests that there is a room for improvement in terms of AHR of bank managers. As managers are supposed to have a very positive AHR, the bank is required to improve it. It is essential for the top management of the bank to accept that AHR of managers needs to be very positive and then to work on enhancing it so that the bank's HRM becomes better. Relatively the bank's situation with regard to the degree of AHR of bank managers (middle managers) is good because of the fact that 101 bank managers (78.3%) are having a positive AHR.

It revealed in case of the specific nature of AHR that managers' responses on 10 attitudinal items were not congruent with the overall average response. It is good to observe that the means of 3 items numbered 5, 7, and 10 are more than 4.7 meaning that the managers' responses are very positive. These three items are: (1) Human resources are the most important resource in an organization; (2) I hate people generally; and (3) I wish I could live in a place where no humans are. In order to accept the overwhelming importance of employees for the success and growth of the organization, it necessitates that managers believe in item numbered 1 to the highest extent of positivity. It is good to observe that managers are very negative in respect of the element, i.e., Intense dislike of people (a feeling) and also very positive in respect of the element, i.e., Tendency to interact with people (a behavioural intention). It was observed that managers are somewhat negative (mean= 2.95) in respect of

the element, i.e., Having confidence in human capability. The relevant item was “We can’t work more than we can”. Indeed, this item is a positive statement (a belief) as far as AHR is concerned. One who strongly agrees with the item shows a very positive AHR. In case of other items numbered 5, 4, 6, and 9 managers are moderate implying that they need to be changed to be very positive, at least positive. Consider item 6, i.e., “Time is more important than humans”. Ideally the response is “Strongly Disagree”. It is true that time is important, but compared with human resources it is less important as all the decisions are taken by human resources and even time management is done by human resources. “An organization cannot perform more than what its employees perform” is item numbered 3. The expected ideal response for this is “Strongly Agree” because of the fact that the summation of individual performance makes organizational performance or business performance (Ramawickrama, Opatha, and PushpaKumari, 2017).

It was found that the degree of AHR of bank managers in the selected bank is lower than that of bank managers in general theory. It was possible to accept the Hypothesis 1. It is true that managers selected for this study were middle level managers in a highly successful commercial bank in Sri Lanka. The bank has been profitable for many years which ended. However, there is always competition that comes from not only other state banks in Sri Lanka but also all the private banks in Sri Lanka. In addition to local competition, global competition exists. Furthermore, excellence is a continuous process and it requires improvements. Hence, it is implied that the bank needs to improve the degree of AHR of senior managers to come to the level which is ideal (at least 4.7 on the 5-point Likert scale). Opatha (2015, p. 83) writes: *“Thus, it is not easy to change attitudes of people. However, managers have a useful strategy to change attitudes and it is called persuasion. Persuasion is the act of convincing a person to believe something as true. It involves causing a person to do something which he or she had unwillingness to do previously by giving valid reasons for doing it.”* Persuasion is suggested in this banking scenario. In this regard a serious effort is needed to ensure that persuader must possess high expertise relating to the field in which attitudes are changed, and he or she must be a proven example of being highly successful in his or her career.

Another important finding was that degree of AHR of male managers is not different from that of female managers. It was found that both male managers and female managers were the same in terms of AHR having rejected the hypothesis 2. A good explanation for this “no difference” is the androgynous manager model. Managers possess both masculine and feminine characteristics irrespective of their sex (male or female). The managers under the study possess almost same academic and professional qualifications, got the same training and development experience, and learnt management and business. Furthermore, it may be possible that both male and female managers have been trained to have a locus of control which is internal locus of control. When managers have an internal locus of control or high internality (believing that events and things of one’s life are controlled by him or her), it is likely that they have positive AHR. According to a recent study done in Sri Lanka (Opatha and Jayani Opatha, 2019), majority of middle level managers in a highly successful commercial bank possessed a high level of internality. Further, it is likely that both male and female managers have been trained to have higher levels of the Big Five Dimensions of Personality

(BFDP) which led them to have a positive AHR. An empirical finding of a recent Sri Lankan study done by the same authors of this research paper (Opatha and Janath Opatha, 2023) revealed that, on average, senior bank managers in Sri Lanka have a BFDP to a high extent. Hence, it is not surprising to observe that there is no significant difference between male managers and female managers with regard to the degree of AHR.

Ideally every manager, irrespective of his or her field of specialization and field of interest, is supposed to have a positive AHR to be successful. Every manager has to manage his or subordinates properly, to interact with peers to ensure right coordination, team working, and communication, to deal with customers so as to make them satisfied and loyal, and to associate with other human beings who are stakeholders in the way that does not make them dissatisfied and hostile. It is asserted that one significant difference between being successful in dealing with people at work and being unsuccessful in dealing with people at work is the AHR. Positive AHR of the manager paves the way for being successful to a higher extent while negative AHR of the manager paves the way for being unsuccessful to a higher extent.

### Conclusion

This study had a focus on one critical construct, i.e., AHR of managers. Five research questions were addressed and for the purpose of the study senior and chief managers by title or middle managers by level were taken into consideration and they were in a large and successful commercial bank in Sri Lanka. The study was an original study in the sense that AHR of managers was defined nominally and operationally as well and then investigated empirically. Further the originality of the study gets enhanced by the empirical attempt to test a hypothesis that involved a gender effect on AHR of managers. It is recommended that further studies be done with regard to top managers as well as other types of managers in the bank and other banks not considered for this study, and even organizations in other industries to investigate degree of AHR, the effect of gender on AHR, and factors which determine AHR. It may be interesting; hence it is suggested to study theoretically and empirically how internal locus of control and Big five dimensions of personality affect AHR.

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