

Impact of Education and Skill Mismatch on Job Satisfaction of Graduate Employees in Public Sector Organisations in Jaffna District of Sri Lanka

A.R. Ramesh¹ and K. Mathushiya^{2,*}

General Administration, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka¹

Faculty of Engineering, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka²

*Corresponding author: mathushiyak@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of educational and skill mismatches on job satisfaction among graduate employees in public sector organisations in the Jaffna District. Sri Lanka faces a graduate employment gap due to a supply-driven higher education system and a skills mismatch with the needs of the private sector. As a result, this mismatch has compelled graduates to rely on public sector organisations and to seek government intervention in job provision. The study uses deductive, correlational, and cross-sectional approaches, with a stratified random sample of 201 (N=408) development officers in Jaffna District. A Google Form was used to collect data; 156 responded (78%). The data analysis was conducted using SPSS. The internal consistency of the 16 items was good ($\alpha=0.700$). The study reveals a perceived educational mismatch in the workplace, employees feeling slightly overqualified for their roles. However, there is a neutral perception of under-education and a slightly above-average mismatch between their field of study and their job roles. Development officers reported strong skills in communication, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, exceeding role demands. Job satisfaction was high in coworkers, opportunities and rewards, supervision, operational rules and procedures, fringe benefits, and the nature of work and performance. The study tested four hypotheses: over-education negatively impacts job satisfaction, under-education positively impacts job satisfaction, different fields of study negatively impact job satisfaction, and skill mismatch negatively impacts job satisfaction. Three hypotheses were rejected, while the relationship between under-education mismatch and job satisfaction was accepted. The findings suggest that mismatches in education, field of study, and skills can significantly impact job satisfaction. The study suggests that graduate employees in public sector organisations operate within their comfort zone, overlooking their intrinsic value and external opportunities, which leads to reduced productivity, underutilisation of educational investments, and an increased burden on the government budget, and recommends aligning graduate output with labour market demands.

Keywords: different fields of study, job satisfaction, over education, skill mismatch, under education