

# Internality and Job Involvement: An Empirical Study of Senior Managers in Sri Lanka

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## **Abstract**

A systematic study was carried out with regard to internality and job involvement owing to little research done, contextual gap and intellectual curiosity. Objectives of the study were (1) to explore and describe the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study; (2) to explore and describe the degree of internality of senior managers in the organization under study; and (3) to investigate whether the degree of internality of senior managers affects significantly and positively the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study. As respondents, 129 senior managers who are middle managers working in a large bank were utilized. The empirical findings revealed that Sri Lankan managers under study possess high internality, high job involvement, and positive effect of internality on job involvement which is insignificant at .05 level, but significant at 0.06 level. Possible reasons for the insignificant effect were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Internality, Job Involvement, Senior Manager

## **1. Introduction**

As a concept Job Involvement (JI) is not as popular as employee-related attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and organizational commitment in Organizational Behaviour Literature. However, JI can be considered as an employee-related phenomenon that drives high job performance. It is an objective of Human Resource Management (Opatha, 2009) and it can be considered as an employee behaviour (action/activity) and an employee attitude (belief, feeling and behavioural intention) as well.

JI is an attitude relating to a specific job and this attitude deserves a special attention because of its importance to both employees and organizations (Dunham, 1984). High level of JI is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin and Lord, 2002). According to Newstrom (2007) job-involved employee is likely to believe in the work ethics, to exhibit high growth needs, and to enjoy participation in decision making; consequently, he or she seldom will be tardy or absent, he or she is willing to work for long hours, and he or she will attempt to be a high performer. It was revealed that high JI was related significantly to a reduced number of absences and lower resignation rates (Boal and Cidambi, 1984; Blau, 1986; Barrick, Mount and Strauss, 1994, as in Robbins and Judge, 2013). High job involvement and job performance are significantly and positively related, and it is a strong predictor of job performance (Uthayakumar and Opatha, 2003). Highly involved employee is likely to take work more seriously and pay more attention to specific aspects of working experience than the employee who is less highly involved in the job (Opatha, 2015).

There could be many factors or variables as independent affecting or contributing to JI of employees in an organization and they may include internality (internal locus of control) of the employee, interesting nature of the job, supervision, human resource management practice, career development aspiration of the employee, peer pressure, financial need of the employee, nature of personal life of the employee and so on. It is argued that internality (internal locus of control) of the employee is a significant determinant of JI of any employee.

According to an empirical study done by Nigeria, Fagbola and Popoola (2015) about influence of locus of control on decision-making of managers in the aviation industry, individuals with high external locus of control are less likely to be committed to their organizations and they may feel unable to influence organizational decision making. According to an extensive research done by Angelova (2016) generally internals have better social skills and better interpersonal relationships with colleagues and supervisors than externals. From a managerial perspective, development of high internality is desirable both in supervised personnel and personnel who supervise.

It reveals that little research has been done with regard to JI in Sri Lanka, perhaps in Asia. In particular it reveals a gap in the empirical knowledge of degree of JI of senior managers working in banking sector in Sri Lanka indicating a contextual gap in research at industry level too. In addition, there is an intellectual curiosity to know about the degree of JI of senior level managers, particularly those who could advance in their career paths to a significant extent and whether their internality had affected significantly with the degree of their JI.

## **2. Research Questions and Objectives**

A systematic attempt was made to find answers for the following research questions:

1. What is the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study?
2. What is the degree of internality of senior managers in the organization under study?
3. Does internality of senior managers in the organization affect significantly and positively their job involvement?

This study has an explorative and descriptive part and an explanatory part as well. The first question and second question mentioned above deal with the explorative and descriptive part of this study while the third, that is the final question deals with the explanatory part of the study. The objectives of the study that are consistent with the above mentioned research questions are:

1. To explore and describe the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study.
2. To explore and describe the degree of internality of senior managers in the organization under study.
3. To investigate whether the degree of internality of senior managers affects significantly and positively the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study.

## **3. Conceptualization of the Constructs**

### **3.1. Job Involvement**

JI is a behaviour as well as an attitude because of the reason that for some researchers it means as attitude and for some, a behaviour (Iddagoda, Opatha, and Gunawardana, 2016). A behavioural perspective is inappropriate to job involvement as it is an attitude and as such, a variety of behaviours might be associated with a particular level of the involvement attitude which is a psychological variable (Dunham, 1984). For the purpose of this study, JI was considered as an attitude and Dunham (1986) defines JI as the degree to which a person: chooses to participate in a work experience, considers work to be a central life interest, and considers work central to his/her self-concept. Newstrom (2007) considers JI as an attitude and defines it as the degree to which employees immerse themselves in their jobs, invest time and energy in them, and view work as a central of their lives. JI is the degree to which a person identifies with a job, actively participates in it, and considers performance important to self-worth (Robbins and Judge, 2007).

Following working definition was developed for the construct, i.e. JI:

“Job involvement is the extent to which the employee takes part in his/her job seriously.”

### **3.2. Internality**

Internality comes from locus of control. According to Umstot (1984) locus of control is the degree to which a person feels that his or her life is controlled by self or internally versus by the environment, fate, or chance, or externally. This definition considers locus of control as a concept

with regard to whether the life of a person is controlled by himself or herself or by some external forces. Nelson and Quick (1997) define locus of control as an individual's generalized belief about internal (self) versus external (situation or others) control. These two authors view locus of control as a generalized belief one is having about internal control (done by him or her) or external control (done by situation or other people). Arnold, Silvester, Patterson, Robertson, Cooper and Burnes are six psychologists and they (2005) define the concept as the degree to which the individual feels that he or she has substantial control over events (internality) or little control over events (externality). Locus of control is a feeling of an individual about the degree of his or her control over events according to the six psychologists. Locus of control is a continuum representing one's belief as to whether external or internal forces control one's destiny (Lussier, 2010). According to Lussier everything that happens to a person during his or her life and what will happen in the future (destiny or fate) are concerned under the construct.

Following working definition was developed for the construct, i.e. internality:

“Internality is the extent to which the employee believes that his or her destiny depends on what he or she does.”

#### **4. Operationalization of the Constructs**

##### **4.1. Job Involvement**

For the purpose of measuring JI under this study the instrument developed by Opatha (2015) was utilized because it was short and distinct. Also it was assumed that Sri Lankan managers selected for the study would understand it better. The summated rating received on a 10-item, 5-point Likert scale of JI was the relevant operational definition and the level of the instrument was interval. The relevant indicators based on the literature (Opatha, 2015) were:

1. Job as a the central part of overall life
2. Energy devoted to the job
3. Emotional attachment to job duties
4. Identifying himself/herself without the job
5. Match between job values and self values
6. Mentioning the job when introducing self
7. Living, eating, and breathing on the job
8. Job as the source of major satisfaction
9. Physical immersion in the job
10. Willingness to participate in decision-making

Based on the above indicators or aspects, beliefs of the respondents and their feelings were solicited on a 5-point Likert scale, and the act of transforming into a different variable (with new values from 1 to 5) was done after calculating the composite indexing. The transforming was done by using the following scale:

## Points

10 – 18	Very low JI
19 – 26	Low JI
27 – 34	Moderate JI
35 – 42	High JI
43 – 50	Very high JI

**4.2. Internality**

As mentioned above it was decided to use the instrument developed by Opatha (2015) as it was simple, short and easy to understand for Sri Lankan managers. The instrument was based on an operational definition, i.e. the summated rating received on a 10-item, 5-point Likert scale and the relevant ten indicators based on literature (Opatha, 2015) were:

1. Hard working as a determinant of success
2. Dependency of destiny on self doing
3. Essentiality of powerful people for achieving success
4. Controlling others by being right
5. Dependency of success of life on self ability to manage it
6. Dependency of prosperity of life on luck
7. Impact of hard working and perspective on grades of qualifications
8. Role of luck and others in giving success on work life and personal life
9. Relationship between the God's help and doing good things
10. Linkage between own behaviour and things that happen

Beliefs of the respondents were solicited on a 5-point Likert scale with regard to each of the above mentioned indicators, and after composing the composite indexing, the transforming into a different variable (with new values from 1 to 5) was done by using the following scale:

## Points

10 – 18	Very low internality
19 – 26	Low internality
27 – 34	Moderate internality
35 – 42	High internality
43 – 50	Very high internality

**4.3. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

Content validity is an essential type of validity which is the extent to which the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Sekaran, 1992; Opatha, 2003; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). One question item was developed for each of the indicators mentioned above, and therefore the instruments contained an adequate degree of content validity. Internal reliability of the instrument measuring internality was high as the split half reliability coefficient was .424 which was significant at the 0.01 level. Interitem reliability of the instrument for JI (Cronbach's Alpha) was .854 indicating that the instrument possesses a high level of internal consistency. Also the split half reliability coefficient was calculated and the relevant coefficient between part 1 and part 2 was .608 which was significant at the 0.01 level.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

The highly involved worker is likely to take work and the job more seriously and pay more attention to specific aspects of the organizational experience than the person who is less highly involved (Dunham, 1984). Externals get less involved in their jobs than internals (Sekaran, 2004).

When a manager has a high level of internality he or she tends to control many things of the managerial life including job performance, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction by becoming involved in the job in higher extent. The more the manager is internalized the more he or she becomes involved in the job. When a manager who has a very low level of internality (in other words a high level of externality) is considered, it is possible to expect that he or she does not attempt to increase his or her job performance, customer satisfaction and employee job satisfaction by involving highly in his or her job because of his or her belief that external forces control his or her managerial life. A manager with high internality believes that his or her actions determine job performance and therefore tends to be involved in the job more. A manager with externality believes that external factors such as subordinates, superiors, other people, luck, and the God determine job performance, and therefore tends to be involved in the job less. The highly internalized manager is likely to take work and job more seriously and pay more attention to specific aspects of the job compared with the manager who is highly externalized.

Thus the above observations and logical beliefs of the researchers lead to formulate an alternative hypothesis which is stated below. Relevant null hypothesis is given below the alternative hypothesis.

Alternative Hypothesis: *Internality of senior managers affects significantly and positively their job involvement.*

Null Hypothesis: *There is no significant and positive effect of internality of senior managers on their job involvement.*

## 6. Method

For the purpose of finding answers for research questions a systematic survey was carried out. The survey consisted of a self-administered questionnaire that included two instruments used to measure the two constructs, i.e. JI and internality. The instruments that were utilized for this study were the instruments developed by Opatha (2015).

### 6.1. Respondents

A very large bank in Sri Lanka was selected as the organization under this empirical study and this organization was an organization for which one of the authors in this research paper served as a resource person. The bank was received many awards of excellence locally and internationally for its continued success. As a matter of fact it has been one of the largest banks and also is one of the biggest organizations in the country. Without taking all managers as the respondents for the study one type of middle managers was considered for the principle of parsimony. About 130 middle managers whose official job title is Senior Manager had been working in the bank and from whom (almost all) data were collected. Senior Managers were, are, and will be considered as key

managerial employees for the success of the bank and it requires them to have the potential to assume responsibilities of higher jobs including Chief Manager, Assistant General Manager, Deputy General Manager, and General Manager. Thus Senior Manager is a middle manager in the management hierarchy of the bank and jobs titled Management Trainee, Junior Executive, Executive, Senior Executive, Assistant Manager and Manager are the ones that are lower than Senior Manager. It was possible to get data from 129 senior managers.

## 6.2. Unit of Analysis and Time Horizon

Unit of analysis was individual level: Senior Manager. The data for the study were collected only at one point of time, and therefore its time horizon was cross sectional.

## 6.3. Other Design Decisions

With the normal flow of events the researchers interfered with the study. This study was not a causal study. Hence the extent of researcher interference was minimal. The study setting was noncontrived because of the reason that no artificial setting was created for data collection.

## 7. Findings

### 7.1. Job Involvement of Sri Lankan Managers under Study

The first research question of the study is: *What is the degree of job involvement of senior managers in the organization under study?* It was possible to collect data from 129 senior managers in the selected bank and Table 1 presents the relevant descriptive statistics.

**Table: 1 Descriptive Statistics**

Mean	3.9225
Standard Deviation	.79660
Minimum	2
Maximum	5
Range	3

Table 1 gives the mean of JI of senior managers under the study and it was 3.9225. It is almost 4 and resultant finding is that majority of senior managers in the bank under the study are individuals with high JI. The standard deviation which offers an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013) is .79660 which is less than 1 indicating that the dispersion is not much. Table 2 provides frequencies.

**Table: 2 Frequencies of Job Involvement**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	5	3.9	3.9	3.9
3	31	24.0	24.0	27.9
4	62	48.1	48.1	76.0
5	31	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	129	100.0	100.0	

According to the above Table, the first row is for the composite response *Low job involvement* (coded in the data with the value 2), and the second row is for the composite response *Moderate job involvement* (coded in the data with the value 3). Third row is for the composite response *High job involvement* (coded with the value 4) while fourth row is for the composite response *very high job involvement* (coded with the value 5). 62 senior managers have high JI and the percentage of such managers is 48.1. Number of senior managers who are having very high JI is 31 and it is 24 as a percentage. 31 managers have moderate JI and it is 24 percent. Only 5 senior managers have low JI (3.9 as a percentage). 72 percent of senior managers have either high or very high JI. Thus, the majority of Sri Lankan managers under study are having job involvement the level of which is high.

### 7.2. Internality of Sri Lankan Managers under Study

The second research question of the study is: *What is the degree of internality of senior managers in the organization under study?* As mentioned above collecting data from 129 senior managers in the selected bank was possible and Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of the construct of internality.

**Table: 3 Descriptive Statistics**

Mean	3.9147
Standard Deviation	.58672
Minimum	2
Maximum	5
Range	3

According to the Table, the mean of internality of managers under the study was 3.9147 which is almost 4 resulting in a finding that majority of senior managers in the bank under the study are individuals with high internality. Because of the fact that the standard deviation is less than 1 (.58672) the dispersion is not much and most of the managers are centered around the mean. Table 4 provides frequencies of internality.

**Table: 4 Frequencies of Internality**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	1	.8	.8	.8
3	25	19.4	19.4	20.2
4	87	67.4	67.4	87.6
5	16	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	129	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 presents the first row that is for the composite response *low internality* (coded in the data with the value 2), the second row that is for the composite response *moderate internality* (coded in the data with the value 3), the third row for the composite response *high internality* (coded with the value 4), and the fourth row is for the composite response *very high internality* (coded with the value 5). 87 senior managers possess high internality and the percentage of such managers is 67.4. 16 senior managers possess very high internality and it is 12.4 as a percentage. 25 senior managers

are in 'Being moderate' level and only one senior manager possesses low internality. High or very high internality is possessed by almost 80 percent of senior managers.

### 7.3. Impact of Internality on Job Involvement

The third research question of the study is: *Does internality of senior managers in the organization affect significantly and positively their job involvement?* Based on the observations of noted authors and the researchers' logical beliefs an alternative hypothesis was formulated and it was: *Internality of senior managers affects significantly and positively their job involvement.* In order to test the validity of the alternative hypothesis the Linear Regression Technique was applied as it was the appropriate technique (the hypothesis is about impact of one independent variable on one dependent variable) (Norusis, 1997). Internality was taken as the independent variable while JI was taken as the dependent variable. Table 5 presents the results of the Linear Regression Text.

**Table: 5 Linear Regression of Internality and JI and Analysis-of-Variance Table**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.170	.029	.021	.58049

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.268	1	1.268	3.762	.055
	Residual	42.794	127	.337		
	Total	44.062	128			

According to the Table R is absolute value of correlation coefficient which is .170. R Square is proportion of variation of the dependent variable (JI) that is explained by the independent variable, i.e. internality. It is .029 meaning that only 2% of the variability of JI has been explained by internality. Indeed there is a positive impact of internality on JI but that impact is not statistically significant as the observed significance value is .055 that is higher than 0.05 (desired level of significance is 95 % confident level). Indeed there is a slight difference between 0.05 and .055. If desired level of significance is 94%, then it is possible to claim that 2 percent impact of internality on JI is significant. Thus, at 95% confident level, the alternative hypothesis is not accepted. However, at 94% confident level the alternative hypothesis can be accepted.

### 8. Discussion

It was hypothesized that Internality of senior managers affects significantly and positively their job involvement. Though it was found that internality affects positively job involvement it was not statistically significant at 0.05 level. This might be owing to one or several reasons. One reason might be owing to low Cronbach's Alpha value of the instrument used to measure internality. It was .499. Another reason might be that both internality and JI are attitude variables. Another reason might be that internality is only one personality trait and there are many personality traits which make up the phenomenon called personality. Schuler (1996) points out that personality tests are not viable for employee selection owing to three reasons and one reason is that in highly structured situations controlled by regulations, rules, and guidelines, an individual's personality is unlikely to

have an effect. Therefore, it is possible to mention here that senior managers in the bank under study are required to work and perform their jobs in line with regulations, rules and guidelines including performance evaluation targets. Hence, it might be that internality has an impact on JI but it is insignificant. Another reason might be that the alternative hypothesis was developed based on observations of two authors and the researchers' logical beliefs, not based on a common well established theory. However, the importance of internality as a factor contributing to JI does not get reduced and it indeed becomes a significant factor if desired level of significant is changed from 95 % confident level to 94% confident level (only by 1%) (as far as this study is concerned).

## 9. Conclusion

Under this study two important variables, i.e. internality and JI were considered. Internality of majority of senior managers in the bank under the study is high. Furthermore, JI of majority of senior managers in the bank under the study is high. Internality of senior managers positively affects their JI. However, the effect of internality on JI is insignificant at 0.05 level. At .06 level the effect becomes significant. It is recommended that further studies be done with regard to senior managers as well as other types of managers in the bank and even other banks not considered for this study to determine the role of internality in job involvement. Furthermore it may be better to develop a new instrument or adjust the developed instrument to measure internality when conducting future studies.

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