

Impact of Job Satisfaction on the Young Community Engaged in the Plantation Jobs: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The plantation industry can be recognized as a sector that contributes greatly to the economy of Sri Lanka. However, it has been found that the labor shortage caused by the youth community leaving plantation jobs, especially in large-scale tea estates, has directly contributed to the decline in Sri Lanka's tea production and export capacity. The main objective of this study is to identify the job satisfaction of the young people doing plantation jobs and its effect on the young community to leave the plantation jobs, about 106 young people working in the Spring Valley Tea Estate of Haliela Divisional secretariat, Badulla District, Sri Lanka were selected as a sample through stratified random sampling method. Primary data collection was done on the socio-economic data of the youth and their satisfaction with the internal factors of the job using questionnaires and interviews. Furthermore, Binary logistic regression model and Likert scale intervals were used for data analysis. According to research data, 78% of young people working on plantations are dissatisfied with their jobs. It was revealed that the internal factors of the job such as the low level of social acceptance of the job, the low salary paid by plantation management in comparison to alternative jobs, the inadequacy of basic facilities provided in the work environment, the weakness of residential facilities, problems in supervision, prolonged working hours, insufficient overtime and additional allowances have mainly affected to increasing job dissatisfaction of youth, and for they leaving from plantation employment.

The binary logistic model revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between factors such as education level, age, and job satisfaction, and a significant positive relationship between daily income, service time, and job satisfaction. It was also possible to recognize that men are more likely to be satisfied with jobs compared to women. Accordingly, Measures such as providing formal training, adequate living wage, improving basic facilities in the work environment, providing quality residential facilities, developing job security, making a systematic and formal performance evaluation system, improving existing social recognition for plantation jobs, and introducing small-scale contract farming system (SCFS) to the youth in Plantation jobs can be recommended as the most appropriate measures that can be taken to prevent the youth working in tea estate from leaving the plantation jobs.

Keywords: Plantation Sector, Job Satisfaction, Leaving job, youth community

INTRODUCTION

Plantation plays a critical role in the economy of developing countries with a large rural sector (ILO, 2015). Considering the tea cultivation in Sri Lanka, it plays a very important role in the agricultural export sector of the country. At the beginning of the British Colonial Era, coffee was the main crop that was grown in Sri Lanka. When the fungal disease, coffee rust, devastated the coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka, the British had to look for alternatives. Tea is one such alternative that was tested in the island nation in the colonial era. The first tea plant was introduced to the country in 1824 in the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya. By 1867 the Scotsman, James Taylor (called "the father of Ceylon Tea") produced the first commercial crop of tea at the Loolecondera Estate in Kandy. That is considered as the beginning of the tea industry in Sri Lanka. Tea plantation in Sri Lanka takes place in two main ways. They are large-scale plantations and small-scale cultivations. However, due to the fact that about 80% of the tea produced for export in Sri Lanka is created from

large-scale plantations, this study focuses only on large-scale tea plantations.

According to the central bank reports, Sri Lanka’s economy is significantly impacted by the plantation industry. Tea plantations are one of the main foreign income-earning sources. The shortage of labor is one of the main problems facing Sri Lanka’s plantation sector. Numerous studies have examined this, and it is one of the primary causes of the significant labor shortage in the plantation industry. The young community from plantation jobs can be identified as one of the main factors affecting the existence of a significant level of labor shortage in the plantation sector. When the British established commercial plantations in Sri Lanka, they employed Tamil laborers from South India as their labor supply for the tea estates. They established a sustainable labor supply system in plantation settlements to continuously obtain the labor required for plantation cultivation by transferring the jobs of the settled workers from generation to generation. However, due to the socio-economic and technological changes in the country since the 21st century, it is common to see the current youth generation of plantation settlements leaving plantation jobs and engaging in agricultural or non-agricultural jobs in rural and urban sectors. Job satisfaction is one of the primary factors that influence people to quit their jobs. Sri Lankan plantation workers receive relatively little attention, and many plantation corporations similarly place very little emphasis on human resource development. Furthermore, even in the formulation of public labor policies, they pay little attention to plantation workers, and therefore there are few studies conducted to identify their job satisfaction. In this research, we explore why the youth community in the plantation sector leaves plantation jobs, which has been chosen as the research problem.

In the last few decades, a significant decrease in the number of people employed in large-scale tea plantations in Sri Lanka has been observed. In the year 2018, a large drop in the number of workers registered with tea estates can be detected. Accordingly, in the year 2000, the number of workers registered with tea estates was about 261,417, and by 2018, the number has decreased by more than 50% to 129,640. Compared to that, A big contraction can also be detected in the area under large-scale tea cultivation, and the total area under tea cultivation, which was 99,564 hectares in 2000, has dropped to 77,553 hectares in 2018 (Ministry of Plantation Industries and Export Agriculture, 2018). In this way, the decrease in the amount of tea-planted land and the number of registered workers leads to a decrease in the production of tea in this country and the amount of foreign exchange earned by exports. The area of tea cultivation under local plantation companies in selected years can be identified from Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: The area of tea cultivation under local plantation companies in Sri Lanka

Year	Land (hectare)
2000	99,564
2005	95,288
2010	84,119
2015	81,099
2018	77,553

Source: Ministry of Plantation Industries & Export Agriculture, 2020.

As shown in table 1.1, we can see there is a decreasing trend of tea plantation land in Sri Lanka. The decline in the area of tea cultivation in Sri Lanka’s plantations can be identified as a major problem that can be seen over the decades. Many researchers have found that the main reason for this is the workers leaving the plantation work, and it is clear that the weaknesses in the plantation management. The decline in the number of workers related to the plantation sector in Sri Lanka as a whole has occurred throughout the last few decades, and the rate and size of the decline in the number of workers providing services to tea plantations is greater compared to other plantations.

Table 1.2: Number of labors works in tea plantation in Sri Lanka

Year	Number of Labors
2000	261,417
2005	233,046
2010	202,204
2015	160,557
2018	129,640

Source: Ministry of Plantation Industries & Export Agriculture, 2020.

Therefore, in line with the main research questions, we can list our primary and secondary objectives as follows:

Primary Objective

The primary objective of this study is to identify the overall job satisfaction of young people engaged in plantation jobs.

Secondary Objectives

Identify how to impact the internal and external factors on the job satisfaction of young-age tea plantation workers. In line with the objective, we examine how overall internal factors impact the job satisfaction of tea plantation workers and separately identify gender impact on young tea plantation workers job satisfaction.

Dissatisfaction with work among the young community living in estate settlements is causing them to leave the estate jobs, and it is important to identify the job-related factors that cause them to be dissatisfied in order to prevent them from leaving the jobs. Therefore, this study is significant to determine the level of job satisfaction among young people working on plantations in order to identify the reasons why they quit and point to the emphasis that should be used to prevent them from leaving the job.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka constitute a significant portion of the agricultural workforce, with the tea industry being a major contributor to the country's economy. However, the job satisfaction of these workers has been a subject of concern due to various socio-economic, environmental, and organizational factors that impact their well-being and job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

A considerable number of theories have been advanced about job satisfaction. Similarities and differences can be identified in those theories as revealed in the literature. The theories about job satisfaction begin around the year 1911 in accordance with the concept called “scientific management” developed by Frederic W. Taylor. Job satisfaction is a critical aspect of workplace dynamics and has been extensively studied across various disciplines, including psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource management (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). It is generally defined as the extent to which employees are content with their jobs, which includes several dimensions such as pay, work conditions, relationship with supervisors, and career advancement opportunities. Understanding job satisfaction is crucial for organizations because it influences employee performance, productivity, and retention rates. Maslow (1943) in his theory “Hierarchy of Needs” argues that individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, starting from physiological needs to self-actualization. Job satisfaction is influenced when these needs are met in the workplace. For instance, salary satisfies basic

physiological needs, while opportunities for growth and advancement cater to self-actualization needs. Further, Herzberg (1959) proposed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two factors: hygiene factors (Ex: salary, company policies) and motivators (Ex: recognition, achievement). While hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, motivators actively contribute to satisfaction.

According to Judge et al. (2010) Compensation is one of the most significant predictors of job satisfaction. Employees who feel they are fairly compensated for their work are generally more satisfied. Spector (1997) points out that the physical and psychological work environment also plays a crucial role in job satisfaction. A supportive, healthy, and safe work environment can enhance job satisfaction. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) said that the work-life balance is the most important aspect of job satisfaction. Employees who can maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives report higher job satisfaction. Flexible working hours, remote work options, and organizational support for family needs contribute positively to job satisfaction. Likewise, Opportunities for career growth and development are essential for job satisfaction. When employees perceive that they have opportunities for advancement, their satisfaction levels are higher (Garcia-Cabrera & Hernandez, 2014).

The factors affecting the job satisfaction of every employee are not the same. Research conducted by Suraweera and Jayasinghe (2023) identified that those factors change according to the work performed by the employees. However, according to Herzberg (1959) the world has identified two constant factors that affect the job satisfaction of any employee. Those factors refer to the hygiene factors and motivation factors. Hygiene factors consist of Interpersonal relations, Salary, Company policies and administration, Supervision, working conditions etc. The motivator factor consists of Advancement, The work itself, Possibility for growth, Responsibility, and Recognition. Likewise,

The nature of the job itself is a significant determinant of job satisfaction. Jobs that are challenging, engaging, and provide opportunities for personal growth tend to result in higher satisfaction. The Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham (1976) emphasizes that jobs that provide skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are more satisfying to employees. according to Deci & Ryan (2000) autonomy is another important factor of job satisfaction. Autonomy refers to the degree of control and discretion employees have over how they perform their work. Higher levels of autonomy are associated with greater job satisfaction because they empower employees to make decisions and manage their work processes. Furthermore, Employees derive satisfaction from achieving goals and receiving recognition for their work. Social acceptance of the job is crucial to feel happy on the job. Hence, social acceptance leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the job (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Job Satisfaction in Tea Estate Workers

Tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka typically receive low wages, which significantly impacts their job satisfaction. Research shows that the daily wage structure, which is often insufficient to meet basic living standards, leads to financial insecurity among workers. For instance, Herath et al. (2018) discusses how the disparity between the cost of living and wages contributes to dissatisfaction and demotivation among workers. Furthermore, the physical working conditions in tea plantations, including long hours, physically demanding tasks, and exposure to harsh weather, adversely affect job satisfaction. Perera (2016) highlights how these conditions, coupled with inadequate health and safety measures, contribute to high levels of job dissatisfaction among tea plantation workers. The living conditions of tea plantation workers are closely linked to their job satisfaction. Many workers live in line-rooms with basic housing provided by the plantation companies. Studies like those by Jayawardena and Fernando (2015) show that these poor living conditions, combined with limited access to education and healthcare, contribute to a lower quality of life, negatively impacting job satisfaction. Tea plantation workers, predominantly of Indian Tamil descent, have historically been marginalized in Sri Lankan society. This social marginalization, combined with limited upward mobility, exacerbates feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction among workers. Wickramasinghe (2017) discusses the intersection of social identity and job satisfaction, noting that the lack of social recognition and respect significantly diminishes the workers' overall job satisfaction. The role of trade unions in advocating for the rights of tea plantation workers is crucial in shaping their job satisfaction. While unions have historically played a role in negotiating better wages and conditions, there is often a disconnect between union leadership and the workers they represent.

According to De Zoysa and Disanayaka (2019), this disconnect can lead to disillusionment among workers, affecting their satisfaction with their jobs. In research conducted on the development of human resources in the plantation sector, it has been identified that the satisfaction of the young community living in the plantations has caused them to get rid of plantation jobs and turn to other jobs (Jayawardane ,2014). Research on the job satisfaction of plantation workers in Sri Lanka is scarce and the findings of this research hope to fill this gap in the literature.

METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this study was to identify job satisfaction of the youth community engaged in tea plantation work. Accordingly, a sample of 106 young people was selected using stratified random sampling method. The sample consisted of 50 young women and 56 young men. This study utilized both primary data collection tools and secondary data collection tools. Primary data collected through a structured questionnaire by using 106 respondents through a random sample.

The structure of the questionnaire is specially designed on a Likert scale where the respondents can easily select their satisfaction level. Five-point Likert scale employed to identify the job satisfaction of estate workers. Unstructured interviews were employed to identify the job satisfaction of youth engaged in tea plantation work. That was used to further explain the answers given by young people to the questions contained in the questionnaire.

In this study, the youth community was restricted to the age group of 17-35 years. Also, Springvalley Tea Estate in Badulla District was selected as the study area and the fact that it is an isolated plantation settlement separated from the city and the fact that Sinhalese villages are located around the plantation settlement led to the selection of the study area.

To identify the overall job satisfaction, a question was included in the questionnaire to identify the overall job satisfaction of the youth. Furthermore, the external and internal factors that affect job satisfaction were used to identify how each factor affects job satisfaction. Social Acceptance, Salary, Basic facilities, Residential facilities, Supervision, working hours, Additional and overtime allowances, Nature of work, Job security and Performance evaluation were used as internal factors. The binary logistic regression model was used to identify the relationship between the external factors of the job and the overall job satisfaction. Gender, Age, Education, Service period, Daily income was used as external factors of employment.

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5) \quad \text{Eq (01)}$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + u_i \quad \text{Eq (02)}$$

Table 3.1: Variable Explanation

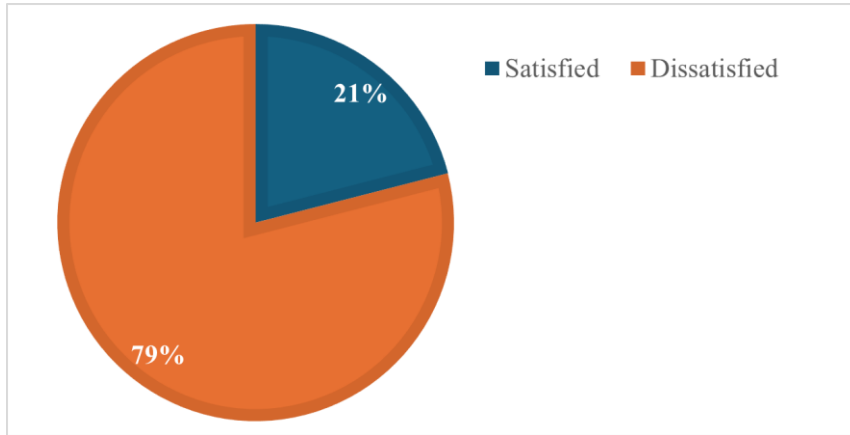
Dependent Variable		
Y= Overall job satisfaction (Satisfied=1, unsatisfied=0)		
Independent Variables	Variable	Measurement
X ₁	Age	Number of years
X ₂	Education level	Number of years of schooling
X ₃	Service period	Number of years
X ₄	Gender	Male=1, Female=0
X ₅	Daily income	Sri Lankan Rupees

Source: Authors

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the Overall job satisfaction among the young people among the engaged in plantation job. Accordingly, it can be recognized that the majority of the youth community is dissatisfied with the plantation work. About 71% of the respondents said that they are dissatisfied with the job, while about 21% said that they are satisfied with the job.

Figure 1: Overall job satisfaction



Source: Authors, SPSS Software.

In this research, the Chi-square test is used to identify the relationship between the internal factors of the job and the job satisfaction of the youth community, and thus it is necessary to find out whether there is a relationship between the internal factors and the job satisfaction. As internal factors, data related to social acceptance, salary, basic facilities, residential facilities, working hours, supervision, additional and overtime allowances, performance evaluation, job security, and the nature of work were used to measure reliability.

Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.718	10

Source: Authors, SPSS Software.

As shown in table 4.1 The Cronbach's Alpha value obtained for those 10 factors is about 0.718. A value of Cronbach's Alpha, $0.7 \geq$ or more affects the reliability of the data, and thus this data distribution used for analysis can be identified as a reliable data distribution.

Equation 3 is used to calculate the mean value.

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{\sum (f_i \times \text{Likert Item Score})}{\text{Number of Respondents}}$$

f_i = frequency of each Likert Scale Score, i = Likert Scale Scores

Source: Wanjohi & Syokau, 2021.

Figure 2 shows the satisfaction with the internal factors of the job among young people engaged in plantation work. Accordingly, it can be recognized that young people are very dissatisfied with the social acceptance (1.75) and salary (1.86) of the job. And it can be recognized that the youth community is dissatisfied with the internal factors of basic facilities (2.08), additional and overtime allowances (2.15), residential facilities (2.22), working

hours (2.29), and supervision (2.38) respectively. Also, the youth community is moderately satisfied with performance evaluation (2.68), job security (2.89), and nature of work (3.00).

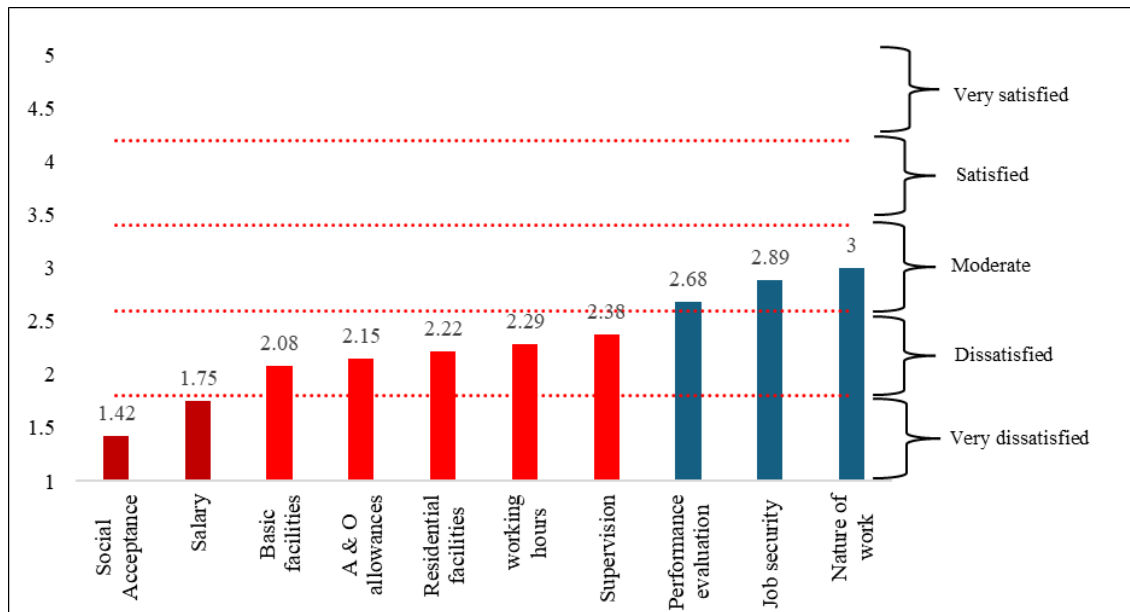


Figure 2: The satisfaction with the internal factors of the job among young people engaged in plantation work

Source: Authors, SPSS Software.

One of the objectives of this study is to identify the satisfaction of young people about the internal factors of work according to gender. We examined gender wise job satisfaction internal factors. Accordingly, the satisfaction with the internal factors of the job among the young men is represented by figure 3.

It can be recognized that young men engaged in plantation jobs are very dissatisfied with the social acceptance (1.48) and salary (1.68) of the job. There is dissatisfaction with accommodation facilities (2.10), basic facilities (2.18), supervision (2.32), nature of work (2.56), additional and overtime allowances (2.56) and moderate satisfaction with performance appraisal (2.66) and job security (2.70). Younger men are markedly more satisfied with the number of hours (3.70) they work.

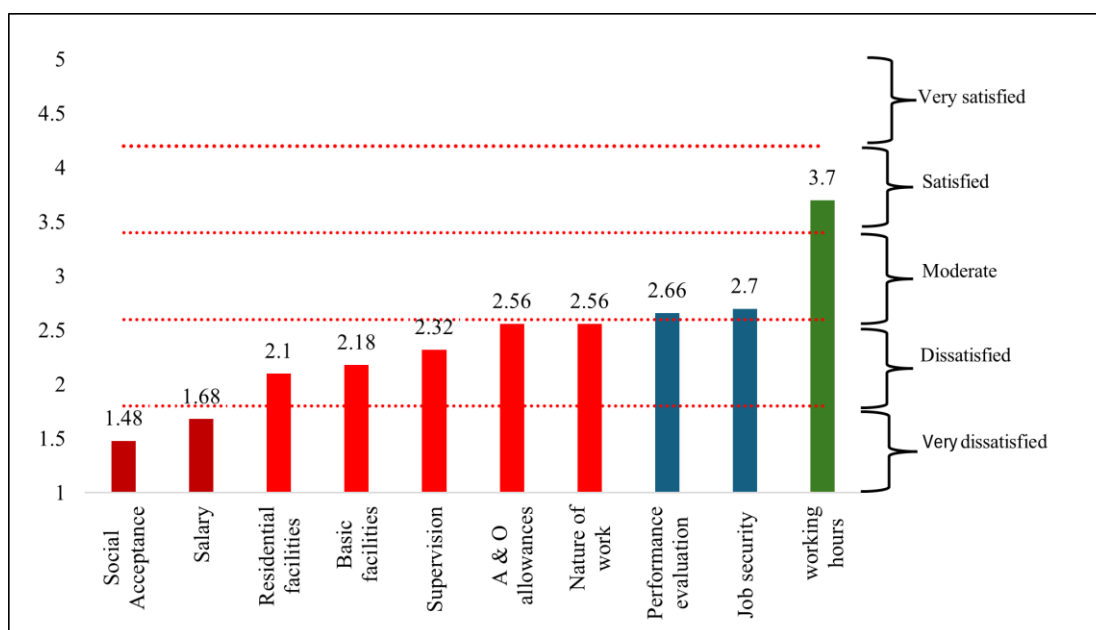


Figure 3: The satisfaction with the internal factors of the job among young men

Source: Authors, SPSS Software.

Figure 4 shows the satisfaction of young women engaged in plantation work on the internal factors of job. Young women are most dissatisfied with social acceptance (1.68) and working hours (1.70) of plantation work. basic facilities (2.14), overtime pay (2.16), supervision (2.18), residential facilities (2.32), job security respectively. (2.46), followed by dissatisfaction with the internal factors of job performance evaluation (2.54). Also, it is a special characteristic that young women are moderately satisfied with the nature of work (2.80).

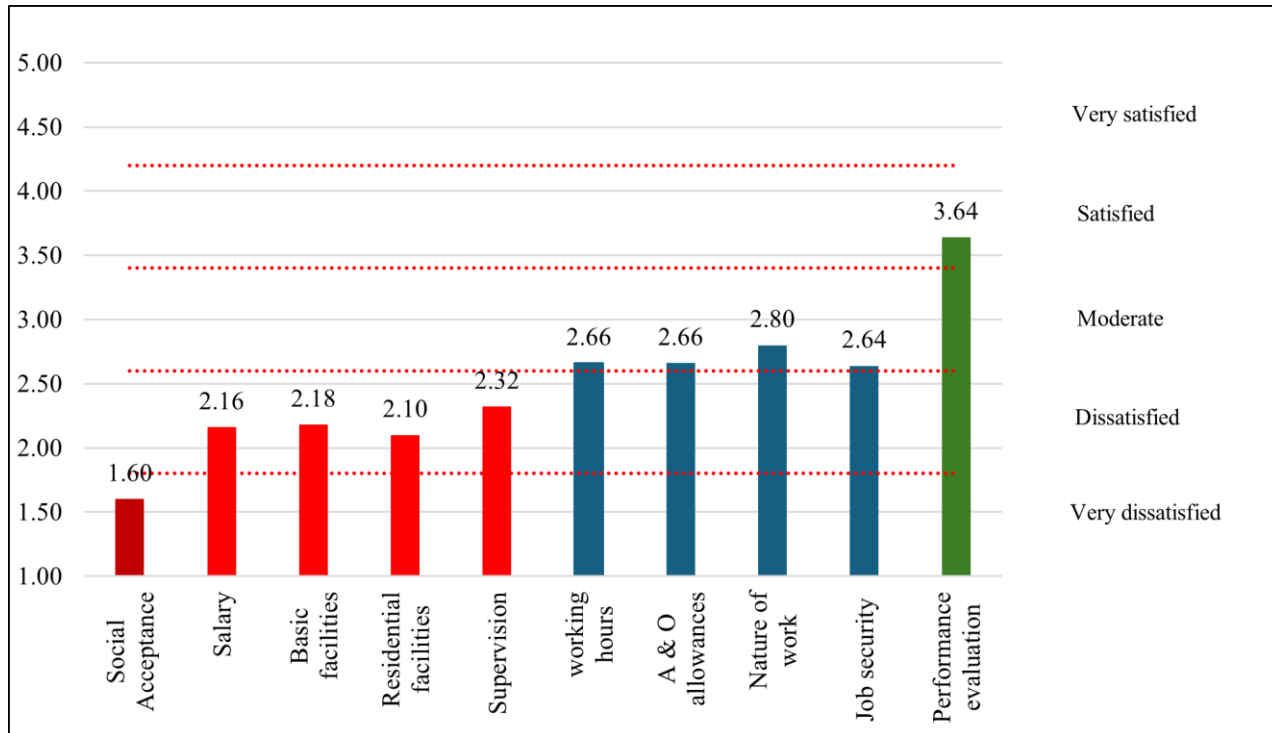


Figure 4: The satisfaction with the internal factors of the job among young women

Source: Authors, SPSS Software.

The relationship between overall job satisfaction and external factors of plantation job is strived to identify employing binary logistic model. In this analysis, the correlation between overall job satisfaction and external factors is revealed.

The cox & snell R square of this model is 0.517 and it leads to prove the suitability in the model for analysis. In addition, nagelkerke R square value is 0.820 which is proven further the suitability of the model for analysis. The result of the employed model is represented by table 4.2. According to the correlation matrix (Table 1) the relationship between Overall job satisfaction and age ($B = -0.266$) and education ($B = -0.353$) is negative. Which means when age increases by a unit, there is a probability that job satisfaction will decrease by about 0.76 log percent., and the education level increase by a unit, there is probability that job satisfaction will decrease by about 0.70 log percent.

Table 4.2: Model Summery

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	28.363	0.517	0.820
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	28.363	0.517	0.820

Source: Authors, SPSS software

There is positive relationship between Overall job satisfaction and external factors such as, service period (B= 0.69), and daily salary (B= 0.005). According to the model when the service period increases by unit, there is a probability to decrease overall job satisfaction by about 0.69 log percent. Which means people who have the prolonged service tend to increase overall job satisfaction rather than the person who have a short service period. Furthermore, according to the model when daily salary increases by a unit, there is a probability to increase overall job satisfaction by about 1.0 log percent. It can be recognized that there is a correlation between external factors and overall job satisfaction of the young community engaged in plantation jobs, and when the factors of education level and age increase by one unit, it can be recognized that there is a probability of a decrease in overall job satisfaction, and when the daily income and working hours increase, the youth The overall job satisfaction of young women is likely to increase.

Table 4.3: Binary Logit model

Variable	B	S. E	Wald	df.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (1)	2.734	1.523	3.22	1	0.043	15.388
Service Period	0.693	0.299	5.389	1	0.02	2
Daily Income	0.005	0.006	0.879	1	0.048	1.005
Age	-0.266	0.108	6.084	1	0.014	0.766
Education level	-0.353	0.131	7.257	1	0.007	0.703
Constant	2.329	6.669	0.122	1	0.727	0.097

Source: Authors, SPSS software

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The plantation sector in Sri Lanka is primarily based on tea, coconut, and rubber plantations. In this research, only focus on the tea plantation sector limited to young people between 17 and 35 years of age. In focusing on tea plantations in Sri Lanka, they can be identified mainly under two categories: large-scale and small-scale. There, large-scale tea estates are controlled by the public sector and local plantation companies. This research is limited to large-scale tea plantations controlled by local plantation companies. Furthermore, it was identified that the tea estates controlled by local plantation companies are spread across different districts of Sri Lanka. This study is limited to the geographical area of the Spring Valley Tea Estate of the Haliela Divisional Secretariat, Badulla District, Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

This study identified that a majority of the youth community engaged in plantation work are dissatisfied with plantation jobs. Accordingly, about 71% of young people are dissatisfied with their jobs and 21% are satisfied with their jobs. overall, it can be recognized that young women and young men are dissatisfied with the internal factors of job such as social acceptance, salary, basic facilities, overtime and additional allowances, residential facilities, working hours and supervision. It can also be identified that there is moderate satisfaction with job performance evaluation, job security and job nature. Taking women and men separately, it can be recognized that men are more satisfied with the number of working hours, while women are more satisfied with the evaluation of work performance. And men are moderately satisfied with job performance evaluation and job security. Also, women are most dissatisfied with social acceptance and working hours, and men with social acceptance and salary. Furthermore, it was possible to identify that there is a negative relationship between the external factors of work such as age, education level and overall job satisfaction. It was also identified that there is a positive relationship between internal factors such as service period, daily salary and overall job

satisfaction. In addition, women are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs compared to men. Accordingly, since tea plantation is a major export product that strengthens Sri Lanka's economy, further action should be taken to increase the job satisfaction of young people who are engaged in plantation-related jobs. Furthermore, the findings of this study are important for both the public and private sector in formulating policies to increase the job satisfaction of young plantation workers and prevent them from leaving the workforce.

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