

## **An Exploratory Study on the Personal Qualities/Characteristics expected by the Organisations for Key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka**

**A. Anton Arulrajah**

*Senior Lecturer*

*Department of Management*

*Faculty of Commerce and Management*

*Eastern University*

*E-mail: antonarulrajah@yahoo.com*

And

**H.H.D.N.P. Opatha**

*Professor of HRM (on Merit)*

*Department of HRM*

*Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce*

*University of Sri Jayewardenepura*

*E-mail: hopatha@yahoo.com*

### **Abstract**

*This study explores a gap in the empirical knowledge with regard to the personal qualities/characteristics expected by the organisations for key HRM jobs in the field of HRM in Sri Lanka. The research questions of this exploratory study were: What are the personal qualities/characteristics needed or expected by the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka for key HRM jobs? And is it possible to develop a sort of illustration to understand personal qualities/characteristics expected for key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka? In order to answer the research questions systematically, an exploratory study was conducted by using eight key HRM job related employment advertisements appeared in the Sunday Observer newspaper for the period of 5 years (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010). Time horizon of the study was longitudinal and HRM related job advertisement was the unit of analysis of the study.*

*Comprehensive and systematic content analysis along with descriptive statistics was applied to generate results and findings. The results of the study revealed that the personal qualities/characteristics are one of the very important requirements in selecting people for key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka. At the same time it differs from key job to another key job. When considering the personal qualities for the selected key HRM jobs, the findings revealed that there are 39 personal qualities related to the post of HR Director, 29 personal qualities related to the Group HR Manager, 41 personal qualities related to Head of HRM, 98 personal qualities related to the HR Manager, 81 personal qualities related to the HR Executive, 50 personal qualities related to the HR Officer, 32 personal qualities related to the Training Manager, and 15 personal qualities related to the post of Recruitment Manager.*

*With regard to the personal qualities eleven (11) key dimensions of personal qualities were identified in addition to the number of personal qualities including attitude related, personality related, good character related, team related, professional related, business related, people related, performance related, physical appearance related, leadership traits related and HR/HRM related aspects. The implications of these findings are useful to all*

*stakeholders and professionals of HRM especially in developing good professionalism among current HR professionals in Sri Lanka and prospective personnel who wish to establish a career in HRM.*

**Key Words:** Human Resource Management, Key HRM jobs, Personal Qualities

### **Introduction**

In Sri Lanka, Human Resource Management (HRM) is becoming one of the most important functional fields in organizational management. Business organisations also have realized importance of HRM as a major factor in gaining a competitive advantage in a dynamic business environment. It has generally been observed that almost every large organization has a separate department for HRM under the leadership of HR Manager (HR Director or Group HR Manager in case of very large organizations and groups of companies). Establishment of separate academic departments for HRM in Sri Lankan universities including University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Kelaniya, and University of Colombo and introduction of HRM degree programs and specializations in HRM by Sri Lankan universities and technical colleges reflect increasing importance and consideration on HRM as an academic discipline in addition to practice. Like other fields such as Accounting and Engineering, HRM is being recognized as a prestigious and significant professional field.

An organization's performance directly depends on the individuals it employs. Strategies and decisions in staffing have a direct impact on whether the organization employs right or wrong individuals. Right individuals give right performance which leads to accomplish strategic needs of the organization. An organization cannot perform more than its employees perform. When done strategically, staffing can enable a company to acquire a sustainable competitive advantage that allows it to successfully fulfill its mission and reach its goals (Phillips and Gully, 2009). In this context HR staffing is critical for organizational success and it refers to establishing human resource management personnel in the human resource department of the organisation. It is indispensable to procure and employ people who possess right HRM knowledge, skills and special and general qualities to perform successfully jobs and positions of the human resource department. How effectively an organisation's human resources are managed depends in large part on the quality of the people in the human resource department (Schular and Youngblood, 1986). If the organisation has no right HR personnel, it is not in a position of performing HRM in right way and therefore it will not be able to achieve its goals. This paper has its focus on personal qualities required by Sri Lankan organizations from HR personnel or for key HRM jobs.

This study explores the personal qualities/characteristics expected by the organisations for key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan literature in connection with HRM field reveals that there is a material gap in the empirical knowledge regarding the above phenomenon. In order to fill this empirical knowledge gap, this paper addresses the following two specific research questions:

1. What are the personal qualities/characteristics needed or expected by the organizations which are operating in Sri Lanka for key HRM jobs? and
2. Is it possible to develop a sort of illustration to understand personal qualities expected for key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka?

### **The Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were:

1. To explore the personal qualities/characteristics expected for the key HRM jobs; and
2. To develop an illustration of personal qualities/characteristics of key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka.

### **Literature Review**

In the literature there were very few scholars who had mentioned about personal qualities/characteristics/attributes which are needed from the HRM professionals. In the view of Bergman (1992, as in Carrel et al. 1995), good judgment/common sense, flexible/resilient, leadership, action oriented, innovative thinking, and group dynamics are personal qualities required from HR Personnel. Kaufman (1994, as in Kleiman, 1997) stressed leadership qualities, managerial qualities and qualities which are related to HRM and business. In 1998, Sherman, Bohlander and Snell mentioned about four kinds of mastery such as business mastery, HR mastery, change mastery and personal credibility which were expected by the top executives from HR professionals. Sanghi (2004) has developed a checklist of HR competency audit. In that list she stressed needed personal attitudes and values of HR professionals in addition to their HR knowledge and HR skills. Deb (2006) grouped qualities of human resource professional/manager into two main groups. One is managerial qualities, and other one is professional qualities. Under the managerial qualities he pointed out seven specific qualities such as intelligence, conceptual clarity, analytical ability, motivational ability, emotional maturity, business acumen, and professional integrity. At the same time under the professional qualities he stated additional seven qualities such as empathy, communicator, human relation skill, knowledge, responsiveness, presentation, and management of change and culture.

In the Sri Lankan HRM literature, Opatha (2008 and 2009) pointed out seven competencies. In addition to the technical competence of HRM the human resource manager should possess competencies which include human relations competence (communicating, motivating, influencing people to change and leading), conceptual competence (planning, organising and controlling), intelligence (mental reasoning ability), appropriate personality (interest in people, appreciation in human capital, desire for developing people, pleasing appearance, adjustable and flexible, self-monitoring, extroversion to a certain extent, etc.), individual good character (moral excellence-ability to build and enhance virtues of responsibility, honesty, tolerance, patience, humility, etc. and minimise or eradicate vices of jealousy, greed, anger, stinginess, deception, corruption, retaliation etc.), and Personal/individual management competencies (ethical thinking, positive thinking, continuous learning, balancing life and work, time management, career management, and stress management). Out of these competences human relation competency, appropriate personality, intelligence and good character are highly related to personal qualities or characteristics of HR professional.

For the purpose of study, the term 'quality' or 'characteristic' is defined as a distinguishing feature or trait a person must possess to be perceived as a right HR professional. Indeed the concept is an abstract concept, and therefore it may be perceived alternatively as a competence. Qualities include attributes which are needed for a human resource professional to be successful on his/her job.

### **Research Methodology**

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, an exploratory study was conducted by using all the HRM related employment advertisements appeared in the Sunday Observer

newspaper for the period of 5 years (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010). This study was longitudinal in time horizon and the unit of analysis of this study was HRM related job advertisement. The extent of the researchers' interference in this study was minimal as there had not been any manipulation and control of variables. As the study had been carried out in a natural environment where events occurred normally the study setting was non-contrived. Mainly by using comprehensive and systematic content analysis along with descriptive statistics, results and findings were generated.

### Results and Findings

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

Number of job advertisements and number of job vacancies relating to the advertisements for the selected 08 key jobs under study are given in Table 1. According to the Table, the highest number of job advertisements and vacancies were with the key job, HR Manager. HR Executive is the key job that had the next highest number of advertisements and vacancies. These two jobs become critical for a person who wants to excel in the HRM profession. Generally for a person who wishes to have an excellent career in the field of HRM, the job of HR Manager becomes a long term career goal and the job of HR Executive becomes a short term career goal. Tables from 2 to 9 provide expected personal qualities/characteristics for the eight key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka.

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

Selected Key HRM Jobs	Year					Total
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
<b>HR Director</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	07	20	11	05	13	<b>56</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	07	20	11	05	14	<b>57</b>
<b>Group HR Manager</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	07	06	05	02	05	<b>25</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	07	06	05	02	05	<b>25</b>
<b>Head-HRM</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	08	08	07	06	05	<b>34</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	08	08	07	06	06	<b>35</b>
<b>HR Manager</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	116	139	130	63	114	<b>562</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	122	147	160	68	121	<b>618</b>
<b>HR Executive</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	101	120	102	40	91	<b>454</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	117	159	132	46	102	<b>556</b>
<b>HR Officer</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	27	35	28	27	41	<b>158</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	35	36	30	53	44	<b>198</b>
<b>Training Manager</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	12	14	27	04	23	<b>80</b>

Number of Job Vacancies	14	14	27	04	27	<b>86</b>
<b>Recruitment Manager</b>						
No. of Job Advertisements	08	10	15	08	19	<b>60</b>
Number of Job Vacancies	08	11	17	08	20	<b>64</b>
Note: Excluding Repetition						

## 1. Director- Human Resources Management

**Table: 2 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics and HR Director**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	A Real Team Player/Team Oriented	<b>23</b>	21	People Oriented	<b>03</b>
02	Dynamic	<b>22</b>	22	Proactive	<b>03</b>
03	High Level of Professionalism	<b>20</b>	23	A High Caliber	<b>02</b>
04	Leadership qualities	<b>16</b>	24	Business Acumen	<b>02</b>
05	Self-Motivated	<b>11</b>	25	Confidence	<b>02</b>
06	Energetic	<b>10</b>	26	High Level of Enthusiasm	<b>02</b>
07	Motivator	<b>09</b>	27	Passion	<b>02</b>
08	Commitment	<b>08</b>	28	Sense of Humour	<b>02</b>
09	Maturity and Emotional Balance	<b>05</b>	29	Service Oriented	<b>02</b>
10	Resourceful	<b>05</b>	30	Talented	<b>02</b>
11	Result Oriented	<b>05</b>	31	Willing to Put in Efforts Untiringly	<b>02</b>
12	Challenging	<b>04</b>	32	Ambitious	<b>01</b>
13	Drive	<b>04</b>	33	Creative	<b>01</b>
14	Highly Qualified	<b>04</b>	34	Good Decision Maker	<b>01</b>
15	Innovative	<b>04</b>	35	Hungry for Success	<b>01</b>
16	Positive Attitude	<b>04</b>	36	Independent	<b>01</b>
17	A Strong Intrinsic Motivation	<b>03</b>	37	Initiative	<b>01</b>
18	Adaptable	<b>03</b>	38	Intellectual	<b>01</b>
19	Flexible	<b>03</b>	39	Problem Solver	<b>01</b>
20	Integrity	<b>03</b>			

## 2. Group Human Resource Manager

**Table: 3 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics and GHRM**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	<b>10</b>	16	A Strong believer of open culture	<b>01</b>
02	Results-oriented	<b>09</b>	17	A Strong Communicator	<b>01</b>
03	Professionally qualified	<b>06</b>	18	Ambitious	<b>01</b>
04	Team player	<b>06</b>	19	Committed to dead line	<b>01</b>
05	Drive	<b>05</b>	20	Conceptual thinking	<b>01</b>
06	Passionate	<b>04</b>	21	Focused	<b>01</b>
07	A Strong Motivator	<b>03</b>	22	Forward Thinking	<b>01</b>
08	Mature	<b>03</b>	23	Initiative	<b>01</b>
09	Challenging	<b>02</b>	24	Negotiator	<b>01</b>
10	Commitment	<b>02</b>	25	Organizer	<b>01</b>

11	Confidence	02	26	Out-going	01
12	Energetic	02	27	Proactive	01
13	Self-Motivator	02	28	Resourcefulness	01
14	Strategic Thinker	02	29	Young	01
15	A self-starter	01			

### 3. Head of Human Resource (Head-HRM)

**Table: 4 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics and Head-HRM**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	20	22	Be Flexible	01
02	Result Oriented	10	23	Business Acumen	01
03	Self-Motivated	10	24	Commercially Astute Professional	01
04	Team Player	08	25	Conscientious	01
05	Professionalism	05	26	Diplomatic Approach	01
06	Enthusiastic	04	27	Good Understanding	01
07	Proactive	04	28	High Caliber	01
08	Accept Challenges	03	29	Innovative	01
09	Energetic	03	30	Leadership qualities	01
10	Highly Committed	03	31	Loyalty	01
11	A proven track records in the Field of HRM	02	32	Meticulous	01
12	Effective	02	33	Nurture	01
13	Integrity	02	34	Out-going Personality	01
14	Optimistic	02	35	Self-Starter	01
15	Passion for Achieving Excellence	02	36	Strive for Continuous Improvements at All Times	01
16	Positive Attitudes	02	37	Talented	01
17	Young Achiever	02	38	Tireless	01
18	A Natural Flair to engage with People at All Levels	01	39	Uncompromising	01
19	A Strong Generalized Background	01	40	Willingness to Work Outside Regular Hours	01
20	All-Rounder	01	41	Work Independently	01
21	Ambitious	01			

### 4. Human Resource Manager (Manager-HRM)

**Table: 5 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics HR Manager**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	141	50	Self-Driven Personality	06
02	Highly Professional	107	51	Self-Starter	06
03	Strong Team Player/Team Spirit	106	52	An Abundance of Commonsense	05
04	Self-Motivated	77	53	Diligent	05
05	Results Oriented/Target Oriented	73	54	Honesty	05
06	Suitably/Highly Qualified	49	55	Positive Demeanour	05
07	Strong Leadership Qualities	48	56	Versatile	05
08	Committed/unwavering	42	57	Working Independently	05

	commitment				
09	Prepared to Take Challenges	<b>41</b>	58	Good Organizer	<b>04</b>
10	Energetic	<b>39</b>	59	Incessant Desire	<b>04</b>
11	Strong/Highly Motivated/Motivator	<b>37</b>	60	Ongoing Learning & Self Development	<b>04</b>
12	Capable and Competent	<b>31</b>	61	Resourceful	<b>04</b>
13	Excellent Educational /Academic Record	<b>30</b>	62	Strategic Thinker	<b>04</b>
14	Proven/Sound Track Record	<b>26</b>	63	Trustworthiness	<b>04</b>
15	Proactive	<b>22</b>	64	Empathetic	<b>03</b>
16	Dedicated	<b>21</b>	65	Good Sense of Judgment	<b>03</b>
17	Innovative	<b>21</b>	66	Good Understanding	<b>03</b>
18	Self-Confidence	<b>21</b>	67	Highly Multi-Disciplined	<b>03</b>
19	Young	<b>21</b>	68	Inspiration	<b>03</b>
20	A Positive Attitude/Mindset	<b>20</b>	69	Intellect	<b>03</b>
21	Highly/ Best Talented	<b>19</b>	70	Loyalty	<b>03</b>
22	Initiative	<b>19</b>	71	Practical	<b>03</b>
23	Ambitious Individual	<b>17</b>	72	Service Oriented	<b>03</b>
24	Passion	<b>17</b>	73	An Individual of Good Character	<b>02</b>
25	Smart and physical stamina	<b>17</b>	74	Diplomatic	<b>02</b>
26	Strong/Sturdy Personality	<b>17</b>	75	Ethical Commitment	<b>02</b>
27	High Caliber	<b>15</b>	76	Forceful Player	<b>02</b>
28	Relentless Drive/Drive	<b>15</b>	77	Foresight Qualities	<b>02</b>
29	Strive for Achievement	<b>14</b>	78	Forward Thinking	<b>02</b>
30	Matured	<b>13</b>	79	Goal Oriented	<b>02</b>
31	Work Under Pressure	<b>12</b>	80	Go-Getter Attitude	<b>02</b>
32	Accept Responsibilities	<b>12</b>	81	Out of Box Professional Attitudes	<b>02</b>
33	Be Flexible	<b>11</b>	82	Strong Attitude	<b>02</b>
34	Excellent	<b>11</b>	83	Willing to Work Long Hours	<b>02</b>
35	High Sense of Enthusiasm	<b>11</b>	84	Balanced Approach	<b>01</b>
36	Integrity	<b>11</b>	85	Best in the Field	<b>01</b>
37	Pleasing Personality	<b>11</b>	86	Can do Attitude	<b>01</b>
38	Outgoing Personality	<b>10</b>	87	Commercially minded	<b>01</b>
39	Communicator	<b>09</b>	88	Disciplined	<b>01</b>
40	Confidentiality	<b>09</b>	89	Flare for Public Relations	<b>01</b>
41	Market Intelligence/Business Acumen	<b>08</b>	90	Focused Approach	<b>01</b>
42	Meaningful Contributor	<b>08</b>	91	Good Physical condition	<b>01</b>
43	Outstanding/Exceptional	<b>08</b>	92	Humility	<b>01</b>
44	People Oriented/People Friendly	<b>07</b>	93	Look ahead	<b>01</b>
45	Career Minded	<b>06</b>	94	Meticulous	<b>01</b>
46	Creative	<b>06</b>	95	Open Minded	<b>01</b>
47	Determination	<b>06</b>	96	Resilient	<b>01</b>
48	Hardworking	<b>06</b>	97	Sincerity	<b>01</b>
49	Independent Thinker	<b>06</b>	98	Virtue	<b>01</b>

**5. Human Resource Executive (HR Executive)****Table: 6 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics and HR Executive**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	141	42	Honesty	05
02	Team Player/Oriented/Team Spirit	102	43	Confidentiality	04
03	Self Motivated	70	44	Continuous Improvement All the Time	04
04	Young	56	45	Ethical Minded	04
05	Professionally Qualified	55	46	Excellent	04
06	Results /Target Oriented	54	47	Good Understanding	04
07	Energetic	41	48	Methodical, Systematic & Organised	04
08	Accepting Challenges	32	49	People Oriented	04
09	Committed	32	50	Vibrant	04
10	Enthusiasm	28	51	Willing to Work Highly Competitive Environment	04
11	Leadership Qualities	27	52	Analytical Mind	03
12	Dedicated	25	53	Communicator	03
13	Highly Motivated	19	54	Contributor	03
14	Drive/Self Driven	18	55	Diplomatic	03
15	Highly Talented	18	56	Exceptional	03
16	Positive Minded/Attitudes	18	57	Positive Personality	03
17	Right Academic Background	18	58	Proper Attitude for Work	03
18	Initiative	17	59	Quick & Willing Learner	03
19	Suitably Qualified	16	60	Self Managed	03
20	Achievement Oriented	15	61	All-rounder	02
21	Innovative	15	62	Client Pleaser	02
22	High Caliber	12	63	Development Oriented	02
23	Passion	12	64	Empathy	02
24	Proactive	12	65	Flexible	02
25	Smart	12	66	Inspiration	02
26	Confident/Self-Confident	11	67	Look Forward	02
27	Competent	10	68	Personal Discipline	02
28	Hard-Working	10	69	Positive Interpersonal Relations	02
29	Outgoing Personality/Person	10	70	Proven Record in Extra Curricular Activities	02
30	Responsible	08	71	Strategic Thinkers	02
31	Best Attitudes	07	72	Assertive	01
32	Capable	07	73	Career Minded	01
33	Career Oriented/Minded	06	74	Creative	01
34	Go Getters Attitude	06	75	Customer Orientation	01
35	Integrity	06	76	Dare to Do Spirit	01
36	Intelligent	06	77	Determination	01
37	Mature	06	78	Emotional Resilience	01
38	Pleasing Personality	06	79	Have a Can Do Attitudes	01
39	Willing to Work Long Hours	06	80	Self-starter	01



40	Working Independently	06	81	Swift	01
41	Ambitious	05			

## 6. Human Resource Officer (HR Officer)

**Table: 7 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics and HR Officer**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Team Player/Oriented/Team Spirit	27	26	Initiative	03
02	Dynamic	30	27	Intelligent	03
03	Highly Qualified	20	28	Proactive	03
04	Self Motivated	17	29	Diplomacy	02
05	Results Oriented	13	30	Efficient	02
06	Work with minimum supervision	11	31	Highly Multidisciplined	02
07	Energetic	10	32	Leadership Qualities	02
08	Committed	09	33	Willing to Help	02
09	Flexible	08	34	Work Independently	02
10	Innovative	08	35	Career Oriented/Minded	01
11	Young	08	36	Challenge Taker	01
12	Mature Person	07	37	Confident	01
13	Ambitious	06	38	Confidentiality	01
14	Creative	06	39	Enthusiastic	01
15	Work under Pressure	06	40	Go-getter	01
16	Capable and competent	05	41	Integrity	01
17	Dedicated	05	42	Passion	01
18	Higher Caliber	05	43	Patient	01
19	Highly Motivated	05	44	Positive Attitude	01
20	Friendly and People Oriented	04	45	Reliable	01
21	In Response to Changing Needs	04	46	Self Managed	01
22	Pleasing Personality	04	47	Sense of Self Achievement	01
23	Tact	04	48	Sense of Self Development	01
24	Drive/Self Driven	03	49	Trustworthy	01
25	Honest	03	50	Unencumbered	01

## 7. Training Manager

**Table: 8 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics/Attributes and Training Manager**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	26	17	Creative	02
02	Highly Motivated	13	18	Dedicated	02
03	Results Oriented	10	19	High Caliber	02
04	Self Motivated	08	20	Initiative	02
05	Team Player/Oriented/Team Spirit	08	21	Capable	01
06	Innovative	07	22	Committed	01
07	Talented	06	23	Focused	01
08	Professionally qualified	05	24	Good Leader	01

09	Sober and Mature Person	05	25	Hard working	01
10	Drive/Self Driven	04	26	Passion	01
11	Excellent	04	27	People Oriented	01
12	Proactive	04	28	Physically Fit	01
13	Suitably Qualified	04	29	Service Oriented	01
14	Energetic	03	30	Strictly Disciplinarian	01
15	Self-Starter	03	31	Strong Personality	01
16	Change Agent	02	32	Trustworthy Person	01

## 8. Recruitment Manager

**Table: 9 Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics/Attributes and Recruitment Manager**

#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count	#	Qualities/Characteristics	Count
01	Dynamic	10	09	Good understanding of human relations	02
02	Team player	06	10	Outgoing personality	02
03	Energetic individual	05	11	Well/Highly organized	02
04	Self-motivated	04	12	Empathetic	01
05	Talented	04	13	Positive Minded	01
06	High Caliber	03	14	Proactive	01
07	Professionally qualified	03	15	Trustworthy Personality	01
08	Good Communicator	02			

## Discussion

Full list of personal qualities/characteristics expected by the Sri Lankan organizations from HR professionals was presented under the results and findings. The list contains almost each item in terms of quality that had been required by the organizations under the study. In this context two types of discussions were attempted. First one is identification of top five personal qualities/characteristics expected by the organizations regarding each HRM job and second one is overall discussion with regard to certain types or key categories of key personal qualities/characteristics expected by the organizations. The following Exhibit and Figure 1 relate to the first attempt and Figure 2 and the Appendix relate to the second attempt.

### Exhibit: 1 Top Five Personal Qualities/Characteristics expected by the Organizations Regarding each HRM Job

#	HRM Job	#	Top Five personal qualities/characteristics/attributes
<b>01</b>	<b>Director-HR/HRM</b> <i>Number of content identified - 39</i>	01	A Real Team Player/Team Oriented
		02	Dynamic
		03	High Level of Professionalism
		04	Leadership qualities
		05	Self-Motivated
<b>02</b>	<b>Group HR Manager</b> <i>Number of content identified -29</i>	01	Dynamic
		02	Results Oriented
		03	Professionally Qualified
		04	Team player
		05	Drive
<b>03</b>	<b>Head of HR</b> <i>Number of content identified -41</i>	01	Dynamic
		02	Results Oriented

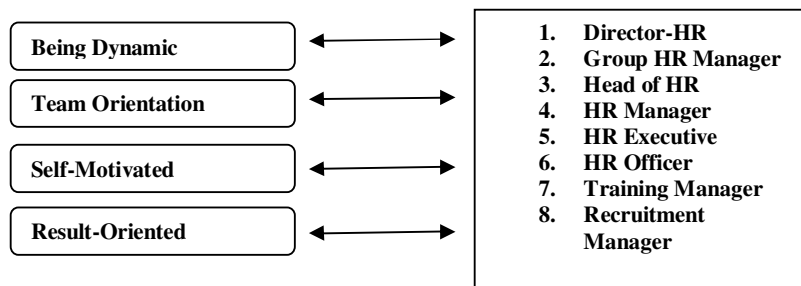
		03	Self-Motivated
		04	Team Player
		05	Professionalism
<b>04</b>	<b>HR Manager</b>	01	Dynamic
	<i>Number of content identified -98</i>	02	Highly professional
		03	Strong Team Player/Team Spirit
		04	Self-Motivated
		05	Results Oriented/Target Oriented
<b>05</b>	<b>HR Executive</b>	01	Dynamic
	<i>Number of content identified -81</i>	02	Team Player/Oriented/Team Spirit
		03	Self Motivated
		04	Young
		05	Professionally Qualified
<b>06</b>	<b>HR Officer</b>	01	Team Player/ Oriented/Team Spirit
	<i>Number of content identified -50</i>	02	Dynamic
		03	Highly Qualified
		04	Self Motivated
		05	Results Oriented
<b>07</b>	<b>Training Manager</b>	01	Dynamic
	<i>Number of content identified -32</i>	02	Highly Motivated
		03	Results Oriented
		04	Self Motivated
		05	Team Player/ Team Player/Oriented/Team Spirit
<b>08</b>	<b>Recruitment Manager</b>	01	Dynamic
	<i>Number of content identified -15</i>	02	Team player
		03	Energetic individual
		04	Self motivated
		05	Talented

Here, it is possible to understand that there were very much similarities regarding certain personal qualities of selected HRM jobs. *Dynamic*, *team player/oriented/team spirit*, *motivated/self-motivated*, and *results oriented* were commonly and very frequently stated /expected four personal qualities by the organizations irrespective of different HRM jobs in Sri Lanka. The label '**common personal qualities**' could be given to these four identified qualities.

**Dynamic** means unstable, changing, not being static. This quality is considered as one of the most important common qualities for all the key HRM jobs. It may be due to the reason that a human resource professional has to face various different situations which require new way of thinking and thinking out of the box rather than limiting to one framework of looking at problems, and being closed minded with pre-determined conclusions. **Team orientation** means state of being directed as a team. Human resource professional (specially head of HR department) has to work as a member of the team that consists of other heads (line and staff) who are committed to a common purpose, i.e. achieving strategic needs (vision, mission and strategic goals) of the organization. In addition HR professionals are supposed to coordinate HR related works with other managers in the organization and they have to team up themselves within the HR department.

**Self-motivated** means to generate a force that causes the person (in this context HR professional) to engage in a particular behavior (in this context to perform relevant HR duties and responsibilities) rather than other behaviors. HR professional is supposed to have decision of performing relevant duties and responsibilities seriously; decision of putting much effort into job performance; and decision of spending hours and hours to keep working at job performance. **Results oriented** means state of being directed as a person of results rather than a person of traits and behaviors. One may utilize his/her traits and engage in right behaviors but may not produce right outputs/results (mainly quality and quantity of work). As results are the most important at the final analysis of achieving strategic needs of the organization, HR professionals are supposed to produce right or expected results which will create value to realization of strategic goals of the organization. Figure 1 shows linkage between common personal qualities and key HRM jobs.

**Figure: 1 Linkage between Common Personal Qualities and Key HRM Jobs**



**Figure: 2 Key Categories of Personal Qualities/Characteristics expected by the Organizations to Perform HRM Jobs in Sri Lanka**

<b>Attitude Component</b>	<b>Personality Component</b>	<b>Good Character (Virtue) Component</b>
<b>Team Component</b>	<b>Professional Component</b>	<b>Business Component</b>
<b>People Component</b>	<b>Key Categories of Personal Qualities Expected by the Organizations to Perform HRM Jobs</b>	<b>Performance Component</b>
<b>Physical Character related Component</b>	<b>Leadership Traits</b>	<b>HR/HRM related Component</b>

The above Figure was developed after investigating 176 (after eliminating overlapping) personal qualities/characteristics identified from this exploratory study. Regarding personal qualities/characteristics of HRM professionals Bergman (1992), Kaufman (1994), Sherman et

al (1998), Sanghi (2004), Deb (2006) and Opatha (2007 and 2009) have emphasized that many types of personal qualities/characteristics are necessary for HRM professionals. Individually 176 (overall/summary) personal qualities/characteristics were identified from the findings of this study and further eleven (11) key categories of personal qualities needed to perform HRM jobs were identified from those 176 individual personal qualities through classification. In general, results of this study were almost similar with observations of the above mentioned authors and however this study provides a more comprehensive view about personal qualities/characteristics needed for HR professionals, especially in the Sri Lankan context.

### **Conclusion**

Content analysis of the relevant 1429 newspaper recruitment advertisements revealed 176 personal qualities expected by Sri Lankan organizations for 08 key HRM jobs. There are 39 personal qualities related to the post of HR Director, 29 personal qualities related to the Group HR Manager, 41 personal qualities related to Head of HRM, 98 personal qualities related to the HR Manager, 81 personal qualities related to the HR Executive, 50 personal qualities related to the HR Officer, 32 personal qualities related to the Training Manager, and 15 personal qualities related to the post of Recruitment Manager. The most important five personal qualities for each key HRM job have been presented. Further investigation resulted in four common personal qualities which are highly demanded by the organizations under study and they include being dynamic, team orientation, self-motivated and result-oriented. 11 key categories of personal qualities were identified through classification and they include attitude, personality, good character (virtue), team, professional, business, people, performance, physical character, leadership, and HRM related component.

Results of the study have direct implications on all stakeholders and HRM professionals in developing good professionalism among current HR professionals in Sri Lanka and prospective personnel who wish to establish a career in HRM. Senior university teachers need to take into account of these results in order to develop a good curriculum of HRM and teachers and trainers who are directly involved in teaching and training individuals today to make them future successful professionals in HRM should develop learning materials and applications (cases, critical incidents, skill builders etc.) relating to the identified key categories and common personal qualities. Those who currently seek employment opportunities in the field of HRM need to get prepared for enhancing those personal qualities so as to increase the likelihood of getting selected for the relevant job vacancies.

The data used in this study were secondary data and therefore avenues for further investigation by collecting primary data are possible. Another interesting avenue for future research is to carry out similar studies in other fields of business management including marketing, finance, operation, business information technology etc.

### **References**

- Bergman, T. (1992), "Preparing to Enter and Succeed in Human Resource Management," SAM Advanced Management Journal (Winter 1992):37. [Carrell, M. R, Elbert, N.F and Hatfield, R.D (1995), *HRM Global Strategies for Managing a Diverse Workforce*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed, New Jersey: Prentice Hall].
- Deb, T. (2006), *Strategic Approach to Human Resource Management*, Concept, Tools and Application, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.

- Kaufman, B.E. (1994), What companies want from HR graduates, HRMagazine, September, 84-86. [Kleiman, L. S (1997), *Human Resource Management: A Tool for Competitive Advantage*, New York: West Publishing Company].
- Opatha, H.H.D.N.P. (2007), Competencies as Human Assets: A Perspective, *Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp.1-13.
- Opatha, H.H.D.N.P. (2009), *Human Resource Management: Personnel*, Colombo: Department of HRM, University of Jayewardenepura.
- Phillips, J.M. and Gully, S.M. (2009), *Strategic Staffing*, New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Sanghi, S. (2004), *The Handbook of Competency Mapping, Understanding, Designing and Implementing Competency Models in Organizations*, New Delhi: Response Books (A division of Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd).
- Schuler, R.S. and Youngblood, S.A. (1986), *Effective Personnel Management* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: West Publishing Company.
- Sherman, A., Bohlander, G. and Snell, S. (1998), *Managing Human Resources*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed, Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College Publishing.

### **The Appendix: Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics expected/needed to perform HRM Jobs**

#### **# Types of Personal Qualities/Characteristics**

##### **01. Attitude Related**

- 1.1 Positive Attitude/Mindset
- 1.2 Best Attitudes
- 1.3 Dare to Do Spirit
- 1.4 Go-Getter Attitude
- 1.5 Have a Can Do Attitude
- 1.6 Open Minded
- 1.7 Optimistic
- 1.8 Out of Box Professional Attitudes
- 1.9 Proper Attitude for Work
- 1.10 Strong Attitude

##### **02. Personality Related**

- 2.1 Outgoing Personality
- 2.2 Trustworthy Personality
- 2.3 Strong Personality
- 2.4 Self-Driven Personality
- 2.5 Sturdy Personality
- 2.6 Pleasing Personality
- 2.7 Positive Personality
- 2.8 Pleasant Personality
- 2.9 Assertive

##### **03. Good Character (Virtue) Related**

- 3.1 An Individual of Good Character
- 3.2 Good Sense of Judgment
- 3.3 Honesty/ Honest
- 3.4 Humility
- 3.5 Loyalty
- 3.6 Sincerity
- 3.7 Disciplined
- 3.8 Reliable
- 3.9 Patient

**04. Team Related**

- 4.1 A Real Team Player
- 4.2 Team Oriented
- 4.3 Team Sprit

**05. Professional Related**

- 5.1 Career Oriented/Minded
- 5.2 Confidentiality
- 5.3 High Level of Professionalism/ Professionalism
- 5.4 Professional Approach
- 5.5 Professionally qualified

**06. Business Related**

- 6.1 Client Pleaser
- 6.2 Commercially Astute Professional
- 6.3 Commercially minded
- 6.4 Customer Oriented
- 6.5 Market Intelligence
- 6.6 Service Oriented

**07. People Related**

- 7.1 A Natural Flair to engage with People at All Levels
- 7.2 An Abundance of Commonsense
- 7.3 Diplomatic Approach/ Diplomacy/ Diplomatic
- 7.4 Empathy/ Empathetic
- 7.5 Flare for Public Relations
- 7.6 Flexible
- 7.7 Friendly/ People Friendly
- 7.8 Good communicator
- 7.9 Good understanding of human relations
- 7.10 Nurture
- 7.11 People Oriented
- 7.12 Positive Interpersonal Relations
- 7.13 Sense of Humour
- 7.14 Tact
- 7.15 Willing to Help

**08. Performance Related**

- 8.1 A Strong believer of open culture
- 8.2 Achiever/ Achievement Oriented
- 8.3 All-Rounder
- 8.4 Capable
- 8.5 Commitment/ Highly Committed/ Committed/unwavering commitment
- 8.6 Committed to dead line
- 8.7 Competent
- 8.8 Conscientious
- 8.9 Diligent
- 8.10 Effective
- 8.11 Efficient
- 8.12 Excellent
- 8.13 Excellent Educational /Academic Record
- 8.14 Exceptional
- 8.15 Goal Oriented

- 8.16 Hard-Working
- 8.17 High Caliber
- 8.18 Highly Talented/Best Talented
- 8.19 Hungry for Success
- 8.20 Incessant Desire
- 8.21 Intelligent
- 8.22 Meaningful Contributor/ Contributor
- 8.23 Meticulous
- 8.24 Ongoing Learning & Self Development
- 8.25 Organizer/ Good Organizer/ Methodical, Systematic & Organised
- 8.26 Outstanding
- 8.27 Passion for Achieving Excellence
- 8.28 Proven Record in Extra Curricular Activities
- 8.29 Proven/Sound Track Record
- 8.30 Quick & Willing Learner
- 8.31 Result Oriented
- 8.32 Self Managed
- 8.33 Sense of Self Achievement
- 8.34 Sense of Self Development
- 8.35 Strive for Achievement
- 8.36 Strive for Continuous Improvements at all Times
- 8.37 Swift
- 8.38 Target Oriented
- 8.39 Talented
- 8.40 Versatile
- 8.41 Vibrant
- 8.42 Uncompromising
- 8.43 Willing to Put in Efforts Untiringly/ Tireless
- 8.44 Willing to Work in a Highly Competitive Environment
- 8.45 Willing to Work Long Hours/outside regular hours
- 8.46 Work Independently (Work with minimum supervision)
- 8.47 Work under Pressure

**09. Physical Appearance Related**

- 9.1 Young
- 9.2 Smart and Physical stamina
- 9.3 Physically Fit
- 9.4 Good Physical condition

**10. Leadership Traits/ Qualities Related**

- 10.1 A self-starter
- 10.2 A Strong Communicator/ Communicator
- 10.3 A Strong Intrinsic Motivation
- 10.4 Adaptable
- 10.5 Ambitious
- 10.6 Analytical Minded
- 10.7 Balanced Approach
- 10.8 Challenging/ Accepting Challenges/ Prepared to Take Challenges
- 10.9 Conceptual thinking
- 10.10 Creative
- 10.11 Dedicated
- 10.12 Determination
- 10.13 Development Oriented
- 10.14 Drive



- 10.15 Drive/Self Driven
- 10.16 Dynamic
- 10.17 Emotional Resilience
- 10.18 Energetic
- 10.19 Enthusiastic/ High Level of Enthusiasm/ High Sense of Enthusiasm/ Enthusiasm
- 10.20 Focused/ Focused Approach
- 10.21 Foresight Qualities
- 10.22 Forward Thinking
- 10.23 Good Leader
- 10.24 Good Decision maker
- 10.25 Highly motivated
- 10.26 Independent
- 10.27 Independent Thinker
- 10.28 Initiative
- 10.29 Innovative
- 10.30 Inspiration
- 10.31 Mature / Matured
- 10.32 Emotional Balance
- 10.33 Motivator/ A Strong Motivator/ Strong/Highly Motivated/Motivator
- 10.34 Negotiator
- 10.35 Passion/ Passionate
- 10.36 Positive Demeanour
- 10.37 Practical
- 10.38 Proactive
- 10.39 Problem Solver
- 10.40 Relentless Drive/Drive
- 10.41 Resourceful/ Resourcefulness
- 10.42 Response to Changing Needs
- 10.43 Responsible/ Accept Responsibilities
- 10.44 Self-Confidence
- 10.45 Self-Motivated
- 10.46 Strategic Thinker

**11. HRM Related**

- 11.1 A proven track records in the Field of HRM
- 11.2 A Strong Generalized HRM Background
- 11.3 One of the Best in the Field
- 11.4 Forceful Player in the Field
- 11.5 Right Academic Background (HRM)
- 11.6 Suitably Qualified (HRM)

The qualities identified below define the key strengths of a good Human Resources professional. Knowledge and Expertise in Human Resources. You must have a core foundation in the many functions of Human Resources. Your personal opinion does not count—these types of decisions must be based solely on the facts presented. Having excellent problem-solving skills is a must, and you need to apply them in numerous situations. Hello Sally, Communication is key, and you are right it is not easy. You need to be able to read the individual, be sensitive to their needs, and diplomatic in your responses. So many people are guilty of saying they listen, but they don't hear what is being said. The Sri Lankan Journal of HRM is a refereed journal published annually by the Department of HRM. It is the journal of university that devoted to the promotion of systematic and scientific research studies of the theory and practice of human resource management, particularly in Sri Lanka. Editorial Team : ( <http://journals.sjp.ac.lk/index.php/sljhrm/about/editorialTeam> ) ISSN: 1800-3036. 2012, Vol. 3, No. 1. 1. An Exploratory Study on the Personal Qualities/Characteristics expected by the Organisations for Key HRM jobs in Sri Lanka (<http://journals.sjp.ac.lk/index.php/sljhrm/article/view/154/62>) Anton Arulrajah, H.H.D.N.P. Opatha. 4. If you are want to progress professionally or get the job of your dreams your need these 10 personal qualities and skills employers love. So, apart from the basic professional skills that you need to possess - communication, teamwork, decision making and organisation - there are some other more specific personal attributes that you have to develop to have a successful career. This article provides a list of qualities you every employer loves. Let's go through it. 1. Stress Tolerance. The ability to manage stress effectively is central to workplace success and employers are always in favour of people who can handle any demand and work well under pressure.