

Social Identity and Workplace Motivation: A Sri Lankan Case Study

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Abstract

Analyzing case study data of business practices of award winning small business owner-managers in Sri Lanka, the author contends that both personal and social identities are an equally important basis of motivation for the research participants and their employees. In the Sri Lankan context, both personal and social identities provide a sense of pride, involvement, stability, quality consciousness and perfection. Once the social identity becomes the group identity, it functions as a driver of competition, thus encouraging innovation and creativity that lead to achieving excellence in their businesses. The findings have theoretical implications as they present another layer of social identity which can be used for future research and expansion of social identity theory. Specifically, Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners in developing countries can use this much needed information to develop and maintain a culture of innovation and HRD practices appropriate to their particular culture and organization.

Dr. Gertrude Ira. Hewapathirana has over 15 years of executive experience in the areas of HRD, marketing and strategic planning in her home country of Sri Lanka. She also completed an MBA from the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM). She joined the University of Minnesota as a Fulbright Scholar and a Humphrey Fellow. While at the University of Minnesota, Gertrude received an MSc in Scientific and Technical Communication, and an MA in Comparative International Development Education.