

## Analysis of the use of public relations practices in the non formal education units of the provincial education departments

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The study reviews the use of Public Relations (PR) practices in the non formal education units by the provincial departments of education. The study was carried out in 2004 focusing the non formal education unit, in the three districts of Galle, Matara and Hambantota belonging to the Southern province department of education. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the PR practices used by the provincial education department for the non-formal education, to study the strengths and weaknesses of the PR practices and to make observations and suggest the ways of improving the existing PR practices used by the provincial education department for non formal education.

Employees belonging to the non-formal education unit of the education department of Southern province were interviewed for data. Seventy two employees, selected through stratified random sampling participated in the survey. Excel and SPSS computer packages along with tabular presentations were employed in data analysis.

The practice of PR activities at present with regard to the non formal education units was identified and the employee perception on the effectiveness of same was sought. The authors have examined the background information of the respondents, respondents' roles in the organizational hierarchy, the existing channels of communication within and outside the organisation and the respondents' perception on PR practices. These were also tested for major relationships with the respondents' characteristics. Relationships were sought with respect to the respondents' perceived preference and usefulness of PR practices and their perceived performances at present. The respondents' perception on the contribution of major factors, in the successful practice of PR activities was noted.

The results of this study highlighted the importance of a proper PR strategy and resulting image building for improved performances of the non formal education units at provincial levels. The study further analysed the impact of employee perceptions on PR practices for successful planning and implementation of a PR strategy and the major factors underlying the success of same.

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