

# A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF JANITORIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS IN SRI LANKAN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: A BILATERAL PERSPECTIVE

RAJAPAKSHA, P.M.N.N., RAJINI, P.A.D. AND KARUNARATHNA, A.S.W.\*

University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

\*Correspondence E-mail: [sandunik@uom.lk](mailto:sandunik@uom.lk)

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**Abstract.** An outsourcing arrangement starts with a contractual relationship between a client and a service provider, and therefore, the management of janitorial service contracts poses different issues from both client and provider perspectives. However, literature or empirical evidence does not provide a clear picture of such issues or of managing them from this bilateral perspective. Accordingly, this research aims to address the identified research gap by evaluating the current practice of janitorial service contracts and developing a framework for effective management by integrating both these viewpoints. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, conducting five cases selected from commercial buildings in Sri Lanka. According to the research findings, most common issues faced by clients are lack of skilled janitors; breach of trust; disciplinary issues; job switching; lack of technological advancements and poor documentation while the issues faced by service providers are lack of job information, intension of cost reduction; breach of trust; and lack of energetic and young janitors to be employed in clients' sites. As the findings suggested, by adhering to effective contract structures, risk-sharing mechanisms, negotiation strategies, and developing workforce, both clients and service providers will be able to improve the management of their janitorial service contracts.

**Keywords.** Outsourcing, Janitorial Contracts, Commercial Buildings Janitorial Contract Management, Bilateral Perspective

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## 1. Introduction

Outsourcing refers to the assignment of tasks and operations performed by internal personnel to external service providers (Pang et al., 2021). According to (Zhao et al., 2014), organisations cannot thrive in a competitive landscape by relying only on their own resources, and those outsourcing strategies may serve as a viable approach to confront competition. Further to the authors, outsourcing allows organisations to reduce costs, enhance services, boost staff productivity and morale, and improve the reputation of the organisations. Conflicts and issues may emerge in outsourcing contract practices due to factors such as opportunistic behaviour, quality concerns, delivery timelines, technological advancements, information deficits, and cost-reduction efforts (Lok et al., 2018). Efficient management of contractual practices is essential for addressing these challenges. Outsourcing issues can be prevented or mitigated through effective outsourcing contract processes, and effective techniques must be developed to address challenges associated with service contract procedures (Mawed, 2024; Pang et al., 2021). According to Kenyi and Barasa (2021), a well-defined contractual framework is the foundation for sustaining the relationship between client and service provider when entering into a service contract. Similarly, effective management of contract practices is vital for ensuring that the service provider fulfils the needed services throughout the contract duration (Murthy et al., 2016; Solehah Kadir et al., 2025) while the service provider is supported with a suitable environment for performing their responsibilities (Ifediora et al., 2021).

Janitorial services are among the most often outsourced functions, with the majority of organisations engaging external service providers for these tasks (Toffolutti et al., 2017). Taponen and Kauppi (2020) emphasised the absence of a standardised framework for formulating outsourcing contracts, resulting in ineffective outsourcing practices. In the context of Sri Lanka, although research has been conducted on facilities management outsourcing strategies, risks, and decision-making models (Ikediashi et al., 2012; Lok et al., 2018; Lok & Baldry, 2015; Rajini et al., 2019), a specific framework for the effective management of janitorial service contracts is lacking. Despite the increasing prevalence of outsourcing, the majority of

current research emphasises on the viewpoints of client organisations, frequently ignoring the challenges and barriers faced by service providers. The complexity of outsourcing relationships, which are dependent upon collaboration and alignment between both parties, is not adequately captured by this partial approach. In particular, there is a significant gap in research that simultaneously investigates the outsourcing relationship from the perspectives of both the service receiver and provider, particularly in the context of janitorial services in commercial settings. To address this gap, the objective of this paper is to establish a practical framework for the efficient administration of janitorial service contracts in commercial buildings in Sri Lanka. This framework will incorporate the perspectives of both clients and service providers to guarantee feasible and balanced outsourcing outputs.

The paper begins with an introduction to the study followed by a literature review on concept of outsourcing and outsourcing of support services. The paper then presents the research methodology and findings with the developed framework and the final section of the paper presents the conclusion of this research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION TO OUTSOURCING**

The notion of outsourcing originates from the American phrase "outside resourcing," which refers to acquiring resources outside (Karakolias, 2024; Troaca & Bodislav, 2012). This concept originated and gained prominence in the 1980s and was first seen as the delegation of non-core tasks via subcontracting or the procurement of products and services from an external partner (outsourcer) for a client (outsourcee) (Bilan et al., 2017). Considering the definition of outsourcing, Ishizaka et al. (2019) analysed the literature from 1994 to 2020 and reached a thorough conclusion: "Outsourcing is a business agreement, either domestic and/or international (known as offshoring), and strategic management initiative for gaining a competitive advantage of a firm by contracting out their existing internal and/or external non-value added functions, and/or value-added functions, and/or core competencies to competent supplier(s) to produce products and/or services efficiently and effectively for the outsourcing firm." (Ishizaka et al., 2019), p. 1)

Outsourcing provides several benefits, making it a smart and economical business choice. It aids in cost reduction, enhances financial stability, and diminishes employee-related expenditures (Charles & Benson Ochieng, 2023). By delegating non-core functions to specialised service providers, outsourcing allows organisations to concentrate on their primary business and improve competencies. It also provides access to vendor knowledge, enhancing service quality, productivity, and operational effectiveness (Mykytyuk et al., 2021; Somjai & Program, 2017; Tayauova, 2012). Moreover, it enhances flexibility, promotes innovation, and facilitates risk transfer to service providers. Organisations benefit from right sizing their workforce, reducing space requirements, and improving customer service, while outsourcing also eliminates the need for major capital investments and facilitates competitive advantage by allowing firms to focus on core business operations (Rajini and Kaluarachchi., 2019; Somjai & Program, 2017).

### **2.2 OUTSOURCING OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

As Kamanga and Ismail (2016) mentioned, outsourcing key services adversely impacts organisational performance, whilst exporting non-essential tasks positively influences corporate performance. Consequently, as noted by Yeboah (2013), businesses predominantly choose outsourcing for non-core operations. Thus, substituting internal services with an external entity to execute one or more operations of the organisation is fundamentally termed as services outsourcing (Taponen & Kauppi, 2020). Organisations outsourcing administrative functions anticipate enhanced efficiency while using less internal resources (Zitkiene & Dude, 2018).

Today, most of the organisations outsource all services that may be executed by other entities, including catering, cleaning, business processes, and information technology (Perunović et al., 2012). The most prevalent outsourced services include supportive services such as electricity, fire detection and protection, air conditioning, drainage, gas supply, waste disposal systems, access and cleaning, maintenance and troubleshooting of building automation systems, vertical transportation systems and lightning protection (Ali et al., 2025; Pahirathan, 2017; Taponen & Kauppi, 2020). Further as Ifediora et al. (2021) indicated, security, laundry, waste disposal, and building fabric maintenance are predominantly outsourced services, while cleaning, catering, furniture, and building service maintenance exhibit an intermediate level of outsourcing. Conversely, energy optimisation, copying, printing, space management, and postal services are the least outsourced services. Janitorial services, which encompass routine cleaning and facility upkeep, are the most common and frequently outsourced to specialized providers to ensure cost efficiency and maintain high standards of hygiene (Solehah Kadir et al., 2025). (Karakolias, 2024) highlighted that this approach allows organizations to focus on their core activities while leveraging the expertise of specialized janitorial service providers to maintain a clean and efficient working environment.

### 2.3 MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE CONTRACTS

In a service contract context, there will inevitably be conflicts and issues that would arise between the supplier and client. Mainly these issues arise due to the miscommunication of terms of the contracts to the supplier. (Hietanen-Kunwald & Haapio, 2021). Accordingly, these issues arise depending on the nature of the business and the terms included in the contract. When many business and legal terms are involved in a contract, and not adequately communicated, they may lead to arise many issues of service contract management (Zou et al., 2019). A fundamental reason for these issues between the vendor and the client is related to the objectives of each party of the outsourcing contract. As discussed by Andersson et al. (2019), the profit motives of both firms are the same, but they have different perspectives on that. The vendor is trying to maximize the profits from the client and the client is trying to maximize the benefits while reducing the costs. Thus, the conflicts arise.

The management of service contract practices includes not only contract documentation but also many management elements, including relationship management, performance management, knowledge management, and contract management (Kenyi & Barasa, 2021). Especially, the service contracts and their associated elements have a significant role in strengthening the relationship between the parties involved (Zou et al., 2019). A contract is established between two parties when they mutually accept the drafted terms and conditions, whether orally, in writing, or via their presence, and commit to honouring those terms (Klungseth & Blakstad, 2016). Taponen and Kauppi (2020) claimed that the outsourcing process, pertinent to the contextual research, begins when the owner and the service provider reach an agreement and undertake activities to execute the necessary tasks to provide the contracted service. When these contracts are fulfilled and services are performed, the contract is said to be fulfilled. Thus, effective management of contracts involves not only ensuring the fulfillment of services but also proactively overseeing contract elements to enhance collaboration, drive continuous improvement, and achieve long-term value for all parties involved (Bilan et al., 2017).

Klungseth and Blakstad (2016) highlighted janitorial services as secondary yet vital to core business models, integrating processes to enhance organisational effectiveness. Janitorial contracts, distinct from traditional ones, involve three parties: clients, service providers, and janitors, with janitors playing a critical role in service delivery at the client's site, yet employed by the service-providing organisation (Benjamin et al., 2015; Salerno et al., 2012). The rise in outsourcing janitorial services, driven by cost-saving strategies, has increased their importance, especially in large organisations (Knotter, 2017). However, these contracts face unique

challenges, including labour-intensive work, physical injuries, and conflicts between parties (Salerno et al., 2012). High switching costs, health hazards, and unexpected client-related costs further complicate these contracts (Toffolutti et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2014). Strategies to mitigate issues include joint responsibility, reducing paperwork, and avoiding frequent staff switching (Murthy et al., 2016).

Effective management of service contracts is crucial in ensuring seamless service delivery and maintaining strong relationships between parties involved (Klungseth & Blakstad, 2016). In the case of janitorial service contracts, proper management practices help address challenges such as labour-intensive work, health hazards, and high switching costs (Salerno et al., 2012). By fostering collaboration between clients, service providers, and janitors, organisations can enhance service efficiency while minimising conflicts (Toffolutti et al., 2017). Implementing structured performance monitoring, clear communication, and fair compensation strategies can further improve contract fulfilment. As outsourcing continues to grow, adopting robust management frameworks will be essential in optimising service outcomes and ensuring long-term contract sustainability. These insights highlight the need for effective management frameworks in janitorial service contracts.

#### 2.4 MANAGERIAL CHALLENGES IN SERVICE OUTSOURCING

Although successful outsourcing depends on efficient service contract administration, several managerial issues often arise that might lower operational effectiveness and long-term relationships. A primary concern is the discrepancy in objectives between service providers and clients. While both parties seek financial gains, their perspectives often clash; clients focus on cost reduction, whereas vendors aim to increase profit margins (Andersson et al., 2019). This discrepancy may lead to conflict and distrust, especially when contracts fail to clearly outline methods to resolve conflicts or adjust to operational changes. Static contracts that remain unchanged to accommodate changing business requirements may lead to inefficiencies and disputes (Zou et al., 2019). Lack of communication causes situations to be significantly more challenging since conflicting interpretations of performance standards or service expectations often result in dissatisfaction and disagreements (Hietanen-Kunwald & Haapio, 2021). Further to the authors, maintaining service quality and ensuring accountability has become challenging in the absence of regular and structured communication between the parties.

In terms of operation, outsourcing may lead to issues with knowledge transfer, service continuity, and staff management. The separation of client organisations, service providers, and on-site janitors, for example, might result in discrepancies in responsibility and coordination in cleaning service (Benjamin et al., 2015; Salerno et al., 2012). These challenges are made worse by high staff turnover and uneven training, which results in variable service quality along with additional work for client-side managers in terms of monitoring. Furthermore, companies may lose internal competencies as a result of relying on outside sources, which makes them liable to vendor failures or transitions (Toffolutti et al., 2017). Effective management techniques must include shared responsibility frameworks, adaptive governance mechanisms, and active performance monitoring to handle these issues successfully (Murthy et al., 2016). These methods ensure that outsourcing partnerships stay consistent with long-term organisational goals while preserving adaptability.

### 3. Methodology

The qualitative approach was adopted as the most suitable research approach, given the nature of the research problem, as this study emphasises understanding the unique dynamics of janitorial service contracts management through in-depth exploration and developing a framework for effective management of janitorial service contracts. Accordingly, five cases were

selected from commercial buildings in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to ensure a relevant and practical understanding of janitorial service outsourcing. These sites were chosen based on the scale of their janitorial operations, the availability and quality of data, the logistical ease of conducting fieldwork, and the willingness of service providers to participate and share insights. Table 1 presents a summary of the selected cases. From each case, the required data were collected from management representatives from both the client and service provider of the janitorial service contract. Accordingly, two interviews from each case were conducted, making it altogether of ten interviews for the study. Data collection was conducted through a semi-structured interview, allowing for flexibility in exploring participants' opinions and experiences, and document review related to the contracts

*Table 1: Summary of the selected cases*

<b>Case</b>	<b>Nature of the Business carried out in the building</b>
Case A	Office activities related to Software Development
Case B	Office activities related to the accounting service
Case C	Real estate activities related to the Renting the Building
Case D	The rented out to the carry out different office activities
Case E	Office activities to the carry out different Financial Services

Cross-case analysis was employed as the primary technique for data analysis, as it is well-suited for qualitative research. This method enables the identification of patterns, themes, and insights across cases, facilitating the development of conclusions and recommendations for improving janitorial service contract practices.

#### **4. Discussion of Research Findings**

Table 2 presents the profiles of the interviewees who participated in the data collection process. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues, both clients and service providers from each of the selected cases were interviewed. Person in charge of both clients and the janitorial service outsourced crew from each organisation was interviewed to acquire relevant data.

*Table 2: Interviewees Profile*

<b>Cases</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Experience in the Field</b>
Case A	A-CL	Assistant Administrative Manager	10 years
	A-SP	Accounts Manager	06 years
Case B	B-CL	Administrative Executive	06 years
	B-SP	Head of Business Development	16 years
Case C	C-CL	Facility Manager	25 years
	C-SP	Chief Executive Officer	15 years
Case D	D-CL	Executive Customer Relationship Manager	10 years
	D-SP	Head of Human Resource management	16 years
Case E	E-CL	Civil Engineer	15 years

E-SP	Admin Manager	10 years
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#### 4.1 CURRENT PRACTICE OF JANITORIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS IN SRI LANKAN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

##### 4.1.1 Drivers for Janitorial Service Outsourcing

The respondents from all five cases shared their perspectives on the drivers for outsourcing janitorial services in Sri Lanka's commercial sector. It was evident that outsourcing is becoming an increasingly popular strategy. Among the key reasons for outsourcing, the scarcity of janitors was highlighted by respondents A-CL and C-CL, while E-CL further emphasised the need for experienced janitors to improve efficiency and performance. Additionally, respondent A-CL mentioned the ease of management as a factor influencing their decision to outsource janitorial services in their building. Respondent C-CL supported this idea from the perspective of reducing material costs, while B-CL viewed it as a form of cost management, which aligns with the same concept. Not only management costs but also the reduction of overall costs was directly stated by respondents A-CL, B-CL, and E-CL as another significant driver for outsourcing. This suggests that cost reduction is a key motive for outsourcing in the commercial sector.

Respondent A-CL also identified the “focus on core business” as a significant factor. Organisations can more effectively allocate resources to their primary activities by outsourcing support services, such as janitorial functions, which is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the market. Respondent B-CL further highlighted that the decision to outsource janitorial services has been influenced by the growing number of third-party contracts. This trend necessitates that service providers maintain demanding performance standards to remain competitive. The affordability of outsourcing as an alternative was further emphasised by respondent B-CL, who emphasised the challenges associated with administering large spaces. The decision to contract out janitorial services was significantly influenced by the expertise, specialised skills, experience, and capabilities of external providers, which are frequently unavailable internally, as noted by respondents D-CL and E-CL.

##### 4.1.2 Roles and responsibilities of clients and service providers in janitorial service contracts

A janitorial service contract involves multiple stakeholders, primarily the service provider and the client, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. According to respondents A-CL and E-CL, clients are responsible for providing fundamental facilities, adequate storage for equipment and materials, and an appropriate working environment with sufficient infrastructure to ensure janitorial staff can perform their duties efficiently and comfortably. Further, respondent B-CL emphasized the significance of timely payments by the client organisations in fostering a strong, long-term relationship with the service provider. On the service provider’s side, respondent A-CL highlighted the necessity of maintaining a structured checklist for scheduled tasks and ensuring the consistent delivery of high-quality services. Respondent D-SP noted that while garbage clearance does not typically fall within their scope of work, service providers occasionally have to undertake additional responsibilities. Respondent B-CL further mentioned that subcontracting supplementary tasks, employing well-trained janitorial personnel, and enhancing cleanliness standards are essential duties. All respondents concurred that service providers must equip janitors with personal protective equipment and provide adequate training on safety, health protocols, and personal hygiene. Moreover, the respondents precisely indicated that internal staff, as occupants of the workspace, have a shared responsibility in maintaining cleanliness, thereby supporting the efficiency of janitorial service providers.

## 4.2 ISSUES PREVALENT IN JANITORIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS IN SRI LANKA

### 4.2.1 Issues Faced by Clients in Janitorial Service Contracts

The outsourcing of janitorial services, while beneficial in some aspects, presents several challenges that vary across businesses but share commonalities in their impact. A significant issue highlighted by all five respondents (A-CL, B-CL, C-CL, D-CL, and E-CL) is the lack of skilled janitors, which directly affects the performance of outsourcing practices. Respondents A-CL and D-CL pointed out that insufficient training programs contribute to this problem, while D-CL also identified "*job switching*" as a factor, where skilled janitors are rotated within organisations to fill gaps, worsening the shortage. Another major issue is the shortage of employees for necessary services, which respondents B-CL and D-CL attribute to poor worker engagement brought on by the notion that janitorial work is of low quality. The age of employees provided by service providers was also a concern for B-CL and D-CL, as they did not receive young, energetic labourers, which impacted work efficiency. D-CL emphasized that "*younger staff are more focused and better suited for risky tasks, which could minimize client compensation costs.*"

Another pressing issue raised by respondents B-CL and E-CL is the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) for labourers, which increases the risk of severe injuries and adversely affects clients. E-CL noted that compensation for injuries in their case is currently at a higher level. Trust-related issues were also highlighted, with respondent A-CL describing "*breach of trust as a fatal problem that led to the termination of a previous contract.*" Opportunistic behaviours were cited as a potential cause of such breaches, often resulting in expensive legal actions. Efficiency concerns were raised by respondent C-CL, who mentioned that the "*lack of expected efficiency among staff, particularly in the mornings, disrupts core activities.*" C-CL also noted the lack of technological adaptation in cleaning methods due to fixed-rate contracts, which discourage modifications or rescheduling of work. Absenteeism was another significant issue, with D-CL and E-CL attributing it to factors such as unattractive salaries, heavy workloads, poor peer and supervisor conditions, and job switching. Respondent A-CL reported additional discipline-related issues, including behavioural problems and a lack of adherence to organisational culture. Instances of theft and inappropriate behaviour were noted, further complicating the outsourcing relationship.

By contrast, A-CL and D-CL identified the challenge of managing and supervising outsourced labourers as a common issue. A-CL also noted that the disparities in work attitudes between outsourced janitors and internal staff could potentially impact the overall organisational environment. In the same vein, E-CL expressed concern about the possibility of a decrease in the level of commitment of internal employees to maintaining hygiene because of cultural disparities between internal and external staff. Furthermore, E-CL emphasised a substantial constraint of fixed-rate contracts: "*service providers can decide to save expenses by using cheaper supplies, which would cause inefficiencies.*" C-CL emphasised that the involvement of an external entity in problem-solving may result in increased costs and delays over time, whereas B-CL maintained that the severity of these drawbacks is primarily dependent on the service provider.

### 4.2.2 Issues Faced by Service Providers in Janitorial Service Contracts

Conflicts in janitorial service contracts often arise due to various reasons, and most of the conflicts are manageable through effective practices. All respondents agreed that issues are inevitable when multiple parties are involved. Interviews with five service providers revealed several key challenges. Three respondents (B-SP, C-SP, and D-SP) identified the lack of clear information from clients as a major issue, leading to hidden costs and misunderstandings. Extra work was another significant problem, with A-SP and E-SP noting that clients often force workers

to perform tasks beyond the agreed scope, frequently without additional payment, as highlighted by B-SP. A-SP also noted that, although the national retirement age ranges from 52 to 60, client organisations often demand janitors under the age of 50, making it difficult to meet staffing requirements within that age limit. *“In my experience, a large portion of the available labour pool consists of experienced workers over 50. When clients insist on hiring only those under 50, it narrows down our options. It becomes a real struggle to find enough janitors to meet demand, especially in areas where younger people aren’t interested in taking on janitorial jobs.”*

Table 3: Issues identified from cases

	Client (-CL)	Service Provider (-SP)
<b>Case A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breach of trust</li> <li>Lack of trained janitors</li> <li>Discipline of the janitors (Education level, talking pattern, culture is different)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditions of the clients (requiring an age limit is less than 50 for janitors by the client)</li> <li>Extra work taken by janitors</li> <li>Labor turnover</li> </ul>
<b>Case B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough manpower</li> <li>Lack of PPE usage</li> <li>Scarcity of youngsters as janitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation- (the contract includes a minimum number of employees for work if they do not fulfil the requirement deduction of payment.)</li> </ul>
<b>Case C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Janitor absenteeism</li> <li>Delay of the cleaning work in the morning</li> <li>Switching (allocate janitors for another absenteeism janitor work as well)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to reduce costs (Since customers constantly cut expenses, high-quality materials are somewhat more costly than low-quality ones.)</li> <li>Less mutual understanding</li> <li>Risk transferring (if something goes wrong, clients try to transfer risk to the service provider if it happens due to client errors)</li> <li>Lack of information (the client may not give all the information related to the job)</li> <li>Labor turnover</li> </ul>
<b>Case D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor shortage (area is large)</li> <li>Older workforce</li> <li>Lack of skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost reduction attempts by clients</li> <li>Lack of information regarding the job</li> </ul>
<b>Case E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absenteeism of janitors</li> <li>Less technological adoption (Although the new technology for cleaning is more efficient than doing it by hand, it is not being used.)</li> <li>Not maintain a regular checklist</li> <li>No suitable PPE usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra work taken from the janitors</li> <li>If the scope is done with fewer workers deduction is made from the agreed amount</li> </ul>

Compensation and service quality were also critical concerns. C-SP and D-SP explained that clients often push for lower payments, forcing service providers to use cheaper materials and compromise on performance. D-SP emphasized that absenteeism among janitors creates compensation issues, as contracts typically require a minimum number of workers daily. Failure to meet this requirement results in payment deductions, even if task switching is used to manage cleaning needs. This imposes a heavy pressure on service providers to maintain that minimum headcount at all times, as it can be difficult due to factors beyond the provider's control, such as sudden absences, high turnover, or difficulties in hiring. A-SP added that the scarcity of trained janitors and a young labour force further complicates meeting client demands. Labor turnover emerged as a serious issue, with skilled workers leaving due to high workloads or excessive extra work demanded by clients. A-SP and C-SP cited labour turnover as a significant challenge in maintaining service quality. Additionally, B-SP highlighted the lack of mutual understanding between clients and service providers, with clients often focusing on service providers' errors, hindering good relationships.

In Sri Lanka, organisations present unique challenges, such as lengthy approval processes for contract renewals. B-SP noted that working with commercial buildings often results in unpaid increments during renewal periods. Risk transfer was another concern, with C-SP stating that clients frequently attempt to shift risks to service providers, even when the responsibility lies with the client. These issues collectively highlight the complexities of janitorial service contract management. The summary of the issues identified from cases, through both client and service provider, has been presented in Table 3.

#### 4.3 STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THE IDENTIFIED ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF JANITORIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS

To address the common issue of labour absenteeism, several organisations have implemented a salary deduction strategy. All the clients have formalised this approach by including it in their contracts, ensuring that service providers face financial penalties if they fail to provide the agreed number of labourers. Additionally, these organisations have engaged in negotiations with service providers and workers to address related issues. For instance, A-CL emphasises the importance of discipline, while C-CL focuses on preventive measures through discussions with service providers. Training for workers, particularly in skill development, is also a key aspect of these negotiations. Respondent D-CL highlights the importance of good management practices as a solution to various issues, including absenteeism, disciplinary problems, work delays, and the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) usage. E-CL, on the other hand, employs random checks of work performed against checklists to ensure proper documentation and has identified time management as a critical strategy under the umbrella of good management practices. These measures aim to improve efficiency and address existing challenges.

Negotiation emerges as the most preferred strategy among organisations to mitigate identified issues. Most organisations advocate for negotiations with both service providers and janitors, alongside comprehensive training programs for employees before they begin work. A-CL specifically emphasizes the inclusion of discipline-related training, particularly regarding drug use during working hours. To address absenteeism, organisations recommend motivating workers with attractive payment structures and developing backup plans for contracts. However, several barriers hinder the resolution of these issues. Respondents from B-CL and D-CL identify the lack of participation from younger janitors as a significant challenge, with B-CL noting that labourers over 50 years old are more prevalent in the sector. Additionally, the overall shortage of people willing to work in this field poses a further obstacle to overcoming these problems. These barriers highlight the need for broader systemic changes to attract and retain a younger workforce

To address common issues like a lack of job-related information, B-SP gathers comprehensive job details, helping mitigate problems to some extent. Flexible contracts are emphasized as a key strategy to address insufficient information, extra work, compensation, and clients' cost reduction demands. Respondent C-SP formalizes this by including such conditions in contracts, while C-SP, D-SP, and E-SP highlight effective management practices as a mechanism to address challenges. Negotiation is another critical measure. Respondents negotiate with clients to address skill gaps, often requesting special training for workers. C-SP proactively negotiates with service providers to prevent future issues, while D-SP conducts on-site janitor training to overcome skill shortages. B-SP has signed earlier contracts with government clients to address these challenges and seeks further job-related information. They also emphasise specifying extra work in contracts to avoid overburdening janitors.

Negotiation is widely recommended as a primary solution. D-SP and E-SP advocate for regular meetings to discuss and resolve janitorial service contract issues proactively. C-SP emphasizes strong client relationships and flexible contracts, noting trust as a foundation for mitigating problems. A-SP suggests improving training program quality, while B-SP proposes advanced solutions like maintaining a sophisticated contract tracker, implementing the "Happy Toilet Concept," conducting client awareness programs, and defining responsibilities for janitors, users, and designers. The "Happy Toilet Concept," a new initiative in Singapore, aims to enhance customer satisfaction with washroom conditions, and awareness programs by the World Toilet Organization promote established standards. However, as constraints faced by service providers, E-SP notes workers may resist multiple tasks, potentially leading to labour turnover if forced. B-SP and D-SP highlight financial challenges in providing paid training and workers' reluctance to participate in unpaid programs. C-SP points out the difficulty of negotiating flexible contracts, as clients often prioritize their interests. A-SP and B-SP mention the challenge of changing workers' mindsets to resolve issues effectively.

Respondents emphasize the importance of properly structuring a contract document with all required terms and conditions to effectively manage the contract and minimize future disputes. Respondents highlighted key issues and solutions to be addressed in contracts. A major issue is the lack of labour and employee absenteeism. Respondents suggested including backup plans for absenteeism (C-CL) and minimum salary ranges to discourage turnover (D-CL). B-CL recommended specifying worker age to address the lack of younger workers, while A-CL emphasized adding worker discipline clauses to avoid problematic situations. Health and safety were also highlighted, with B-CL advocating for worker safety clauses and E-CL suggesting PPE specifications to protect both workers and clients from liability. Service providers also proposed contract improvements. E-SP suggested including payment terms for additional work, while D-SP stressed the need for comprehensive job details in contracts. C-SP recommended risk-sharing methods, and B-SP emphasized specifying details like the number of washrooms, square footage, and fixtures to prevent issues. A-SP proposed including minimum experience requirements to ensure janitors' skills and knowledge.

In summary, well-structured contracts with clear terms, backup plans, salary ranges, age and experience requirements, health and safety provisions, and detailed job specifications are essential for successful outsourcing arrangements.

#### 4.4 FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF JANITORIAL SERVICE CONTRACTS

Based on the findings of the study, a framework was developed for the effective management of janitorial service contracts, as shown in Figure 1. It outlines the effective management of janitorial service contracts by highlighting the drivers and benefits of outsourcing, key roles and responsibilities, common challenges, and strategic solutions. While outsourcing janitorial services offers advantages such as cost savings, improved quality, and access to specialists, it

also presents challenges like supplier dependency and cultural differences. The contract defines the responsibilities of both service providers and clients, ensuring quality standards, timely payments, and a safe work environment. Common issues include a shortage of skilled janitors, labour turnover, and lack of contract clarity. To address these, effective management strategies like proper compensation, negotiation, strong management, and flexible contracts are recommended. The framework links each identified issue to a corresponding strategy by referencing the issue number under the relevant proposed solution.

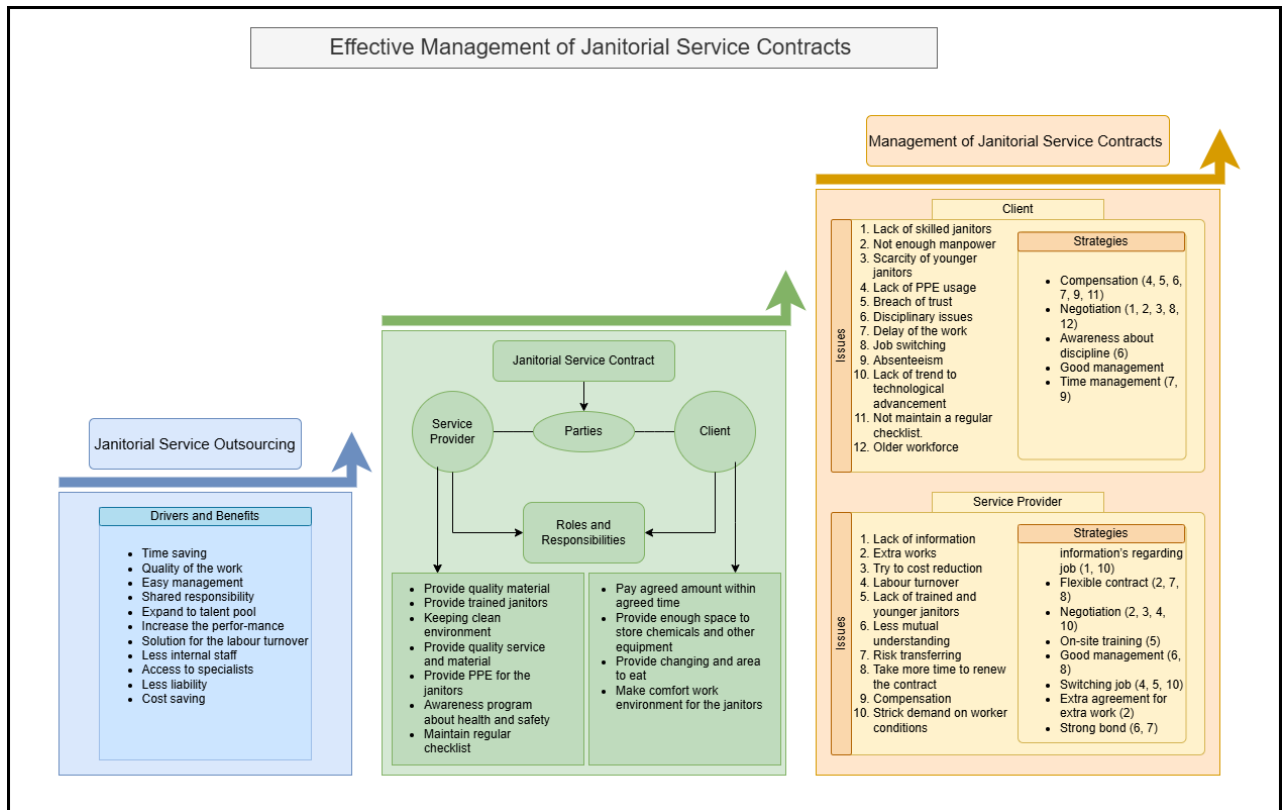


Figure 1: Framework for effective management of janitorial service contracts

## 5. Conclusions

This study reveals the complexities of managing janitorial service contracts in Sri Lankan commercial buildings, integrating a bilateral perspective, highlighting key challenges such as a lack of skilled labour, unreliable service delivery, and contractual ambiguities. Poorly defined contract terms often lead to inefficiencies, with clients facing absenteeism and quality concerns, while service providers struggle with hidden costs and unrealistic expectations. Effective contract structures, risk-sharing mechanisms, and performance-based agreements are crucial for mitigating these challenges. Communication and negotiation play a significant role in resolving contract-related issues, with strategies such as regular discussions, structured training programs, and performance monitoring helping to improve service efficiency. However, financial constraints, resistance to change, and a lack of mutual trust hinder their effectiveness. Attracting young workers through better employment conditions and leveraging cleaning technologies can further enhance janitorial service management.

To address these issues, this research provides a framework for improving janitorial service contract management in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the need for structured contracts, effective negotiations, and continuous monitoring. Proactive contract management, regulatory compliance, and workforce development are essential for enhancing service quality and fostering

long-term client-provider relationships. Future research could explore the impact of emerging cleaning technologies and digital contract management systems in optimizing janitorial outsourcing. Additionally, a quantitative analysis of cost-effectiveness and long-term benefits could further refine outsourcing strategies. Implementing structured frameworks will help mitigate risks, enhance service standards, and support sustainable outsourcing practices in the janitorial sector

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