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**ABSTRACT**

*“A pilot must have a memory developed to absolute perfection. But there are two higher qualities which he also must have. He must have good and quick judgment and decision and a cool, calm courage that no peril can shake”.*

- Unknown

Sri Lanka Air Force is termed as the guardians of the Sri Lankan skies. Utilization of extraordinary skills with precision, Air Force pilots control aircraft to its limits with complete domination and professionalism. These skilled professionals deployed in various platforms of fighter, transporter and helicopter as well as the commanding positions in various appointments. The experiences, hours and flying qualifications to develop these pilots to meet the organizational challenges cannot be gained overnight. The SLAF has broadened its horizons to accept the future challenges in the globalized world with its experienced and matured core potentials. However, it has been observed a severe out flow of pilots after the counter insurgency operation in Sri Lanka. The main aim of this research has focused to identify the significant factors which influence these pilots to accept the premature retirement. The researcher has mainly identified five (5) factors and analysed with twenty one (21) indicators to identify the most significant factors. The social and financial factors were identified in the more dissatisfied environment due to the very low mean values and higher factor loadings. Moreover, explanatory factor analyses was conducted and researcher was able to identify the significant factors towards the premature retirement of SLAF pilots more comprehensively and recommendations projected based on the organizational ethics. However, it's to be noted that the retention of the pilots are important to achieve the objectives of SLAF in order to defend the sovereignty of Sri Lankan airspace.

Key words: Sovereignty of Sri Lankan airspace, most significant factors, organizational ethics, future challenges, globalization

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