



Autocratic vs Democratic Leadership During Crises Times: Impact on Employee Engagement in Sri Lanka’s Public Sector

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Abstract

Public sector organizations significantly contribute to the Sri Lankan economy through employment generation. Despite this, persistent concerns about effective employee engagement in the public sector exist. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee engagement, with leaders needing to foster the right mindset to drive organizational transformation. This study explores the impact of perceived leadership styles, democratic and autocratic, on employee engagement among non-managerial employees in Sri Lanka's public sector during times of crisis. An explanatory research design targeted non-managerial employees in Sri Lankan public sector organizations. A sample of 100 participants was selected using convenience sampling, and primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The findings indicate that democratic leadership significantly enhances employee engagement, whereas autocratic leadership does not have a significant impact, supporting the need for leadership strategies that empower and involve employees. Further, age significantly influenced employee engagement, with males and older employees showing higher engagement levels. Thus, the study recommended paying attention to employee age in job design and conducting further investigation on the role of gender in employee engagement during the crisis.

Keywords: Autocratic leadership, Democratic leadership, Employee Engagement, Public Sector

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