

## Employee Morale and Leadership Styles: A Study on the Most Attractive Leadership Style in the Sri Lankan Banking Sector

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Numbers of factors affect the employee morale. Among them leadership style is important. There was a contradictory argument regarding the connection between employee morale and the leadership styles. According to some researchers, morale of the workers under autocratic or task-oriented leaders is significantly less than other styles of leadership. Another group argued that higher level of employee morale could be expected through participative or people-concerned leadership style. This study is an endeavor to examine whether there is a connection between leadership style and the employee morale, and then decide the appropriate style of leadership to improve employee morale in an organization. An empirical study of a sample of the managers and employees of private sector banking organizations in Sri Lanka was conducted to examine the link between the employee morale and leadership styles. Amongst the leaders, there was none who practiced pure autocratic or participative style of leadership. The findings concluded that the leadership style of any manager cannot be identified as a separate independent behaviour within a continuum of autocratic and participative or people - concerned and task-concerned behaviour. Instead of concerning more on a single type of behaviour, a manager can give high concern simultaneously for the both styles and this behaviour seems to have recorded high employee morale. Most probably, a satisfactory level of employee morale can be achieved through balancing the necessity to get the work done by showing a greater concern for achieving tasks while practicing a same level or somewhat high concern on employees.

Key words: Employee Morale, Leadership Styles, Sri Lankan , Banking Sector behaviour

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