

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES: HOW RESILIENT LEADERSHIP FOSTERS EMPOWERMENT IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

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This study investigates the impact of resilient leadership (RL) on employee empowerment (EE) in the private sector higher education (HE) context in Sri Lanka (SL). Despite its recognized importance, there is a notable research gap regarding the effects of RL on EE within Sri Lanka's higher education sector (HES). This gap is critical given the sector's increasing demands for quality education, competitive pressures, and the need for adaptive leadership. The study aims to bridge this gap by examining how contingency planning, improvisation, adaptive instructing, contingency control, emergency care, adjustment recovery, and mutual growth influence EE. This research employed purposive sampling to gather data from 136 non-academic employees holding positions above the executive level within private higher education institutions (HEI) in the Western Province (WP) of SL. Data collection utilized a structured questionnaire, and statistical analyses, including correlation and regression, were conducted to assess the relationship and impact of RL on EE. The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between RL practices and EE, highlighting the critical role of RL in fostering a conducive work environment. The findings suggest that RL positively impacts EE within private HEIs in the WP of SL. The results contribute to the limited body of knowledge on leadership resilience in HE and provide practical insights for educational leaders aiming to enhance EE. By fostering RL practices, institutions can support their employees, leading to a more motivated and effective workforce. This research offers valuable insights for driving positive organizational outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction, increased productivity, and improved institutional effectiveness, which fosters a supportive work environment in the evolving private HES in SL.

Keywords: Employee empowerment, Higher education, Leadership, Non-academic, Resilient leadership