

Impact of Participative Management on Occupational Satisfaction of Administrative Employees in Selected Private Universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Employee occupational satisfaction plays a vital role in the performance and sustainability of higher education institutions. Despite the growing significance of human resource practices in Sri Lanka's university sector, limited empirical research has been conducted on how participative management influences administrative employees' satisfaction. Preliminary evidence, including a pilot study, revealed a trend of low job satisfaction among administrative staff, raising concerns about productivity, engagement, and institutional effectiveness. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how leadership, motivation, communication, and decision-making aspects of participative management affect occupational satisfaction among administrative employees in selected private universities in Sri Lanka. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to collect data from 297 participants (148 male, 149 female). An online questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS version 21. Reliability and validity tests confirmed the consistency of the measurement scales. Correlation and regression analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between participative management practices and occupational satisfaction. Specifically, leadership, motivational, and decision-making factors emerged as strong predictors of employee satisfaction, while communication also contributed positively. The findings supported all five hypotheses tested in this study. The results emphasize that participative management not only enhances individual job satisfaction but also contributes to improved institutional performance. By involving employees in decision-making processes, fostering transparent communication, and cultivating supportive leadership, universities can strengthen motivation and engagement among administrative staff. This study contributes to the limited body of literature on participative management within Sri Lanka's private higher education sector and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and administrators.

Keywords: decision-making, leadership, occupational satisfaction, participative management, Sri Lanka