

**THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF MANAGERS ON HEALTH
AND SAFETY PRACTICES IN THE NEW NORMAL SETUP
OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC; CASE OF
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN KOGGALA FREE
TRADE ZONE, SRI LANKA**



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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated changes in various industries worldwide, including manufacturing, and managers in the Koggala Free Trade Zone, Sri Lanka, play a critical role in implementing health and safety practices during the new normal setup. This research aims to examine the leadership style of managers and its influence on health safety practices in manufacturing industries within the zone, using quantitative methods. The general objective of this study is to determine the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on health safety behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal conditions. To achieve this, specific objectives are outlined. Firstly, the research aims to explore the mediation role of safety climate between leadership and employee health safety behavior and practices. Secondly, the study intends to investigate the moderation role of working environment conditions to achieve good health and hygiene practices against the propagation of the pandemic. The research employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing surveys to collect data and convenience sampling method. The structured questionnaire survey in the zone with 112 valid responses received. The analysis explored various aspects, including demographic characteristics, reliability and validity, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, hypothesis testing, regression analysis, and model analysis. For the analysis, Ms Excel and SPSS software were used. The findings revealed important insights into the role of leadership in shaping health and safety practises. The results indicated a positive association between leadership and health safety behaviour, highlighting the significance of inspiring and supportive leaders in fostering a culture of safety and adherence to health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal conditions. In conclusion, this research study highlighted the crucial role of transformational leadership in promoting health and safety practises in the manufacturing industries of the Koggala Free Trade Zone. Future research endeavours may consider longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of leadership styles on health and safety practices and across different industries and regions.

Keywords – Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Safety climate, Work environment, Health and safety practices, Self-determination theory, Social Exchange theory COVID-19 pandemic.