THE EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES
TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL SOFTWARE PROJECT

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Abstract

Information technology management is a strategic component of any business organization today. It is one of the driving forces behind globalization of world economies. Globalization and increased competition require that software products should be introduced to the market as early as possible. As a consequence, many companies try to achieve successful completion of software projects in order to place them ahead of competition.

IT companies have several ongoing projects and these projects are typically executed in team settings that require team members and project managers to interact with each other. Poor leadership of a project manager can significantly contribute to or cause project failure. Previous research studies have identified different critical success factors which can be used to measure if a particular IT project is a successful one or not. After establishing leadership as one of the critical success factors in IT projects, this study identifies the most appropriate leadership style/styles at the project management level for the successful execution of IT projects in the Sri Lankan market.

The sample for this research includes project managers and also developers from software companies. Data was gathered through a questionnaire. Two types of questionnaires were distributed respectively for managers and developers. Around 75 responses were received from developers and around 50 from project managers. Although it was deemed that formal interviews and forum discussions would greatly benefit the purpose of this research, such research methodology could not be performed due to the short time allocated to the research project.

Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership styles are the main leadership styles which were considered in the analysis of this research. As perceived
by both managers and subordinates, as the final research result the analysis revealed transformational leadership style as the most effective leadership style which gives high project success.