

Charismatic leadership in Sri Lankan business organizations

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- Author(s):** [J.A.S.K. Jayakody](#), (Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka)
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Abstract: *Purpose* – As the number of studies reported on the new leadership approach in the South Asian region and especially in Sri Lanka is very limited, the present study aims to explore to what extent the Conger and Kanungo (C-K) model can be employed to explain the leadership phenomenon in Sri Lanka.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was undertaken among 53 managers who are reading for MBA degrees using the questionnaire devised and validated by Conger and Kanungo, and the data were subjected to principle component factor (varimax rotation) analysis.

Findings – The paper finds that the Sri Lankan version of charismatic leadership is found to be similar to the C-K model in terms of personal risk, sensitivity to member needs and sensitivity to the environment. However, it differs from the C-K model, as it does not contain unconventional behavior and articulation of vision, and contains a new dimension – creating excitement. The variation is attributed to some aspects of culture i.e. conservative, hierarchical, caring and less futuristic.

Originality/value – There have not been very many attempts at replicating new leadership theories in the South Asian region that is in some ways, i.e. level of development, religion and cultural values, different from the rest of the world. The present study fills this empirical gap.