

## **Factors Affecting the Employee Engagement of Extension Officers in the Department of Agriculture: A Study in the Central Province**

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Agriculture Extension service plays a vital role to provide farmers knowledge, skills and attitude. It bridges the information gap between farmers and Agriculture research institutes. The job engagement of extension officers plays an effective role to have a productive outcome. The study was aimed to examine the factors contributing to the employee engagement of agricultural extension officers. It further examined the effect of factors on different elements of employee engagement. A thorough literature review indicated job autonomy, social support by supervisor, employee training, work life balance, and non-monitory rewards as factors associated with the employee engagement of agricultural instructors. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data of 100 agriculture instructors in Provincial department of Agriculture, Central Province (Kandy, Matale and Nuwara-Eliya district). Results of the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential analyses, namely; Multinomial logistic regression, Man-Whitney u test, and Kruskal Wallis test. Results of the study revealed non-monetary reward, and supervisory support (at  $P < 0.1$ ) contributes to employee engagement of agriculture instructors. Employee training, work life balance, and non-monetary rewards did not indicate significant relationships with job engagement of employees. There was no relationship between employee engagement and demographic factors such as gender, age, education status, and work experience. About 45% of employee engagement was explained by above independents variables. The focus group discussions with agriculture instructors suggested that lack of clarity of job roles has a negative impact on their level of job engagement. Addressing above factors contribute to upgrade the employees' engagement of Agriculture Instructors.

**Keywords:** Agriculture instructors, Employee engagement, Non-monitory rewards, Supervisory support

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