



Notice for the PhD Viva-Voce Examination

Mr Sojan Paul, Registration Number: 1951074, PhD Scholar at the School of Psychological Sciences, Education and Social Work, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 28 November 2025 at 2.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru – 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	Agape in Leadership: An Exploration Using Grounded Theory Approach
Discipline	:	Psychology
External Examiner - I	:	Dr Lorna Bourke Associate Professor School of Psychology Liverpool Hope University Hope Park, L16 9JD United Kingdom
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Suresh Arumugam Scientist F Defence Research and Development Organisation Selection Centre South Cubbon Road Bengaluru - 560001 Karnataka
Supervisor	:	Dr Vijayalaya Srinivas T Associate Professor School of Psychological Sciences, Education and Social Work CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru - 560076 Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru

Date: 14 November 2025

ABSTRACT

Leadership is a complex and evolving concept, with numerous studies, theories, and popular discussions offering only partial insights into its true nature. This study explores the concept of Agape in leadership, highlighting the transformative potential of selfless, unconditional love. Rooted in the Greek term “Agape,” this leadership model emphasizes emotional well-being, personal growth, and the collective fulfilment of individuals and communities. By prioritizing empathy, compassion, and mutual support, Agape leadership shifts away from conventional leadership focused on personal ambition, toward a greater commitment to serving others. Leaders who embody Agape principles often make personal sacrifices for societal benefit. The current study interviewed eighteen bishops from Kerala, belonging to Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin (6 each) to explore the components of Agape leadership practiced by Pope Francis. The study outlines three key dimensions of Agape leadership: Affect-Based, Trait-Based, and Style-Based components. The Affect-Based dimension emphasizes emotional connections between leaders and followers, fostering deep relational bonds. Trait-Based components highlight the essential character strengths needed for effective leadership, such as integrity, humility, and compassion. Style-Based components focus on the adaptability, inclusivity, and flexibility that leaders must practice in various situations. Using Cathy Charmaz’s (2014) grounded theory approach and the constant comparative method, the study identified 98 initial codes, 20 focused codes, and three core dimensions. By integrating affect, traits, and leadership styles, Agape leadership provides a balanced and holistic framework that addresses existing gaps in current leadership models. This approach not only redefines leadership but also empowers both leaders and followers to lead more meaningful and fulfilling lives. The Agape in leadership challenges conventional leadership by placing emphasis on emotional well-being, mutual support, and selfless service to others. This distinctive integration of affect, trait, and style-based components makes the Agape in Leadership a unique and valuable contribution to leadership studies. Agape in leadership represents a paradigm shift, introducing a model of leadership grounded in selflessness and unconditional love, with the potential to foster environments where individuals and communities thrive through compassion and collective fulfilment.

Keywords: *Agape, Leadership, Selflessness, Affect, Trait, Style*

Publications:

1. **Peekunnel, S. P., & Srinivas, V.** (2024). Understanding Agape Leadership: A Scoping Review. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 105(1).
2. **Peekunnel, S.P, & Srinivas, V.** (2024). Constructing the Agape Leadership Model: A Grounded Theory Exploration. *The Patent Office Journal*, 41(2024), 94773. Indian Patent Application No. 202441074674 A. Indian Patent Office.