

ABSTRACT

In the field of social science, leadership has been a well-researched topic in organizational research. There have been several theoretical and empirical studies on the definition and characteristics of leadership as well as on leadership effectiveness. Despite the numerous studies, it has been difficult for researchers to arrive at a well-accepted definition of leadership and leadership effectiveness and the overall results appear insufficient and inconsistent when tested under different situations.

Small and medium enterprises are essential for economic driven growth of the nation, thus, leadership effectiveness in SMEs is an important issue to investigate. This study was conducted in Thailand because Thailand has the highest number of established business owner-managers and statistically ranges high on early stages of entrepreneurial activity (TEA).

Thus far, there has not been an integrative model of leadership effectiveness to investigate the development of the leadership phenomenon, especially in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Thai context. Hence, this study investigates the differences between leadership styles as influenced by the Big-Five personality traits, emotional intelligence, adversity quotient, ethics and leadership effectiveness in SME's in Thailand. Multi-Group comparisons were made to examine the moderating role among leadership style, age and gender.

Four hundred and twenty-six subordinates participated in this study. The results showed that leaders who used different leadership styles (coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching) had different degrees of emotional intelligence, personality traits, adversity quotient, ethical leadership and leadership effectiveness. Path analysis findings showed that emotional intelligence, adversity and ethics had positive and statistically significant relationships with leadership effectiveness. Transformational leaders (Affiliative, Democratic, Pacesetting and Coaching styles) showed positive and statistically significant differences with adversity, ethics and leadership effectiveness. It appears that male