

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES LEADING TO INNOVATION IN SME SECTOR IN UAE

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ABSTRACT

Leadership being a complicated process involves a number of enablers and barriers. Lack of leadership has been identified to be one of the key barriers in implementing innovation since leaders play a significant role in providing a favourable environment to the employees as well as motivating them to increase the chances of innovation success. Limited research on innovation in SMEs in UAE led conducting a survey with leaders of SMEs in UAE. Six categories of leadership qualities were identified from previous research namely strategic thinking, planning and delivery, people management, change management, communication and persuasion and influence. It was found that the leadership qualities are important in implementing innovation when applied collectively since these were not found to impact innovation practices individually. The impact of leadership qualities on innovation practices is thus confirmed by the present research as well as previous research. SMEs in UAE are thus recommended to enhance the leadership qualities of their leaders through appropriate ways.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership, leadership qualities, innovation, SMEs*

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