



BE005

**Transformational Leadership and the Development of Small Business
Entrepreneurs in Songkhla during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Thailand**

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Abstract

This research was a qualitative research. The objectives was to gather information on transformational leadership that small business entrepreneurs should adopt in their business operations during the covid-19 epidemic in Thailand and to collect data on the development towards being successful small business entrepreneurs in Songkhla Province during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand. The number of key informants of 15 people, they are people who live in Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. The researcher used snowball sampling with the first person and then connecting to other people until receiving the data saturation. Research instruments is the interview form that the researcher designed and created from the secondary data collection. Data analysis was conducted by content analysis. The research results show that transformational leadership that business entrepreneurs should adopt in their business operations, namely inspiration, having an ideological influence and cognitive stimulation. For the development path towards being a successful entrepreneur, including proactive work, competitive aggressive and risks tolerance respectively. The findings of this research were of benefit to small business owners and business consultants, human resource developers could also be used to design entrepreneurship development programs.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Development of Small Business Entrepreneurs, During the Epidemic of COVID-19





1. Introduction

People generally have the expectations to run a business of their interest or the one they are skilled and capable to be doing it as a business. As a result, many people immediately enter the business industry after their graduation, but others want to seek for experience by applying to work in the public or private organizations first and spending leisure time after work to create a small business by doing it solely or as a family collaboration, helping each other to work and build a family business. As by monitoring a number of people known personally and were introduced by others in the group, it is obtained the informal information that doing both full-time work and doing own business after work resulting in both being successful and being in the process by not yet becoming successful as they want. It was found that the majority of those who have become successful had the characteristics of experienced and skillful in specific expertise and thus brought them into business through trial and error approach, learning, and pass through many experiences in doing business for a long time, so they become successful.

However, in the situation where all Thais in Thailand are facing with the spreading of virus or known as covid-19, makes everyone become panic and more self-defense, combined with the economic and political conditions that are not conducive to life living like in the past, it affects the way Thais are living their life in Thailand in which they spend less and save more. As a result, entrepreneurs running small businesses have been affected by this situation as well, many of them are unable to produce or distribute products or the products have been sold less compare to the past, and many of them cannot continue running business during this period. In any cases, if many entrepreneurs continuously be facing with negative effects in the way they carry their business, it may result in the halt on production or operations during the covid-19 pandemic, and entrepreneurs must behave in the way they do business or having to demonstrate sustainable and successful entrepreneurial behavior.

Which under the context of Arunrung Auareesuksakun & Thirawat Chuntuk (2016) presented that the concept of transformational leadership has transformed challenges towards sustainable organizational success and achieve to be the leader in business in Thailand and in the region. For Nuch Sathachatmongkol & Auttapon Thamapaiboon (2016) presented that in the situation where Thailand is facing changes under the pandemic of covid-19. How do entrepreneurs need to perform transformational leadership in order to be able to continue their business or business management? which is a challenging topic in doing research. The research team, therefore, is interested in gathering data on transformational





leadership of entrepreneurs that should be adopted during the covid-19 pandemic as a preliminary data for entrepreneurs to implement the changes and develop themselves to continue doing business to be successful.

2. Research objectives

1) To gather information about the needs of students in higher education institutions regarding further study in Master of Business Administration program in Mueang district, Songkhla, Thailand.

2) To Study the expectations of individuals to further study in Master of Business Administration program in Mueang district, Songkhla, Thailand.

3. Research methodology

Being a business entrepreneur is generally perceived as having to be an organizational leader in order to achieve the success as expected or defined. The leader is an influential person towards the ideas or actions of others, who can persuade, influence, or motivate others to follow the order willingly. The leaders must express themselves in business organizational management with leadership that leads to success or achieve the desired outcomes. In the reality of current management, executives or entrepreneurs who express themselves with leadership in business are found in two aspects which are Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership. For doing this research is aimed to study specifically on Transformational Leadership. (Aniwat Kaewjomnong, 2016: 152-156)

In a situation where small business entrepreneurs are faced with the covid-19 pandemic, it has caused high risk in doing business, which they may have to temporarily or permanently stop the business. For this reason, the research team interested in conducting studies to obtain research results that can lead to assisting small business entrepreneurs to succeed in doing their business. By success, it could be said that it is the expectation of every entrepreneur to reach but whichever way that the success will be, each entrepreneur may have different definitions or expectations, with this aspect, Aniwat Kaewjomnong (2015: 2-3) has compiled different perspectives which are Profit, Customers Satisfaction, Incomes and Social, etc.

For the related researches to this subject, for example, Narin Dechsatan, Chaiyon Paophan and Saksit Rittilun (2014) conducted the research on transformational leadership of institution administrators affiliated with Kalasin Primary Educational Service Area Office 3 and the results showed transformational leadership at a high level. The outcome of the study





way to improve transformation leadership of institutional administrators.

Pongsan Boonsan (2015) conducted the research on the leadership of administrators which affected the success of PTT public company limited and the research findings were as the leadership of administrators of PTT as to the characteristics of the transactional, transformational, participative, achievement oriented leadership in general and in particular were at high level the transformational leadership level most. For the research of Rawiwan Yodchan, Yanin Tangpinyoputtikhun and Khajit Konthong (2015) conducted the research on the relationship between transformational leadership and job efficiency of accountant of commercial banks in northeastern. The research results found that the transformational leadership, idealized influential, inspiration motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration relationships and positive impact on overall job efficiency.

Aniwat Kaewjomnong (2018) conducted the research on the leadership with success of SMEs in entering the ASEAN Economic Community and the research results found that behavioral ability influences and affects the success of the business. By the pursuit of achievement in duty, management, leadership, and relationships affect the success of entrepreneurship.

Juthathip Sucharitkul (2019) conducted the research on transformational leadership among administrators of the local government administration in Thailand 4.0 era. The research results found that transformational leadership among administrators of the local government administration had overall scores in the high level. Transformational leadership among administrators of the local has a positive correlation with organizations working towards the Thailand 4.0 era, especially in terms of “intellectual stimulations” having a high level of correlation with smart and innovative organization that can work coordinately with all parties.

4. Theoretical concept and related researches

1) For the content, the researcher uses Bass & Avolio's theory of transformational leadership (1993), consisting of idealized influence, inspirational making, intellectual stimulation, and consideration on individualism.

2) For the key informants, they are people who live in Muang District, Songkhla, who work full time in public or private organizations but also work part time as for a family business. The researcher uses Snowball Sampling, starting with the first person and then connecting to other people until receiving the data saturation, then random 2-3 more people





until there is no new information recur, resulting in obtaining the number of key informants of 15 people.

3) For the research area, researcher conducted a data survey in Muang District, Songkhla, for reasons that during the covid-19 pandemic, the travel is not comfortable or easy to make, as to obtain accurate information and it must be able to meet the informants in person, so the informants must be only in this area.

4) Research instruments is the interview form that the researcher designed and created from the secondary data collection.

5) Collection of data, by collecting primary data, the researcher contacted the first key informant by explaining the objectives of the research and asked for permission to meet for an interview and also gave prior notice to ask for assistance to recommend other informants who have the same characteristic as defined in doing the research. Therefore, this is to allow the key informant to recommend and to request permission from other informants for researcher to meet for further interviews. For the secondary data, it was collected from documents, textbooks, researches and related research articles.

6) Data analysis is conducted by content analysis.

5. Research results

From the content analysis, the research results can be summarized as follows:

1) The result of data collection for transformational leadership data that small business entrepreneurs should implement in their business operations during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand.

All key informants are of the same opinion that during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand, it causes living their life and doing business in Songkhla very difficult, by reason of having to stay in the house all day long, needing to be careful when meeting neighbors and avoid being outside the house. Most of them cannot do any business during the months of April to May, but starting to be able to do business in June. However, they cannot make the same income or sales like before as if they only do business in order not to have too much free time. The majority of them need to create inspiration by encouraging themselves every day for them to be able to work and live their life by having to think every day that “They will get through it and they can do it” They must also intellectually stimulate themselves and their family members by talking to each other in order to find new and creative method or approach with reason to create opportunities in doing business and take each old customer into





consideration, create an atmosphere of care by calling them, talking when having a chance, and treat customers strictly according to the advice heard from the mass media. Most of them think of having an ideological influence as a last source with consciousness, listen carefully to information and believe in themselves by strictly adhering to the advice from the doctor in living their lives.

2) The data collection on the development to become successful small business entrepreneurs in Songkhla during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand.

The majority of the key informants are of the opinion that their daily working is very stressful, as having to be careful and think about covid-19 problem. They need to pay attention to themselves and those around them all the time. The working, therefore, must be proactive which having to plan their work every day and always prepare after finishing full time job so that they can start doing extra job for their family business by not causing themselves and family members to feel depressed and feel tired of life but having to smile and laugh a lot more, and give the proposition for everyone to come and think together, practice to be able to sell the products regardless of the success of the business but having to create business competition continuously in order not to let customers forget their names, so they have to seek for innovations in business management and create business networks such as trying new recipes for dessert, improve sales skills by creating relationships with customers, get more use of online marketing or practice using social commerce on mobile phone, resolving specific problems which make customer feel dependable towards the business, business service intention, and the extension of the payment period, etc. Therefore, the whole family must be ready to accept the risks that may arise from applying new innovation and management used in business operations.

6. Discussion

1) According to the data analysis, it was found that the transformational leadership that small business entrepreneurs should adopt in their business operations during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand are: inspirational making, intellectual stimulation, and consideration on individualism and lastly, having ideological influence and informative influence, and be confident in oneself by strictly adhering to the advice of a doctor for living their life. This information is consistent with Narin Dechsatan, Chaiyon Paophan & Saksit Rittilun (2014) research, where the research result found that transformational leadership of the educational institution administrators is intellectual stimulation and is consistent with Jintana Artsanthia et al (2017) research, that the research result shows that power of supervisor or head person





towards work performance is driven by work inspiration and organizational commitment.

2) According to the data collection result on the development to become successful small business entrepreneurs in Songkhla during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand, the research result found that the first thing is the majority of the key informants must be proactive, create business competition, and accept the risk that arise, this is consistent with Anyamanee Phungphol (2019) research, where the research result found that the variable influence of purchasing intention is the intention through social commerce and is consistent with the Wanita Boonchom (2019) research, where the research result shows that success in doing business comes from the ability of specific problem solving, presentation skill, and creativity, this is also consistent with Aniwat Kaewjomnong (2015) research, where it is found that the capability of a successful business lies in management and relationships.

7. Suggestion

1) Utilization of the research results

1.1) According to the research results, it was found that the transformational leadership that small business entrepreneurs should adopt in their business operations during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand are inspirational making, intellectual stimulation, and consideration on individualism. The researcher, therefore, recommends that small business entrepreneurs can apply them in doing their business to become expressive behaviors in work and career development, both in present and in the future, despite the covid-19 pandemic situation will be gone from Thailand.

1.2) According to the research which found that the development to become successful small business entrepreneurs in Songkhla during the covid-19 pandemic in Thailand requires proactive work, business competition, and acceptance of the risk that arise. The researcher, therefore, recommends that entrepreneurs and individuals who are thinking of becoming a small business entrepreneur should practice and develop themselves in order to work proactively, be competitive and accept the risks in doing business in order to build acceptance and trust from potential customers and be able to achieve success in the future.

2) The next research conducting

2.1) According to the research results of the objective number 1, the researcher recommends other researchers to conduct research in the topic of success of entrepreneurs in developing themselves in order to have transformational leadership or the topic of the comparison of the success of small and medium enterprises executive development in order to have transformational leadership classified by the information of the establishment, etc.





2.2) According to the research results of the objective number 2, the researcher recommends other researchers to conduct research in the topic of the proactive management and success in small business management or the topic of the readiness of small business entrepreneurs and business administration after the covid-19 pandemic has ceased or the topic of leadership behavior and risk management in small businesses.

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