

High Performance Work Systems and SMEs' Performance: Does CEOs' Leadership Matter?

Orisa Chumphong¹ and Wisanupong Potipiroon²

Most small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries lack the internal capabilities required to achieve superior business performance. The present study examines the relationship between High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and SMEs' performance in Thailand. Drawing from several theoretical perspectives, the present study also seeks to examine the antecedent role of CEOs' benevolent leadership and the mediating roles of employees' psychological empowerment and customer service behaviors. Based on the structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses of the data collected from 951 employees in 110 SMEs located in the southern region of Thailand, the results showed that CEOs' benevolent leadership is positively related with HPWS ($\beta = .62, p < .001$). Furthermore, the effects of CEOs' leadership ($\beta = .02, p > .05$) and HPWS ($\beta = .11, p > .05$) on SMEs' performance are fully mediated by employees' psychological empowerment ($\beta = .22, p < .001$) and customer service behaviors ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). An important implication for behavioral science research that arises from this present study is that, in order for SMEs to achieve higher performance, business leaders will need to provide a supportive work environment for their employees so that they could feel empowered to engage in superior customer service behaviors. This highlights the importance of employees' motivation and behaviors in linking HPWS and firms' performance. This study is among the first to shed light on the role of CEOs' leadership on HPWS and the firms' performance.

Keywords: high performance work systems, benevolent leadership, psychological empowerment, customer service behavior

The development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is one of the most viable strategies for achieving the economic goals of most developing nations (Baumol & Strom, 2007; Birch, 1987). In order for SMEs to participate competitively in the world market, they need to attract, develop and retain skilled employees (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). Unfortunately, this is still a tough reality for most SMEs. Specifically, it has been indicated that owners of family-owned businesses tend to lack managerial skills and the human capital, which are greatly required as a source of competitive advantage (Wu, Hoque, Bacon, & Bou Llusar, 2015).

The present study seeks to highlight the importance of 'High Performance Work Systems' (HPWS) in the success of small business firms. In the strategic human resource management (HRM) literature, HPWS refers to a bundle of interrelated HRM practices designed to enhance employee skills, motivation and opportunity for development which may include specific practices that are both internally and externally aligned such as selective staffing, training and development, compensation, and performance appraisal (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Huselid, 1995).

¹PhD Candidate, Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand.
E-mail: O.chumphong@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Director of PhD Program in Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand.

In the past two decades, research has shown that HPWS can have a significant positive impact on the performance of large firms (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Becker & Huselid, 1998; Way, 2002). At the same time, research has revealed that HPWS could also play a vital role in increasing the performance of small firms. Specifically, it has been indicated that SMEs that adopt HPWS are more likely to grow more innovatively (De Winne & Sels, 2010) and have more internal capabilities than those that do not implement it (Cardon & Stevens, 2004).

Despite such empirical evidence, it is unfortunate that few studies have examined the integral role of leadership in the adoption of HPWS and the success of SMEs. Indeed, research indicates that CEOs play a vital role in determining the strategic choice and directions of organizations (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). To address this gap, the present study draws attention to the role of ‘benevolent’ leadership and proposes that CEOs who are benevolent are more likely to adopt HPWS in their firms. Specifically, benevolent leadership involves showing individualized care and concern for employees’ well-being (Wang & Cheng, 2010), which is highly relevant to understanding of the employment relationships in the Asian cultural context (Zhang, Huai, & Xie, 2015). Also, given the close proximity and interactions between business owners and their employees in small firms, it is argued that CEO’s benevolent leadership will play a particularly important role in determining SMEs’ success via the mediating role of HPWS.

Furthermore, although the underlying psychological mechanisms through which HPWS influences organizational performance have been theoretically and empirically established in the strategic HRM literature (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006; Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009), researchers have indicated that the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance still remains a “black box”, which deserves further attention from researchers (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Heffernan & Dundon, 2016). In particular, this present study draws from the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2000) to propose that the relationship between HPWS and SMEs’ performance could be mediated by employees’ psychological empowerment, which refers to one’s assessment of his or her perceived competence, job meaningfulness, job autonomy, and job impact (Spreitzer, 1995). It is also expected that the influence of psychological empowerment will occur indirectly through the extent to which employees engage in positive work-related behaviors. One such behavior, which could be particularly important among small firms, is customer service behavior (CSB) (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Potipiroon, Srisuthisard, & Faerman, 2019). Indeed, it has been indicated that CSB is an important behavioral outcome in organizational research (Ryan & Ployhart, 2003) and it is argued here that organizational performance is driven in part by the behavior of the service provider. Taken together, it is proposed that the influence of HPWS on SMEs’ performance could be explained by the extent to which employees feel psychologically empowered and are willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet customers’ needs and expectations. To date, no existing study that has examined the sequential mediating roles of these important variables.

Overall, the present research contributes to the existing knowledge on the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance by considering the antecedent role of CEO benevolent leadership as well as the mediating roles of psychological empowerment and CSB. In so doing, this study helps highlights the motivational and behavioral pathways through which HPWS could drive business performance. In the sections that follow, the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance, the roles of CEOs’ benevolent leadership, employees’ psychological empowerment and CSB are discussed.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

High Performance Work System (HPWS) and Organizational Performance

Over the past two decades, the strategic HRM research has moved beyond the emphasis on traditional HRM practices and begun to examine a bundle of various interrelated HRM practices, which generally include, but are not limited to, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, career development and promotion, participation in decision-making, and the use of self-managed teams (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Huselid, 1995). It has been argued that these HRM practices are most effective when they are both internally and externally aligned. *Internal alignment*, or *horizontal fit*, suggests that HRM practices should complement one another, whereas *external alignment*, or *vertical fit*, indicates that HRM practices should be aligned with the organization's strategy. One way to achieve this is by ensuring that the execution of these practices is consistent with a coherent set of behavioral competencies that tie directly with the organizational culture and goals. When bundled together, these HRM practices create synergies that help to deploy the value of human capital (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Huselid, 1995; Wright & McMahan, 1992).

In the strategic HRM literature, *the ability-motivation-opportunity* (AMO) theory has been used to explain the role of HPWS in promoting employees' ability, motivation, and opportunity for development in order to achieve superior organizational performance. According to Macky and Boxall (2007), *ability-enhancing HRM practices* include selective selection and comprehensive training, whereas *motivation-enhancing practices* may include contingent rewards, performance management, and internal promotion opportunities. Additionally, *opportunity-enhancing HRM practices* focus on employees' participation in decision-making and self-managed teams. That is, employees will perceive that they are given more work opportunities they are able to utilize their abilities and skills in the appropriate work roles. As HPWS involves a long-term investment in people by promoting skill development, employee empowerment, internal communication, fairness in compensation and status equalizing (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016), it has been shown that employees in firms with higher levels of HPWS will have greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower turnover, and higher productivity (Becker, Huselid, Pickus, & Spratt, 1997).

Although some scholars have questioned the extent to which HPWS actually exists in small business firms as they may not have the internal resources or capabilities to adopt and effectively implement HPWS or perhaps HPWS may not be even be needed in these types of organizations, others have indicated that successful SMEs tend to have higher levels of HPWS (Cardon & Stevens, 2004; Harney & Dundon, 2006; Kroon, Van De Voorde, & Timmers, 2013; Tansky & Heneman, 2003).

Benevolent Leadership and HPWS

This present study first propose that CEOs own the task of adopting and putting HRM activities into practice and that their leadership styles could play a vital role in the success of their firms. Within the broader leadership literature, researchers have generally focused on two primary leadership styles, namely task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership (Yukl, 2012; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). *Task-oriented leadership* involves structuring the roles of followers or subordinates, providing direction and instruction, using power, and behaving in ways that motivate and build an effective team to achieve organizational goals and objectives,

whereas *relations-oriented leadership* involves showing concern for the feelings of employees, treating subordinates with respect, caring about their well-being and providing emotional support.

The primary emphasis of this present research is on the benevolent leadership style, an important component of relation-oriented leadership, which has been shown to be particularly important and relevant in the Asian cultures. Specifically, it has been shown that CEOs' benevolent behaviors, such as showing concern and care for employees, treating employees with respect, caring about employees' welfare, and providing support could lead to positive attitudes of employees towards the organization (Wang, Tsui, & Xin, 2011; Xi, Zhao, & Xu, 2016). Benevolent leadership is also one of three main components of paternalistic leadership (i.e., morale integrity, benevolence and authority) (Chen et al., 2014; Farh & Cheng, 2000), which involves displaying holistic caring behaviors, individualized care and concern for subordinates' well-being (Wang & Cheng, 2010). Arguably, this leadership style is vital to building strong ties between the leader and the subordinate and fostering the father-and-son relationship in which the father treats the son with care and kindness. This present study thus argues that benevolent leaders are those who treat their employees like family members by displaying generosity and concern for their well-being.

Drawing from the Upper Echelon Theory (UET) (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984), the present study proposes that CEOs' benevolence could influence the extent to which HPWS is adopted within their firms. According to the UET, CEOs' characteristics including sex, age, educational background, work experience, value orientation, personality and leadership styles can significantly influence how they make strategic decisions to guide their business. Indeed, in the early stages of a firm's life cycle, firm owners generally play a crucial role in setting organizational strategies and directions. Accordingly, this present study argues that CEOs who are benevolent are more likely to adopt HRM practices that aim to help employees grow and succeed in their work roles. That is, it is expected the adoption of HPWS would be consistent with the underlying values held by the CEO. A recent study by Kroon et al. (2013) showed that, in small firms where the owners have high awareness in the value of HRM, employees tend to perceive a greater presence of HPWS. Thus, it is expected that CEOs' benevolent leadership will lead to the adoption of HPWS, in turn resulting in higher organizational performance. Based on this reasoning, the present study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 1: Benevolent leadership is positively related to High Performance Work System.

Hypothesis 2: High Performance Work System mediates the relationship between benevolent leadership and organizational performance.

The Role of Psychological Empowerment

Aside from examining the role of leadership, it is further proposed that the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance could be mediated by employees' *psychological empowerment* (Spreitzer, 1995). The process of psychological empowerment refers to the employees' belief in their potential to be successful in their jobs, which occurs through four cognitions including perceived competence, job meaning, autonomy and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). *Meaning* refers to the extent to which employees feel that their work is meaningful. *Competence* can be thought of as self-efficacy whereby the employee trusts that they can undertake their work roles. *Impact* refers to the extent to which individuals perceive

that they can have a positive impact on their immediate work environment. Finally, *autonomy* refers to the extent to which employees feel that they can independently perform their work without people watching over their shoulders.

The conceptualization of psychological empowerment is consistent with the underlying tenet of self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT rests on the notion that 'intrinsic or autonomous motivation' is the most enduring form of work motivation that will prompt employees to engage in several useful work-related behaviors. In order for individuals to become intrinsically motivated, it is important for three psychological needs to be satisfied, namely, the need for competence (i.e., enhancement of employees' skills and abilities), the need for autonomy (i.e., psychological freedom and the ability to use one's discretion in one's jobs) and the need for relatedness (i.e., meaningful connections with others). Thus, SDT suggests that in order for individuals to be intrinsically motivated, it is important for them to feel that they are 'able' to perform their roles effectively; that they can independently exercise their own judgment in their work; that they are also cared for, listened to and valued by significant others.

The present study proposes the adoption of HPWS could help empower and motivate employees in a number of ways. For example, training can help enhance to employees' sense of self-efficacy and competence by providing them with necessary job-related skills. Information sharing among organizational members regarding their work could also allow them to perceive that their tasks are meaningful and important. Furthermore, self-managed teams could foster feelings that one is independent and autonomous in his/her work roles. Indeed, a meta-analysis by Chamberlin, Newton and Lepine (2018) showed that psychological empowerment serves as an important mediating mechanism between HPWS and positive organizational outcomes. Based on such empirical evidence, the present study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 3: High Performance Work System is a positively related to employees' psychological empowerment.

Hypothesis 4: Employees' psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between High Performance Work System and organizational performance.

The Role of Customer Service Behavior

Next, it is proposed that the relationship between HPWS and firm performance could be explained by the extent to which employees engage in customer service behavior (CSB). CSB has been defined as the extent to which employees strive to meet the highest service performances directed toward customers, including proactively assisting customers who need help, treating customers with courtesy, respect, and politeness and showing friendliness and warmth to them (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Potipiroon et al., 2018). Liao et al. (2009) also indicated that CSB is related to the overall professional appearance and the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy displayed by employees in serving customers. In particular, these behaviors could be viewed as a form of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) aimed at benefiting the customer (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Potipiroon et al., 2018).

Why is it necessary to consider the role of CSB? First, it has been shown that 'customer focus' is an important component of business strategies both in the service and manufacturing sectors (Ryan & Ployhart, 2003). Secondly, it has been indicated that poor service is the key

reason for why customers switch to buying products from other vendors, in turn negatively affecting business performance (Weitzel, Schwartzkopf, & Peach, 1989).

While numerous factors in the work environment may influence the extent to which front-line employees are motivated to perform their service roles effectively (Ryan & Ployhart, 2003), the present study focuses on the perceptions of supportive work environment engendered by the presence of HPWS. On the one hand, HRM practices that are centered on improving employees' abilities and motivation, such as service-related training programs or the performance appraisal and reward systems that recognize superior service performance could lead to better customer service quality and, consequently, business performance. On the other hand, from the social exchange perspective (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), when the employers take care of employees' well-being and treat them with dignity and respect, there would be more chances that the employee will engage in more positive work behaviors. Empirically, Chuang and Liao (2010) indicated that HPWS fosters the shared perceptions of supportive organizational environment, which in turn encourage employees to engage in discretionary behaviors that make positive contributions to organizational performance. Based on these arguments and empirical evidence, this study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 5: High Performance Work System is a positively related to customer service behavior.

Hypothesis 6: Customer service behavior mediates the relationship between High Performance Work System and organizational performance.

Sequential Mediation Hypothesis

Integrating the ideas discussed above, the present research proposes that the influence of CEOs' benevolent leadership and the adoption of HPWS could be transmitted to organizational performance via the mediating roles of employee psychological empowerment and superior customer service behaviors (CSB). Specifically, through selective staffing, employees' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) will match the requirements of the tasks assigned to them (Locke, 1976; Macky & Boxall, 2007). Proper delegation of decision-making responsibility may also increase employees' beliefs in their own ability to provide excellent services to customers. Indeed, allowing employees to decide how to handle customer complaints could also enhance their perceived self-determination and job impact (Liao et al., 2009). Intensive training programs also equip front-line employees with necessary competencies for delivering superior customer service. Furthermore, continuous performance feedback will allow employees to perceive that their service roles are critical and significant to the well-being of the organization. Through this performance management process, it is also expected that employees' behaviors and attitudes will be better aligned with the business directions. Thus, it is argued that, in order for business to achieve high growth, there is a strong need to design their HRM practices so that employees have the motivation and KSAs to engage in behaviors that meet or go beyond customer needs. Taken together, the present study proposes that the influence of CEOs' benevolent leadership on SMEs' performance will be sequentially mediated by HPWS, psychological empowerment and CSB. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 7: HPWS, employee psychological empowerment and customer service behavior mediate the relationship between CEO benevolence and organizational performance.

Method

Sample and Data Collection

The present study tested the above hypotheses by using the data collected from a sample of front-line employees working in SMEs located in the southern region of Thailand. The contact information of all SMEs were obtained from the database operated by the Office of SMEs Promotion (2017). A sample of SMEs was selected from a pool of SMEs located on the eastern coast of Thailand's sub-southern region including Surat Thani, Songkhla, Phattalung, Chumphon and Nakhon Sri Thammarat. Specifically, this research employed a multi-stage sampling technique for the selection of the respondents. First, the proportional stratified sampling technique was used to categorize the number of SMEs into strata (30 SMEs [15 small and 15 medium sized enterprises] per province). This technique ensures a proportional representation of the business enterprises of different sizes from the provinces. In the second stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to draw respondents from each of the 150 SMEs (10 employees per SME, totaling 1,500). Note that although this region has contributed to the economic and social growth of Thailand's Southern region, since 2011, the economic growth rate of this specific region has witnessed a downward trend (The Office of SMEs Promotion, 2017). Thus, it is interesting to examine the extent to which SMEs in this region embraces internal practices that may promote their growth.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to the front-line employees in each SME. The researchers received the permission from the SME owner to access the respondents. First, the respondents were informed in detail about the objectives of this present research and to rest assured that their personal identity will be kept anonymous. Then, they were asked to fill out the basic information about themselves and to assess their CEOs' leadership and organizational performance as well as to assess their own psychological empowerment and CSB. Upon completing the survey, each respondent was asked to staple and return the survey either to the researchers on the same day or to the administrative department from which the surveys were collected in the following week.

Out of the 1,500 surveys distributed to 150 SMEs, 951 from 110 SMEs were returned, resulting in a 63.4% response rate. Note that the respondents from at least 40 SMEs had not completed the surveys within the requested time frame and thus were not considered for this present research. Note that these non-response SMEs were proportionally distributed across the provinces and between the small and medium enterprises. The characteristics of respondents are described in Table 1.

Measurements

Benevolent leadership was measured using the 4-item benevolent leadership scale developed by Wang et al. (2011). *HPWS* was measured with a 24-item scale that is developed for this present study. The measurement items were drawn from several previous studies (Datta, Guthrie, & Wright, 2005; Delery & Doty, 1996; Lepak & Snell, 2002; Snell & Dean, 1992). Specifically, this measurement instrument covers 8 HRM practices (4 items for each specific dimension) including recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, self-managed teams, communication, participation in decision-making, and career development and promotion. These HRM practices are consistent with the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) framework discussed earlier. *Psychological empowerment* was

assessed using Spreitzer's (1995) 12-item scale comprising four dimensions: autonomy, competence, impact and meaning. *Customer service behavior (CSB)* was measured using the 5-item scale developed by Bettencourt and Brown (1997). These measurements were all based on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Finally, *organizational performance* was measured using the scale developed by Tan and Litsschert (1994). The respondents were asked to indicate, on a five-point scale, the performance of their SMEs (in comparison to other firms) within the same industry, ranging from 1 (*among the bottom 20 %*) to 5 (*among the top 20 %*).

Table 1

SMEs and Respondents Demographics

Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Business Sector			Firm size		
Manufacturing	469	49.3	Small	494	51.9
Service	482	50.7	Medium	457	48.1
Gender			Education		
Male	324	34.1	Masters	22	38.6
Female	623	65.5	Bachelors	562	59.1
Missing	4	0.4	Below Bachelors	367	2.3
Age (years)			Tenure (years)		
Less than 30	432	45.5	Less than 5	646	67.9
31 - 40	363	38.2	6 - 10	173	18.3
41 - 50	122	12.8	11 - 15	79	8.3
51 - 60	34	3.6	16 - 20	39	4.1
Salary (THB)			21-25	9	0.9
Less than 10,000	296	31.1	26-30	5	0.5
10,001 - 20,000	571	60	Positions		
20,001 - 30,000	49	5.2	Full-time Worker	833	87.6
More than 30,001	35	3.7	Temporary Worker	118	12.4
Total	951	100	Total	951	100

Data Analyses

First, the validity and reliability of the study variables were examined via a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Note that the measures with more than 5 items (e.g., HPWS and psychological empowerment) were combined into composite scores using parcelling techniques (i.e., items were combined within their individual subscales) (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Next, the hypotheses were examined by testing the hypothesized structural model. Several indices were used to assess the model fits, including the overall model's chi-square, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). To indicate a good fit, CFI and TLI should be above 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); and RMSEA should be between 0.05 and 0.08 (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Because the data in the current study had a nested data structure (i.e., employees are nested within SMEs), all the analyses were conducted using the TYPE = COMPLEX option in Mplus Software. This built-in function helps adjust for the standard errors of clustered data (Muthén & Muthén, 1998). Tests of sequential mediation involving multiple mediators were also conducted (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Indirect effects were derived using a bootstrapping method involving 10,000 resampling.

Results

The Measurement Model

Prior to testing the main hypotheses, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were first conducted to evaluate the distinctiveness of the key variables. As shown in Table 2, this model fitted the data well ($\chi^2 = 952.26$, $df = 265$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05, Model 1) and was significantly better than other models. For example, when CSB and organizational performance were combined into one latent construct (Model 2), the model fitted the data significantly worse ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2,219.39$, $\Delta df = 4$, $p < .001$).

Table 2

Comparisons of Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR	Model	$\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$
1. Five-factor	952.26	265	0.05	0.95	0.94	0.03		
2. Four-factor	3,171.65	269	0.10	0.78	0.75	0.10	2 vs.1	2,219.39/4
3. Four-factor	3,206.13	269	0.11	0.78	0.75	0.10	3 vs.1	2,253.87/4
4. Three-factor	3,740.38	272	0.12	0.74	0.70	0.12	4 vs.1	2,788.12/7
5. One-factor	7,730.48	275	0.17	0.43	0.38	0.14	5 vs.1	6,778.22/10

Note: $N = 951$; $\Delta\chi^2/\Delta df$ were all significant at $p < 0.001$ level; Five-factor (Hypothesized); Four-factor (1) (CSB and organizational performance merged); Four-factor (2) (HPWS and organizational Performance merged); Three-factor (Empowerment, CSB and organizational performance merged); One-factor (All constructs merged)

Consistent with the CFA results, the bivariate correlations among all the key variables were also found to fall within an acceptable range ($r < .70$) (see Table 3). In assessing the convergent validity of the measurement items, the item loadings on their respective constructs were examined (Hulland, 1999). As shown in Table 4, all the factor loadings were above the recommended .70 value, ranging from .66 to .92. Furthermore, it was found that the average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from .49 to .82, which exceeded the recommended value of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliabilities (CR) also ranged from .55 to .95, exceeding the recommended value of .60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In addition, Cronbach's alphas showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency, ranging from .80 to .95 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliability Estimates

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Benevolent Leadership	3.84	.73	(.95)				
2. HPWS	3.66	.58	.62**	(.92)			
3. Psychological Empowerment	3.72	.56	.48**	.51**	(.80)		
4. Customer Service Behavior (CSB)	3.96	.61	.35**	.35**	.48**	(.92)	
5. Organizational Performance	3.44	.73	.28**	.31**	.36**	.34**	(.93)

Note: $N = 951$; ** $p < 0.01$; Cronbach's alphas reported in parentheses

Table 4
Factor Loadings, AVE and CR

Factors	Measurement Items	Factor Loadings
CEO Benevolence	<i>To what extent do the following statements describe your CEOs' leadership style? AVE = .82; CR = .95; α = .95</i>	
	1. My CEO shows concerns for the employee's family members'	0.91
	2. My CEO shows concerns for employee's personal life	0.90
	3. My CEO treats employees like family members	0.92
	4. My CEO shows love and care for subordinates	0.90
High Performance Work System	<i>To what extent do the following statements describe your perceptions about HPWS implemented at your organization? AVE = .59; CR = .92; α = .92</i>	
	1. Selective staffing	0.70
	2. Intensive training	0.71
	3. Employee participation	0.76
	4. Communication	0.81
	5. Rewards	0.80
	6. Performance appraisals	0.82
	7. Self-managed teams	0.75
	8. Career development	0.81
Psychological Empowerment	<i>To what extent do you feel the following? AVE = .49; CR = .55; α = .80</i>	
	1. Autonomy	0.66
	2. Competence	0.70
	3. Impact	0.71
	4. Meaning	0.74
Customer Service Behavior (CSB)	<i>To what extent do you engage in the following behaviors? AVE = .71; CR = .92; α = .92</i>	
	1. I am willing to help customers, even if it is not my responsibility.	0.77
	2. I solving a problem for customer beyond their expectations.	0.83
	3. I provided excellent customer service more than my job responsibility.	0.85
	4. I am willing to do anything to satisfy customer.	0.87
	5. I often do everything possible to help my customer.	0.89
Organizational Performance	<i>To what extent are you satisfied with the following organizational performance indicators in the previous year? AVE = .77; CR = .93; α = .93</i>	
	1. Growth in sales	0.83
	2. Sales	0.89
	3. Competitive Positioning	0.89
	4. Overall firm performance	0.91

Note: All the factor loadings were significant at the $p < 0.001$ level; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliabilities.

The Structural Model

As strong support was found for the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, the hypothesized structural model was then examined. Note that all structural paths were estimated. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 1, six out of ten paths were significant in the expected directions. Specifically, benevolent leadership had a direct positive relationship with HPWS ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$), psychological empowerment ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) but not with

organizational performance ($\beta = 0.02, p > .05$) or CSB ($\beta = .12, p > .05$). HPWS also had a positive relationship with psychological empowerment ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) but not with CSB ($\beta = .02, p > .05$) or organizational performance ($\beta = .11, p > .05$). Psychological empowerment also had a positive relationship with CSB ($\beta = 0.46, p < .001$) and organizational performance ($\beta = 0.22, p < .001$), whereas CSB had a positive relationship with organizational performance ($\beta = 0.18, p < .01$). These findings provide support for Hypotheses 1, 3 and 5.

Table 5

Structural Equation Model Path Coefficients

Estimated Paths			β	t	p -value
CEO	→	HPWS	0.62	15.84	0.000
CEO	→	Empow	0.25	3.86	0.000
CEO	→	CSB	0.12	1.71	0.086
CEO	→	OrgPerf	0.02	0.41	0.679
HPWS	→	Empow	0.43	5.78	0.000
HPWS	→	CSB	0.02	0.28	0.778
HPWS	→	OrgPerf	0.11	1.94	0.052
Empow	→	CSB	0.46	7.58	0.000
Empow	→	OrgPerf	0.22	3.48	0.000
CSB	→	OrgPerf	0.18	3.04	0.002

Note: $N = 951$; β = standardized coefficients; CEO = CEOs' benevolent leadership; HPWS = High Performance Work Systems; Empow = Psychological Empowerment; CSB = Customer Service Behavior; OrgPerf = Organizational Performance

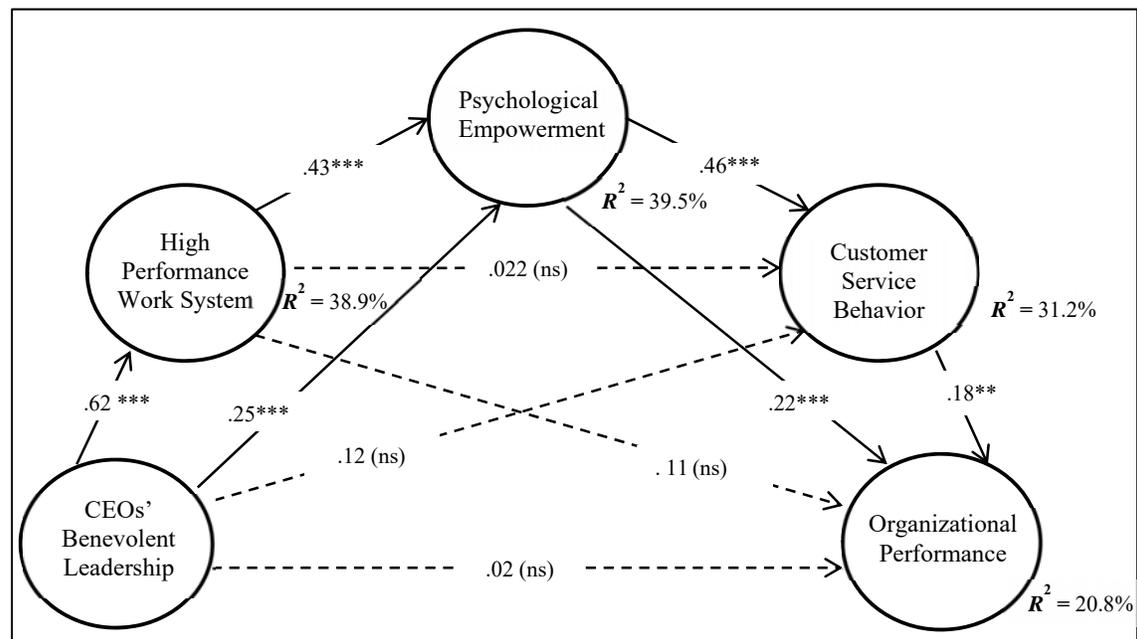


Figure 1. Structural Equation Model Results

Note: Path coefficients are standardized; Dashed lines represent non-significant paths. ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; ns = non-significant ($p > .05$).

Mediation effects were then tested. As shown in Table 6, the result showed that the indirect effect of CEOs' benevolent leadership on organizational performance via HPWS was statistically significant (.06, 95% CI [.01, .13]). Hypothesis 2 was therefore supported. In addition, the effect of HPWS on organizational performance via perceptions of psychological empowerment was statistically significant (.09, 95% CI [.04, .15]), providing support to Hypothesis 4. However, the effect of HPWS on organizational performance via the mediating role of CSB was non-significant (.00, 95% CI [-.01, .02]), failing to provide support to Hypothesis 6.

Table 6

Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects

Hypothesized Indirect Paths	Indirect Effects	SE	p-value	95% Confidence Intervals (CIs)	
				LLCI	ULCI
CEO → HPWS → OrgPerf	0.06	0.02	0.051	0.01	0.13
HPWS → Empow → OrgPerf	0.09**	0.03	0.004	0.04	0.15
HPWS → CSB → OrgPerf	0.00	0.01	0.784	-0.01	0.02
CEO → HPWS → Empow → CSB → OrgPerf	0.02**	0.00	0.003	0.01	0.03
CEO → OrgPerf (Direct Effect)	0.02	0.06	0.679	-0.06	0.10
<i>Total Indirect Effect</i>	0.21***	0.04	0.000	0.20	0.32
<i>Total Effect</i>	0.24***	0.03	0.000	0.22	0.35

Note: $N = 951$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; SE = standard errors; LLCI = lower limit CI; ULCI = upper limit CI; CI that excludes zero indicates that the indirect effects are significant; CEO = CEOs' benevolent leadership; HPWS = High Performance Work Systems; Empow = Psychological Empowerment; CSB = Customer Service Behavior; OrgPerf = Organizational Performance.

Finally, it was found the indirect effect of CEOs' benevolent leadership on organizational performance via the sequential mediating roles of HPWS, psychological empowerment and CSB was statistically significant (.02, 95% CI [.01, .03]). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was supported. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1, the results revealed that the proposed theoretical model could explain about 38.9% of the variance in HPWS, 39.5% in psychological empowerment, 31.2% in CSB and 20.8 in organizational performance.

Discussion

This present study examined the link between CEOs' benevolent leadership, HPWS and organizational performance and the mediating roles of psychological empowerment and customer service behaviors (CSB). The findings lend full support to the hypotheses that CEOs play an important role in determining the adoption of HPWS among small business firms and that the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance could be mediated by employees' motivational (i.e., psychological empowerment) and behavioral (i.e., CSB) processes. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

First and foremost, the findings from the present study provide additional support to the notion that HPWS can be a successful endeavor for both large and small business organizations (Becker & Huselid, 2006). Although Bacon and Hoque (2005) explained that the adoption HPWS in SMEs is likely limited to informal practices, the present study argues that it is a matter

of degree rather than a discrete difference that separates the existence or non-existence of formal HRM practices. Indeed, Kroon et al. (2013) indicated that even within a population of small firms, there tends to be a considerable variation in the adoption of HPWS. Indeed, as business firms grow bigger, it becomes almost inevitable for them to adopt some forms of formal HRM practices and perhaps to hire specialists (e.g., HR managers) to run the HR functions. This finding is consistent with Gray and Mabey (2005), who argued that small firms that adopt more formal HRM practices are more likely to achieve higher growth and will also be better positioned to reap the performance benefits in the future.

Secondly, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this present study is among the first to examine the role of CEOs' leadership styles in predicting the adoption of HPWS. Whereas past studies suggest that CEOs (i.e., their HRM knowledge) could play a critical role in the design of HRM practices in small firms (Qiao, Wang, & Wei, 2015), none of the previous study has actually examined the effect of CEO leadership on HPWS. Consistent with the upper echelon perspective, the study findings showed that CEOs' benevolent leadership (e.g., showing concern and care for employees, caring about employees' welfare, providing support) could directly influence the adoption of HPWS. This finding is consistent with previous research which indicates that the relational capital (e.g., relationships among management and employees) tends to play a particularly strong role in family-owned firms (Pittino, Visintin, Lenger, & Sternad, 2016).

Third, the present study provides an important insight into the role of employee's psychological empowerment and CSB. Indeed, given the critical role of front-line employees in customer service roles both in large and small firms, it is important for both practitioners and researchers to understand the nature and role of employees' perceptions about the work environment that may influence their motivation and service performance. While past studies have shown several factors could influence the ability of employees to deliver services, such as personality traits (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Potipiroon et al., 2018) or emotional regulation strategies (Potipiroon et al., 2018), the study indicates that perceptions of psychological empowerment that results from the presence of HPWS could influence employees' CSB and ultimately, firm performance. More importantly, while Liao et al. (2009) had shown that employees' perceptions of HPWS were positively related to their service performance through the improvement in human capital and perceived organizational support, the present study advances current research by showing that psychological empowerment could be an additional mechanism through which HPWS affects individuals' behaviors and firms' performance. Thus, the results from this present research lend support to the notion that the relationship between HPWS and organizational performance could be mediated by both individuals' motivation and the resultant work-related behaviors.

Practical Implications

This research provides several useful implications for policy related to the development of SMEs. Although SMEs constitute a major source of employment and generate significant domestic and export earnings, they face a number of inherent difficulties in developing their own capacities to meet the demands of the changing business environment. As indicated by The Office of SMEs Promotion (2017), owners of family-owned businesses tend to lack leadership and management skills as well as the HRM knowledge that is required to attract and retain skilled employees. Although it is true that owners of SMEs usually utilize their personal work experiences to start their own businesses, the hard reality is that when their businesses

grow bigger, good management skills become indispensable. Thus, it is important for the government to equip SMEs (and their top leaders) with necessary resources and skills that could be used to meet these inherent challenges. Continuous training (i.e., a provision of leadership skills and HRM practices) and building network or communities of practices among SMEs that would allow them to access and share valuable HRM knowledge and experiences could be an effective way to overcome these challenges.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the study findings, there are several limitations that should be considered. First, because the study data were collected from the same respondents at one time point, it is impossible to rule out the potential problem of common method variance (Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, future research could collect data from multiple sources. For example, customer service performance could be evaluated by the actual customers who come into contact with the SMEs, whereas objective performance data could be obtained from the CEOs or managing directors of SMEs. Also, this present study only examined the mediating role of psychological empowerment as an attitudinal pathway through which HPWS influences organizational performance. Hence, the examination of other plausible mediating variables (e.g., social exchange processes) could provide a more comprehensive picture of the study findings. With respect to the methodology, although the sample size for this present study is consistent with the existing HPWS literature, future research should consider providing a longer period of time for the respondents to complete the surveys (perhaps a month). They can also consider mailing out the survey to the respondents with return, postage-paid envelopes instead of hand-distributing the survey to them. Finally, the generalizability of the findings could be limited, as this study was only conducted on SMEs operating in the southern region of Thailand. Future studies should attempt to replicate the current findings in other business or cultural contexts. Indeed, Thailand is a country of high power distance and the influence of benevolent leaders could be particularly salient in the present context.

Conclusion

This study advances the knowledge in the strategic HRM literature by highlighting the role of CEOs' benevolent leadership on HPWS and the psychological and behavioral mediating mechanisms underlying the relationship between HPWS and firm performance. The study findings indicate that firms with more benevolent CEOs are more likely to adopt HPWS, in turn leading to higher levels of psychological empowerment, customer service behaviors and ultimately organizational performance. These findings emphasize that the employee-focused environment that puts a premium on promoting employee's motivation and positive work behaviors could play a central role in distinguishing high- vs. low-performing firms.

References

- Bacon, N., & Hoque, K. (2005). HRM in the SME sector: valuable employees and coercive networks. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(11), 1976-1999. doi: 10.1080/09585190500314706.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16(1), 74-94. doi: 10.1007/BF02723327

- Baumol, W. J., & Strom, R. J. (2007). Entrepreneurship and economic growth. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 1(3-4), 233-237. doi: 10.1002/sej.26
- Becker, B. E., & Gerhart, B. (1996). The impact of human resource management on organizational performance: Progress and prospects. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4), 779-801. doi: 10.2307/256712
- Becker, B. E., & Huselid, M. A. (1998). High performance work systems and firm performance: A synthesis of research and managerial implications. In K. M. Rowland & G. R. Ferris (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resource management* (Vol. 16) (pp. 53-101). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Becker, B. E., & Huselid, M. A. (2006). Strategic Human Resources Management: Where Do We Go From Here?. *Journal of Management*, 32(6), 898-925. doi:10.1177/0149206306293668
- Becker, B. E., Huselid, M. A., Pickus, P. S., & Spratt, M. F. (1997). HR as a source of shareholder value: Research and recommendations. *Human Resource Management*, 36(1), 39-47. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-050X(199721)36:1<39::AID-HRM 8>3.0.CO;2-X
- Bettencourt, L. A., & Brown, S. W. (1997). Contact employees: Relationships among workplace fairness, job satisfaction and prosocial service behaviors. *Journal of Retailing*, 73(1), 39-61. doi: 10.1016/S0022-4359(97)90014-2
- Birch, D. L. (1987). *Job creation in America: How our smallest companies put the most people to work*. NY: Free Press.
- Bowen, D. E., & Ostroff, C. (2004). Understanding HRM–firm performance linkages: The role of the “strength” of the HRM system. *Academy of Management Review*, 29(2), 203-221. doi: 10.5465/amr.2004.12736076
- Cardon, M. S., & Stevens, C. E. (2004). Managing human resources in small organizations: What do we know?. *Human Resource Management Review*, 14(3), 295-323. doi: 10.1016/j.hrmr.2004.06.001
- Chamberlin, M., Newton, D. W., & LePine, J. A. (2018). A meta-analysis of empowerment and voice as transmitters of high-performance managerial practices to job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(10), 1296-1313. doi: 10.1002/job.2295
- Chen, X. P., Eberly, M. B., Chiang, T.J., Farh, J.L., & Cheng, B.S. (2014). Affective trust in Chinese leaders: Linking paternalistic leadership to employee performance. *Journal of Management*, 40(3), 796-819. doi: 10.1177/0149206311410604
- Combs, J., Liu, Y., Hall, A., & Ketchen, D. (2006). How much do high-performance work practices matter? A meta-analysis of their effects on organizational performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 59(3), 501-528. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2006.00045.x
- Chuang, C. H., & Liao, H. (2010). Strategic human resource management in service context: Taking care of business by taking care of employees and customers. *Personnel Psychology*, 63(1), 153-196. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2009.01165.x
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900. doi: 10.1177/0149206305279602
- Datta, D. K., Guthrie, J. P., & Wright, P. M. (2005). Human resource management and labor productivity: does industry matter?. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 135-145. doi: 10.5465/amj.2005.15993158
- De Winne, S., & Sels, L. (2010). Interrelationships between human capital, HRM and innovation in Belgian start-ups aiming at an innovation strategy. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(11), 1863-1883. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2010.505088

- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227-268. doi: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Delery, J. E., & Doty, D. H. (1996). Modes of theorizing in strategic human resource management: Tests of universalistic, contingency, and configurational performance predictions. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*(4), 802-835. doi: 10.2307/256713
- Farh, J. L., & Cheng, B. S. (2000). A cultural analysis of paternalistic leadership in Chinese organizations. In J. T. Li, A. S. Tsui, & E. Weldon (Eds), *Management and organizations in the Chinese context* (pp.84-127). London: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1057/9780230511590_5
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(3), 382-388. doi: 10.2307/3150980
- Gray, C., & Mabey, C. (2005). Management development: key differences between small and large businesses in Europe. *International Small Business Journal, 23*(5), 467-485. doi: 10.1177/0266242605055908
- Hambrick, D. C. (2007). Upper echelons theory: An update. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(2), 334-343. doi: 10.5465/amr.2007.24345254
- Hambrick, D. C., & Mason, P. A. (1984). Upper echelons: The organization as a reflection of its top managers. *Academy of Management Review, 9*(2), 193-206. doi: 10.2307/258434
- Harney, B., & Dundon, T. (2006). Capturing complexity: developing an integrated approach to analysing HRM in SMEs. *Human Resource Management Journal, 16*(1), 48-73. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-8583.2006.00004.x
- Heffernan, M., & Dundon, T. (2016). Cross-level effects of high-performance work systems (HPWS) and employee well-being: the mediating effect of organizational justice. *Human Resource Management Journal, 26*(2), 211-231. doi: 10.1111/1748-8583.12095
- Hu, L. t., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 1-55. doi: 10.1080/10705519909540118
- Hulland, J. (1999). Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. *Strategic Management Journal, 20*(2), 195-204. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199902)20:2<195::AID-SMJ13>3.0.CO;2-7
- Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(3), 635-672. doi: 10.2307/256741
- Kroon, B., Van De Voorde, K., & Timmers, J. (2013). High performance work practices in small firms: a resource-poverty and strategic decision-making perspective. *Small Business Economics, 41*(1), 71-91. doi: 10.1007/s11187-012-9425-0
- Lepak, D. P., & Snell, S. A. (2002). Examining the human resource architecture: The relationships among human capital, employment, and human resource configurations. *Journal of Management, 28*(4), 517-543. doi:10.1177/014920630202800403
- Liao, H., Toya, K., Lepak, D. P., & Hong, Y. (2009). Do they see eye to eye? Management and employee perspectives of high-performance work systems and influence processes on service quality. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 94*(2), 371. doi: 10.1037/a0013504

- Little, T. D., Cunningham, W. A., Shahar, G., & Widaman, K. F. (2002). To parcel or not to parcel: Exploring the question, weighing the merits. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 9(2), 151-173. doi: 10.1207/S15328007SEM0902_1
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*, 1, (pp.1297-1343). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- MacCallum, R. C., Browne, M. W., & Sugawara, H. M. (1996). Power analysis and determination of sample size for covariance structure modeling. *Psychological methods*, 1(2), 130-149. doi: 10.1037/1082-989X.1.2.130
- Macky, K., & Boxall, P. (2007). The relationship between high-performance work practices and employee Attitudes: An investigation of additive and interactive effects. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(4), 537-567. doi: 10.1080/09585190601178745
- Muthén, L. K. & Muthén, B. O. (1998-2012). *Mplus user's guide* (7th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric methods*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Pittino, D., Visintin, F., Lenger, T., & Sternad, D. (2016). Are high performance work practices really necessary in family SMEs? An analysis of the impact on employee retention. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 7(2), 75-89. doi: 10.1016 /j.jfbs.2016.04.002
- Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879
- Potipiroon, W., Srisuthisa-ard, A., & Faerman, S. (2019). Public service motivation and customer service behaviour: Testing the mediating role of emotional labour and the moderating role of gender. *Public Management Review*, 21(5), 650-668. doi: 10.1080/14719037.2018.1500629
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods*, 40(3), 879-891. doi: 10.3758/BRM.40.3.879
- Qiao, K., Wang, X., & Wei, L. Q. (2015). Determinants of high-performance work systems in small and medium-sized private enterprises in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 53(2), 185-203. doi: 10.1111/1744-7941.12038
- Ryan, A. M., & Ployhart, R. E. (2003). Customer service behavior In I. B. Weiner & N. W. Schmitt (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Volume 12 industrial and organizational psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp.377-397). London: John Wiley & Son.
- Snell, S. A., & Dean, J. W. (1992). Integrated manufacturing and human resource management: A human capital perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 35(3), 467-504. doi: 10.2307/25686
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442-1465. doi: 10.2307/256865
- Tan, J., & Litsschert, R. J. (1994). Environment-strategy relationship and its performance implications: An empirical study of the Chinese electronics industry. *Strategic Management Journal*, 15(1), 1-20. doi: 10.1002/smj.4250150102
- Tansky, J. W., & Heneman, R. (2003). Guest editor's note: Introduction to the special issue on human resource management in SMEs: A call for more research. *Human Resource Management*, 42(4), 299-302. doi: 10.1002/hrm.10091

- The office of SMEs promotion. (2017, June 11). ทำไมต้องจัดทำแผนส่งเสริม SME ฉบับที่ 4 [Why do we need to do the 4th SME promotion master plan (2017-2021)]. Retrieved June 11, 2017, from http://www.sme.go.th/upload/mod_download/ทำไมต้องจัดทำแผนส่งเสริม%20SME%20ฉบับที่%204.pdf
- Wang, A. C., & Cheng, B. S. (2010). When does benevolent leadership lead to creativity?. The moderating role of creative role identity and job autonomy. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(1), 106-121. doi: 10.1002/job.634
- Wang, Tsui, A., & Xin, K. (2011). CEO leadership behaviors, organizational performance, and employees' attitudes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(1), 92-105. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.12.009
- Way, S. A. (2002). High performance work systems and intermediate indicators of firm performance within the US small business sector. *Journal of Management*, 28(6), 765-785. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.12.009
- Weitzel, W., Schwartzkopf, A. B., & Peach, E. B. (1989). The influence of employee perceptions of customer service on retail store sales. *Journal of Retailing*, 65(1), 27-40. doi: 10.1002/job.634
- Wright, P. M., & McMahan, G. C. (1992). Theoretical perspectives for strategic human resource management. *Journal of Management*, 18(2), 295-320. doi: 10.1177/014920639201800205
- Wu, N., Hoque, K., Bacon, N., & Bou Llusar, J. C. (2015). High-performance work systems and workplace performance in small, medium-sized and large firms. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 25(4), 408-423. doi: 10.1111/1748-8583.12084
- Xi, M., Zhao, S., & Xu, Q. (2016). The influence of CEO relationship-focused behaviors on firm performance: A chain-mediating role of employee relations climate and employees' attitudes. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 34(1), 173-192. doi: 10.1007/s10490-016-9487-7
- Yukl, G. (2012). Effective leadership behavior: What we know and what questions need more attention. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, 26(4), 66-85. doi: 10.5465/amp.2012.0088
- Yukl, G., Gordon, A., & Taber, T. (2002). A hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior: Integrating a half century of behavior research. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9(1), 15-32. doi: 10.1177/107179190200900102
- Zhang, Y., Huai, M.Y., & Xie, Y. (2015). Paternalistic leadership and employee voice in China: A dual process model. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(1), 25-36. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.01.002