



**INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEES INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR IN SELECTED SMES OF TEHRAN, IRAN**

By

**MARJAN LATIFI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my beloved husband and son  
To my dearest mother  
and  
To my late father who always encouraged me in life



Abstract of the thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
Fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**MARJAN LATIFI**

**January 2022**

**Chairman : Professor Ismi Arif bin Ismail, PhD**  
**Faculty : Educational Studies**

Globalization has obliged developing countries' SMEs to foreign competition and to survive and become competitive in local and global markets; innovation is a critical factor for SMEs which play a key role in the economy of countries around the world. After reviewing the literature of previous Iranian studies, most of them unanimously agreed that "the lack of innovation" was the main reason for making Iranian SMEs uncompetitive in both the local and the international markets. Therefore, to foster a high rate of innovation within the organization, employees should be encouraged to adopt innovative work behavior (IWB).

Since one of the most important causes of business failure in the Iranian context is mismanagement, this study aims to investigate the influence of perceived leadership style and emotional intelligence of employees on their innovative work behavior and its dimensions (idea generation, idea promotion, idea realization), among 195 employees from selected SMEs in the capital city of Iran, "Tehran".

The correlation quantitative research was applied through three instruments to define the research objectives including MLQ5x (Bass & Avolio, 2004), SSEIT (Schutte, 1998), and IWB (Janssen, 2000) after being translated from English to Persian and testing the validity and reliability. To determine the appropriate sample size, GPower 3.1 statistical software was used and stratified random sampling was applied. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used as analytical tools. The transformational leadership style and innovative work behavior of employees were correlated and significantly positive while the correlation between transactional leadership and employees' innovative work

behavior was significant but weak. The findings have shown that emotional intelligence was related and had a positive impact on innovative work behavior and its subscales. Stepwise Regression Analysis has shown that emotional intelligence, transformational, laissez-faire leadership style, and the level of education significantly predicted innovative work behavior and its components. Also, idea generation was significantly associated with the laissez-faire leadership style, while transactional was not.

This study developed a model that states situational leadership style based on Full Range Leadership Model and emotional intelligence both would be predictive factors for innovative work behavior. Social Exchange Theory which has been considered the underpinning theory matched the model. Contributing the findings to the HRD field might be a turning point in this domain for filling the gap in theory and practice that seems its important implications, especially for SME entrepreneurs and scholars.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**PENGARUH GAYA KEPIMPINAN YANG DIPERCEIFKAN DAN  
KECERDASAN EMOSI TERHADAP TINGKAH LAKU KERJA INOVATIF  
PEKERJA DALAM PKS TERPILIH TEHRAN, IRAN**

Oleh

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Globalisasi telah mewajibkan PKS negara membangun untuk bersaing di luar negara dan untuk terus hidup dan berdaya saing dalam pasaran tempatan dan global; inovasi merupakan faktor kritikal bagi PKS yang memainkan peranan penting dalam ekonomi negara di seluruh dunia. Selepas mengkaji literatur kajian Iran terdahulu, kebanyakan mereka sebulat suara bersetuju bahawa "kekurangan inovasi" adalah sebab utama untuk menjadikan PKS Iran tidak berdaya saing di pasaran tempatan dan antarabangsa. Oleh itu, untuk memupuk kadar inovasi yang tinggi dalam organisasi, pekerja harus digalakkan untuk mengamalkan tingkah laku kerja inovatif (IWB).

Memandangkan salah satu punca kegagalan perniagaan yang paling penting dalam konteks Iran ialah salah urus, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat pengaruh gaya kepimpinan yang dirasakan dan kecerdasan emosi pekerja terhadap tingkah laku kerja inovatif mereka dan dimensinya (penjanaan idea, promosi idea, realisasi idea), antara 195 pekerja daripada PKS terpilih di ibu kota Iran, "Tehran".

Penyelidikan kuantitatif korelasi telah diaplikasikan melalui tiga instrumen untuk mentakrifkan objektif kajian termasuk MLQ5x (Bass & Avolio, 2004), SSEIT (Schutte, 1998), dan IWB (Janssen, 2000) selepas diterjemahkan daripada bahasa Inggeris ke bahasa Parsi dan menguji kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan. Untuk menentukan saiz sampel yang sesuai, perisian statistik GPower 3.1 telah digunakan dan persampelan rawak berstrata telah digunakan. Kedua-dua statistik deskriptif dan inferensi digunakan sebagai alat analisis. Gaya kepimpinan transformasi dan tingkah laku kerja inovatif pekerja adalah berkorelasi dan positif secara signifikan manakala korelasi antara

kepimpinan transaksi dan tingkah laku kerja inovatif pekerja adalah signifikan tetapi lemah. Penemuan telah menunjukkan bahawa kecerdasan emosi mempunyai kaitan dan mempunyai kesan positif terhadap tingkah laku kerja inovatif dan subskalanya. Analisis Regresi Berperingkat telah menunjukkan bahawa kecerdasan emosi, gaya kepimpinan transformasi, laissez-faire, dan tahap pendidikan secara signifikan meramalkan tingkah laku kerja inovatif dan komponennya. Selain itu, penjanaan idea secara signifikan dikaitkan dengan gaya kepimpinan laissez-faire, manakala transaksional tidak. Kajian ini membangunkan model yang menyatakan gaya kepimpinan situasi berdasarkan Model Kepimpinan Julat Penuh dan kecerdasan emosi keduanya akan menjadi faktor ramalan untuk tingkah laku kerja yang inovatif. Teori Pertukaran Sosial yang telah dianggap sebagai teori asas sepadan dengan model. Menyumbang penemuan kepada bidang HRD mungkin menjadi titik perubahan dalam domain ini untuk mengisi jurang dalam teori dan amalan yang nampaknya implikasi pentingnya, terutamanya untuk usahawan dan sarjana PKS.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ISIPO	The Iranian Small Industries Organization
IWB	Innovative Work Behavior
LS	Leadership Style
TFL	Transformational Leadership Style
TALS	Transactional Leadership Style
LFLS	Laissez-Faire Leadership Style
EI	Emotional Intelligence
OEM	Office Equipment Manufacturer
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains several sections namely, the background of the research, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the research, limitation of the research, the operational definitions, the definition of terms, and summary of the chapter.

#### 1.1 Background of the Research

In today's world, the ability to innovate is now very important for society and business as it helps to create a competitive advantage (Oseebaar, 2012; Pieterse et al., 2010) and yields performance results (Kroes, 2015; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). According to (Dadfar et al., 2013) the existence of market globalization within a higher rivalry environment and the rapid increase of technological changes in addition to shorter product and technical lifecycles, has forced many firms, especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to focus on innovation which is the major factor for sustainable competitive advantage. Whilst small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly recognized as the central contributors to innovation, they also portray a key role all around the world within the national economies of countries (Bayarçelik et al., 2014).

In the management world, companies believe that global organizational innovation is heavily dependent on the improvement of the innovative work behavior of employees (IWB); therefore the methods and the probabilities for developing such behavior in the workplace are among the main topic for scholars and practitioners (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). In addition, a key predictor of employee or team, and organizational innovation is leadership (Hughes et al., 2018). On the other hand, (Dincer & Orhan, 2012) has stated a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior. Also, other studies have been conducted that show an individual innovative work behavior increases with increasing emotional intelligence and vice versa (Sari & Amalia, 2022; Shojaei & Siuki, 2014).

Concerning the background of the research, the author briefly explains the most important concepts in this study such as innovative work behavior, emotional intelligence, leadership style, and Iranian SMEs before explaining the problem statement as follows:

### **1.1.1 Innovative Work Behavior**

Companies agree that global organizational innovation greatly depends on improving the innovative work behavior of employees; hence, in the workplace, the methods and probabilities to develop such behavior lie as the basic topic for scholars and practitioners (De Jong & den Hartog, 2010). According to (J. P. J. de Jong & den Hartog, 2007) and (Al-Omari, 2017), the innovation of any organization results from its employees' innovative behavior. Innovative work behavior (IWB) has been defined as the intentional behavior of individuals in producing and implementing brand-new and beneficial ideas that explicitly intend to benefit the individual, group, or organization (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). However, innovative work behavior is much broader than creativity as it also covers promoting the idea and implementation phase (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). As such, IWB expects to generate innovative outputs and benefit the individual, the group, or the organization may range from the expansion and renewal of services, products, processes, and procedures to the evolution of many new production methods and management systems (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

### **1.1.2 Emotional Intelligence**

As time goes by, people begin to understand the meaning of emotional intelligence and its relation to their success in their professional and social lives (Hashern, 2010). The term "emotional intelligence" is known to be used for the first time (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). They managed to define it as a type of talent to observe an individual's emotions among others to be recognized and use this information to guide the individual's thoughts or actions (Orhan, 2012). Hence, people who have this ability shall be able to deal more positively with potential problems in an effective manner compared to others who do not (Khan et al., 2012). The importance of this necessity which has been proven according to many studies concludes the fact that people having a high level of competence in emotional intelligence not only can move toward the right decision but also can make the right decisions at the exact right time (Orhan, 2012).

It was proven that a positive effect of emotional intelligence lies in employee performance in organizations (Hashern, 2010). Emotional intelligence (EI) is one of the significant predictors of enhancing innovative work behavior since a high level of EI means that employees can disseminate their ideas effectively and implement innovative solutions at work; although, there is limited empirical evidence linking EI and IWB; several studies have found a significant relationship between these two constructs (Abdullah et al., 2021).

### 1.1.3 Leadership Style

Leadership style plays an increasingly fundamental role in SME management (Franco & Matos, 2015). According to (D. I. Jung et al., 2003) leadership has been considered one of the most significant factors for employee creativity and innovation. A large number of results (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Kroes, 2015; Sharifirad, 2013; Tahsildari et al., 2014) display that transformational leadership is proven to be beneficial for both innovative work behavior and organizational innovation, whereas transactional leadership can have negative effects (J. Lee, 2008; Oseebaar, 2012).

Despite having a negative trend within transactional leadership, it has been identified by (Iskan et al., 2014) to have a positive but less significant impact on organization performance and innovation than transformational leadership (Si & Wei, 2012). In the past, transactional leadership was considered to maintain a bipolar approach to transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). It is suggested by some studies that the impact of this leadership style on the IWB is still under research (Demeško, 2017). (Khan et al., 2012) noticed that transactional leadership and transformational leadership (which drives innovation) are equally effective within the Pakistani banking sector, and the results have shown that transactional leaders can also promote innovative work practices like transformational leaders (Khan et al., 2012).

### 1.1.4 Iranian SMEs

In different businesses and countries, SMEs have their specific definitions (Atkins & Lowe, 1997). Usually, the amounts of total investment and the number of employees are used to define SMEs (Storey et al., 2016). According to (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019) in EU and US-based companies, the number of employees under 10 is considered Micro while in some countries, companies with 30 to 199 employees are small, and those which include between 200 to 999 employees are considered medium. However, In Iran, the respective stages are 1 to 10 micro, 10 to 49 small, 50 to 149 medium, and over 150 employees as large companies (ISIPO, 2018); However, what is important about SMEs is not their size, it is about their number (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019).

Much of the literature is limited to the study of entrepreneurial characteristics or structural features, but the anchoring of innovation in SMEs is poorly understood (Paniccia, 1998). SMEs are considered flexible sources and innovative elements that can present vital contributions to the economical mechanism of a country through both employing the labor force and the number of SMEs (Islam & Tedford, 2012). There is no doubt that SMEs portray an essential role in the global economy and above 75% of all occupations in any country are created by SMEs (Agwu & Murray, 2015; Haghighi-Rad et al.,

2019) However, few studies are dedicated to a specialized innovation model for SMEs (Talebi et al., 2012).

According to The Iranian Organization of Small Industrial Enterprises and Industrial Parks, (ISIPO,2018), Iran's SMEs play a critical role in economic growth, in this regard, ISIPO has a mission to utilize support and a variety of services to offer development programs to improve the competitiveness of SMEs which converses equipment and infrastructure, by renewal and promoting networks, establishing and improving supportive facilities to increase employment and added share values to small industries in the manufacturing sector and GDP (ISIPO, 2022).

According to (Cordeiro & Viera, 2012) generally, the measurement of welfare is based upon the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, and welfare changes can be the result of changes in labor productivity (GDP per hour worked) and labor utilization (hours worked per person employed). According to Trading Economics, GDP in Iran averaged 165.08 USD Billion from 1960 until 2020, reaching an all-time high of 598.87 USD Billion in 2012 and a record low of 4.20 USD Billion in 1960 (Iran Indicators, 2022) The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Iran was worth 231.55 billion US dollars in 2020, according to official data from the World Bank while the GDP value of Iran represents 0.01 percent of the world economy (Iran Profile, 2020).

According to a report authored by Iran's Islamic Parliament Research Center, previous Iranian administrations have never paid sufficient attention to the development of SMEs (Kalhor, 2016). As such, SMEs in Iran account for a mere 14.7% of GDP and less than 30% of employment even though they constitute more than 85% of enterprises in the country (Kalhor, 2016). Based on (Central Bank, 2022) report the exports in Iran increased from 17285 USD Million in the second quarter of 2021 to 18850 USD Million in the third quarter of 2022; whereas the imports in Iran increased from 13025 USD Million in the second quarter of 2021 to 15010 USD Million in the third quarter of 2022.

Most SME managers measure the success of their companies by business growth and financial performance and these constructs are the main motivators for business continuity; although the absence of this success may result from poor strategic planning and the managerial skill deficiency of SME managers (Rodrigues et al., 2021). This influence may be more important in SMEs, where the owner-manager has a greater impact on their employees and firm-level decisions (Samadzad & Hashemi, 2022). In order to be competitive in the market and being survived, SME development is necessary from the HRD point of view (Arokiasamy & Ismail, 2009). Therefore, since SMEs constitute a strong majority of business firms; if any tool or approach can enable us to help them perform better, we are contributing to the growth of the country's economy (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019).

## 1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Despite the commitment to internationalization (Amirkhani, 2012) a great need for innovation to outlive and become competitive in both local and global markets (Nassar & Faloye, 2015) Iranian SMEs still suffer from innovative deficiency (Talebi et al., 2012). After reviewing the literature of previous Iranian studies, most of them unanimously agreed that "the lack of innovation (Kamalian et al., 2011; Talebi et al., 2012; Taffi, 2011) was the main reason making Iranian SMEs uncompetitive in both the local or the international market but each of the studies has debated different obstacles which affect Iranian SMEs innovation.

While most studies related to business failure have been acquired from developed countries (Arasti et al., 2014; Zahra, 2011) the question yet began to reveal facilitate innovation in SMEs as they were trying to discover which factors contributed to the success, or failure of their innovation efforts (Talebi et al., 2012). SMEs can increase the growth of the economy, but alas statistically, 50% of SMEs have never been able to celebrate their birth for a 5th term (Arokiasamy & Ismail, 2009). Unfortunately, in Iran, this percentage reaches up to 87%. Hence, it seems necessary to survey the problems of SMEs which play an essential role in the economy (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019).

In developing countries, SMEs are still struggling with so many problems (Amirkhani, 2012). In Iran, according to (Arasti et al., 2014) the main sources of business failures are as follows: 1) Mismanagement, 2) Banking financial support deficiency, 3) Inadequate economic circumstances, and 4) government policies. Iranian SMEs face undeniably many management-related issues (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019; Samadzad & Hashemi, 2022). Since the manager's leadership style is one of the most significant organizational characteristics predicting innovation adoption among organizations (Bayarçelik et al., 2014); SME owner-managers play a crucial role to encourage and support the initiatives of individual employees and improving work procedures for the benefit of the organization (Moriani et al., 2014). Traditionally, a large number of managers from small and medium enterprises in Iran are considered to be the owners or stakeholders. Since it is logical to assume that an owner-managers leadership style influences SME management (Franco & Matos, 2015; Samadzad & Hashemi, 2022); hence, mismanagement caused by an ineffective leadership style may lead the SME to extremely poor performance (Bayat, 2009).

On the other hand, (Van de Ven, 1986) indicated that employees are the cornerstone and important source of innovative behavior, and IWB is expected to provide innovative outputs which benefit each individual, group, or organization (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). An ineffective leadership style (Arasti et al., 2014) could cause the employees' innovative work behavior deficiency leading to the absence of innovation in Iranian SMEs; consequently, they

became business failures in the local or global market, thus by importing goods and wasting millions of dollars, a lot of Iranian SMEs are widely threatened on their mission in the economic growth as (Arokiasamy & Ismail, 2009) mentioned earlier.

Due to there being few studies on Iranian SMEs' innovation, therefore not only there is a theoretical gap in the Iranian literature, but also there are consequently practical gaps too. Previous studies have shown the linkage between emotional intelligence and innovative work behavior (Orhan, 2012; Orhan & Dincer, 2012; Sari & Amalia, 2022; Shojaei & Siuki, 2014); hence, it might be possible that employees with high emotional intelligence levels can turn crises into opportunities through innovative work behavior. Simply put, the issue is, to have innovation in Iranian SMEs, what factors can increase innovative work behavior among employees if the owner-manager has an ineffective leadership style? Therefore, to investigate predictive factors of employees' innovative work behavior in Iranian SMEs, the perceived leadership style, and emotional intelligence among employees are considered in this study design.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 The main Objective**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of perceived leadership style (transactional, transformational, and laissez-fair) and emotional intelligence as independent variables on Innovative work behavior as the dependent variable in Iranian SMEs from employees' points of view. There are specific objectives to guide this study as follows:

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- 1- To determine managers' leadership styles and their levels as perceived by the employees.
- 2- To determine the level of emotional intelligence among SME employees.
- 3- To determine the level of innovative work behavior and its subscales (idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization) among employees.
- 4- To compare the level of innovative work behavior and its' subscales based on the demographic characteristics of employees.



- 5- To determine the relationship between the perceived Leadership Styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), Emotional intelligence, and Innovative Work Behavior among employees.
- 6- To determine the predictors of employees' innovative work behavior and its' subscales (idea generation, idea promotion, idea realization).

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- 1- What are the managers' leadership styles and their levels as perceived among the employees?
- 2- What is the level of emotional intelligence among SME employees?
- 3- What is the level of innovative work behavior of employees and its' subscales (idea generation, idea promotion, idea realization)?
- 4- Are there any significant differences between the employee's innovative work behavior levels and its subscales, based on their demographic characteristic?
- 5- What is the relationship between perceived transformational, transactional, laissez-faire leadership style, emotional intelligence, and innovative work behavior among employees?
- 6- What are the significant predictors of employees' innovative work behavior and its' subscales?

#### **1.5 Scopes of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived leadership styles and emotional intelligence of employees as independent variables, to identify the predictors of the individual innovative work behavior's dimensions (idea generation, idea promotion, idea realization) as dependent variables.

Three instruments were administrated to define the research objectives, namely Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, MLQ5X other-rate (B. J. Avolio & Bass, 2004), Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence test, SSEIT (N. Schutte, 1998), and Innovative Work Behavior scale, IWB (Janssen, 2000) after translation from English to Persian and testing the validity and reliability.

The stratified sampling method was applied to this study and the data was collected in March 2018, among 195 employees of five Office equipment manufacturer SMEs in Tehran. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used as analytical tools. Various types of statistical analyses were employed, including mean scores, standard deviation, percentages and frequency (descriptive), multiple regression, Pearson correlation coefficient

method, factorial analysis of variance, and independent-test (inferential). The statistical SPSS software was used to conduct the analysis.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The data of this study is provided information regarding leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and emotional intelligence, and their relationship with innovative work behavior. There is a lot of research on emotional intelligence or leadership style but there are a few studies that examine the relationship of these factors simultaneously with innovative work behavior. In addition, the data related to the demographic characteristic provides information to predict IWB. This study is important because it provides a set of data, which currently does not exist for SMEs, especially Iranian SMEs. This is the initial study that investigates these independent and dependent variables in Iranian SMEs. The results of this study would be advantageous to closing the literature and knowledge gap and determining the predictors of IWB.

Human Resource Development focuses on human resources from two aspects educationally and executively aiming to develop human skills toward organizational success. This study can be an effective step in the development of the field of leadership, emotional intelligence, and innovative work behavior in any organization, especially SMEs. Considering, the HRD point of view by providing an emotional intelligence training program for employees and a leadership training program for managers, the leadership could be more effective and employees' performance and innovative work behavior would increase, thus the organization might be more successful. In addition, assessing employees' emotional intelligence could be a new way of recruiting and selecting people for the right positions. The result of this study is an attempt to help HRD officers, managers, R&D departments, SME entrepreneurs, and even universities to identify the predictor of IWB and increase innovation in the organizations.

## **1.7 Assumptions**

By reviewing the literature these assumptions have arisen:

- 1- The leadership styles of SME managers have an impact on the innovative work behavior of employees and its 'subscale (Oukes, 2010).
- 2- Transformational leadership is correlated to innovative work behavior with positive effects (Birkinshaw et al., 2008).

- 3- Transactional Leadership might be correlated to innovative work behavior but its positive or negative effect is not well-known (Khaola & Sephelani, 2014; Oseebaar, 2012).
- 4- Laissez-faire might be correlated to innovative work behavior but its positive or negative effect is not well-known. (Antonakis et al., 2003).
- 5- The Emotional intelligence of employees might be correlated to innovative work behavior with positive effects (Orhan, 2012).
- 6- Demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, work experience) might be correlated with individual innovative work behavior (Nguyễn, 2019).

## **1.8 Operational Definitions**

The study model focuses on employees' innovative behavior as the dependent variable and also on perceived leadership style and emotional intelligence among employees as independent variables.

### **Leadership Style**

A leadership style is a behavior a leader reveals whilst guiding organizational contributors in suitable directions (Shahhosseini, 2013). Three leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) are based on FRLM the full range of leadership models was applied in this study to assess perceived leadership styles among employees through 36 items of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X, other-rate) developed by (B. J. Avolio & Bass, 2004).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leaders are defined as leaders who have future scenarios for the organizations and are primarily committed to improving employees' self-confidence by helping them realize their potential, providing employees with a feasible mission and vision of organizations, and participating with staff to identify their needs and work together to meet their needs (Peterson et al., 2009). Transformational leadership style was assessed through 20 items of MLQ5X in this study (B. J. Avolio & Bass, 2004).

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership is designed as an exchange relationship between leaders and their followers (Iskan et al., 2014). In transactional leadership, the relationship between the leader and the followers is based on conditional

reward (Iskan et al., 2014). Transactional leadership style was assessed through 12 items of MLQ5X in this study (B. J. Avolio & Bass, 2004).

### **Laissez-Faire**

Laissez-Faire leadership is a style in which leaders ignore to decide, and do not show any responsibility and authority (Antonakis et al., 2003). It is believed that the style of leadership is the least existing in the current business environment in a way passive and ineffective; Laissez-faire leadership style was assessed through 4 items of MLQ5X in this study (B. J. Avolio & Bass, 2004).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

According to (Goleman, 1995; Spahi et al., 2022), emotional intelligence is "The ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others". The Self-Report Emotional Intelligence test (SSEIT) suggested by (N. Schutte, 1998) was applied in this study, to assess individual emotional intelligence. The test is self-reporting on EI and comprises 33 items and four scales. Participants' answers are assessed with a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree, to strongly agree. It takes about five minutes to complete and has four parts: 1-Appraisal of emotions, 10 items 2-Expression of emotions, 9 items 3-Regulation of emotions, 8 items 4- Utilization of emotions, 6 items.

### **Innovative Work Behavior**

Intentional introduction and application of ideas, procedures, and process products relevant to the new adoption unit to serve the individual, group, organization, or society (Iguaran, 2022; Janssen, 2004; Vlist, 2016). The IWB scale suggested by (Janssen, 2004) was applied in this study, to assess individual innovative work behavior and its subscales (Idea generation, Idea promotion, Idea realization) through 9 items. The explanation of subscales is in the following:

#### **Idea Generation**

Idea generation is described as perceived work-related problems, incongruities, and discontinuities (Nijenhuis, 2015) and new emerging trends (Janssen, 2004).

## **Idea Promotion**

Idea promotion is described as coalition building (Galbraith, 1982) and mobilizing resources (Howell & Higgins, 1990) challenging, and risk-taking (Amabile, 1988; Kanter, 2016).

## **Idea Realization**

Idea realization is producing a prototype or model to be applied (Janssen, 2004), implementing (Glynn, 1996; Kleysen & Street, 2001), modifying (Damanpour & Evan, 1984; Kanter, 1988), and routinizing (Kleysen & Street, 2001).

## **SMEs**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are viewed as a source of flexibility and innovation, and they make significant contributions to the economies of many countries (Haghighi-Rad et al., 2019).

## **1.9 Definition of Terms**

### **Innovation**

(M. A. West & Farr, 1989) described innovation as a purposeful introduction and application (in an individual, in a group, or organization) of ideas, products, processes, or procedures relevant to the new unit, designed to improve benefit groups, individuals, organizations, or society (Kheng et al., 2013).

### **OEMS**

Office Equipment Manufacturing SMEs are the industries that include companies specializing in the manufacture of office equipment, such as fax machines, calculators, cash registers, photocopiers, etc.

### **ISIPO**

The Iranian Organization of Small Industrial Enterprises and Industrial Parks, (ISIPO, 2022) is a developed organization that affiliates with the Ministry of Industry and Mines that was created by merging both the Iranian Small Industries Organization and Iran Industrial Estate Co. within the second half of the year 2005.

## 1.10 Summary

In this chapter, the background of the research, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the research, limitation of the research, the definition of terms, and summary of the chapter were explained in detail. The purpose of this study is an investigation transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles as perceived by employees to predict their innovative work behavior and to determine the relationship between employees' emotional intelligence and individual innovative work behaviors in the selected office equipment manufacturer SMEs in Tehran as the capital city of Iran. In this regard, the literature review will present in the next chapter. To clarify the contents, the literature will present in the next chapter.

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