

# LEADERSHIP AND OUTCOME OF LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCES OF AN ENTERPRISE 50 (E50) AWARD WINNING SME: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of leadership styles on achieving organisational performance outcomes based on criteria as set by Enterprise 50 Award organisers. Specifically, this case study makes a comparison between the mean scores of Full Range of Leadership styles, associated leadership factors, Outcomes of Leadership and several demographic factors, collected from an E50 award winning SME (E50Case) on the one hand, and on the other, three cohorts of SMEs: Enterprise 50 award winning SMEs in Singapore's building and construction industry (E50SSME); SMEs in the wholesale subsector of the distributive trade sector in Klang Valley, Malaysia (KMYSME); and a normative sample from the USA (NSUSA). The results showed that a comparative increase in favourable Leadership styles in E50Case did not increase Extra Effort and Effectiveness when compared with E50SSME. However, E50Case displayed a significant decrease in Laissez-faire which contributed to an increase of Extra Effort and Satisfaction when compared with KMYSME. When compared with NSUSA, E50Case manifested comparatively favourably in Transactional Leadership style and Laissez-faire style, but neither the intensity nor frequency were enough to do better than NSUSA's Outcomes of Leadership. Another comparison using Gender revealed that male respondents in E50Case manifested a comparative increase in favourable Leadership styles and increased Outcomes of Leadership, when compared to E50SSME and KMYSME. However, female respondents in E50Case, manifested a comparative decrease in favourable Leadership styles and a decrease in Outcomes of Leadership, when compared to E50SSME and KMYSME.

## Keywords:


Financial Performance,  
Organisational Performance,  
Small and Medium Enterprises,  
Full Range of Leadership,  
Transformational,  
Transactional, Laissez-faire,  
Outcomes of Leadership.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

SMEs in many countries play important roles in economic growth, providing employment and reducing poverty (Arinaitwe, 2006; Ayyagari et al., 2005; Ghobadian & O'Regan, 2004). In recent years, many researchers have focused on their success, longevity, and solvency (Lim, 2022). All organisations aiming for long-term success, including SMEs, need to improve their leadership and management capabilities, since both have a significant immediate and long-term impact on organisational performance (BIS, 2012). Leadership challenges have been most difficult in recent times due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ofori & Toor, 2021). Leaders' and managers' ability to communicate, engage and mobilise their employees have been put through one of the most challenging situations of the decade. The objective of this study is to compare the effects of leadership styles on the organisational performance of SMEs, by means of comparative analyses of the selected E50Case, an Enterprise 50 award winning SME in Singapore's building and construction industry, with three groups of SMEs. The first two were the subject of earlier studies: the performances of Enterprise 50 award winning SMEs in Singapore's building and construction industry (E50SSME) (Lim, 2022); and SMEs in the wholesale subsector of the distributive trade sector in Klang Valley, Malaysia (KMYSME) (Lim, 2016). The third comprises a larger set of samples from MLQ 5X 2004 Normative Sample of USA (NSUSA) (Avolio, 2004a).

This comparative study focuses on the mean scores for three leadership styles, nine leadership factors, three outcomes of leadership factors, and several demographic data to match the E50 award criteria or the organisational performance criteria as published by Enterprise 50 award organisers. The mean scores of all dependent variables and demographic data were obtained from the mentioned earlier studies by Lim (2016), Lim (2022) and from Avolio and Bass (2004a). Comparative study is made possible by the fact that analysis of leadership styles of the three sets, E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA, relied on the Full Range of Leadership model and the same measurement tool - MLQ (5X Short). The sample size of the study by Lim (2016) was 62 while Lim (2022) was 76. Both studies invited participants to the Mind Garden's Transform™ online survey via email. In light of the impact of leadership styles on organisational performance, it is interesting to explore its relevancies with SMEs. A comparative study sheds some light on the efficacy of leadership styles with different SMEs (Avolio, 2004a; Lim, 2016; Lim, 2022). The objective is to determine the comparative mean score of Full Range of Leadership style and Outcomes of Leadership, that can enhance organisational performance of the selected Enterprise 50 award winning SME (E50Case).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the literature on leadership, organisational performance and impacts of leadership on performance, and the Full Range of Leadership and Outcomes of Leadership with the operationalised tools MLQ (5X Short) developed by Bass (2004). This study takes the position that a leader and manager can be the same person in the sense that, as Northhouse (2021) stated, Leadership is a process of guiding and influencing people to achieve organisational goals. Thus, the terms *leader* and *manager* are used interchangeably in this paper (Lim, 2016). However, while Leadership and Management are not differentiable despite decades of debate, and there is still a lack of empirical evidence to justify their differences (Toor, 2011), this case study recognises that leadership and management are different roles. It has been established in the literature that the primary cause of SME failures is the lack of leadership and management skills (CEML, 2002; Davies *et al.*, 2002). As such, it is fair to state that SME leaders and managers play vital roles in ensuring the survivability of their organisations, and that Leadership characteristics have a major impact on organisations' short- and long-term performance (Ghobadian & O'Regan, 2004). For this reason, Leadership in any organisation may need multi-perspectives and representation of its complex impacts on the objectives and a variety of criteria for achieving organisational performance outcomes (Hiller *et al.*, 2011).

Leadership effectiveness that drives organisational performance is dependent on the leaders and managers, and also employees (Avolio, 1999). The organisational performance evaluation, a periodic measurement of inter-related subjective and objective indicators, recognises this fact. These performance indicators are usually related to financial results, customer-related feedbacks, business processes, technology, learning and development (Jing & Avery, 2008, Singh *et al.*, 2016). In the Singapore context, the Enterprise 50 (E50) award ceremony honours the top fifty local and privately held businesses that have exceeded the selection criteria over three years. The criteria consist of performance indicators is presented in Table 1. The financial performance indications (up to 55% weightage) include Operating Profit Before Tax (OPBT), Gross Turnover, Return on Equity, Growth in Operating Profits, Growth in Turnover, Net Tangible Assets, Operating Cash Flow as a percentage of OPBT, Quick Ratio, Debt to Equity Ratio, Return on Total Fixed Assets and Operating Profit per Employee. The non-financial indicators (up to 45% weightage) include Business Model, Productivity, Innovation, Management Ideas, Governance, Knowledge Initiatives, Market Branding cum Presence and Liquidity cum Risk Management.

**Table 1**  
Indicators of performing SME

Financial Performance Indicators (Up to 55% weightage)	
Operating Profit Before Tax (OPBT)	Operating Cash Flow as a percentage of OPBT
Gross Turnover	Quick Ratio
Return on Equity	Debt to Equity Ratio
Growth in Operating Profits	Return on Total Fixed Assets
Growth in Turnover	Operating Profit per Employee
Net Tangible Assets	
Qualitative Factors (<45% weightage) (Non-Financial)	
Business Model	Governance
Productivity	Knowledge Initiatives
Innovation	Market Branding and Presence
Management Ideas	Liquidity and Risk Management

Source: Adapted from Enterprise Singapore 50 Awards (The Business Times, 2022)

The Enterprise 50 (E50)'s performance indicators, ranking and evaluation are kept confidential, and the published list of winners is presented yearly (The Business Times, 2022). The E50 award selection criteria include financial performance and non-financial indicators, which are deemed sufficient measurements for organisational performance. This research deemed that E50 award-winning SMEs exhibit positive effects of leadership and achieve organisational performance.

The Full Range of Leadership model and its effect on organisational performance outcomes are well studied and supported (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Cherian & Farouq, 2013). This case study leans on the findings of Full Range of Leadership in proposing three leadership styles – Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Laissez-faire Leadership. There are five leadership factors within Transformational Leadership – Idealised Influence (Attributes), Idealised Influence (Behaviours), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualised Consideration. There are three leadership factors within Transactional Leadership – Contingent Reward, Management-by-Exception (Active) and Management-by-Exception (Passive). There is one leadership factor within Laissez-faire Leadership – Laissez-faire. There are three Outcomes of Leadership – Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X Short) developed by Bass (1985), was used to measure Full Range of Leadership (FRL) and Outcomes of Leadership (OOL). It is an operationalised quantitative tool with reasonable reliability and validity (Antonakis & David, 2017; Jung & Sosik, 2018; Toor & Ofori, 2009). All three sets of data, E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA, used the forty-five MLQ (5X Short) questions to measure FRL and OOL. E50SSME and KMYSME had similar demographic questions in their survey, while demographic data associated with the NSUSA was not available. Organisational performance, including financial and non-financial performance indicators, is based on the E50 award criteria ranking. The E50SSME and E50Case received the E50 awards in recent years ranging from 2020 to 2014. Announcements for the 2021 E50 award winners were unavailable when the survey for E50SSME ended in January 2022. Consequently, none of the 2021 E50 award winners were invited to participate in the survey.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This case study is aligned with the positivistic research approach. The data were obtained through non-experimental and self-administrated online survey. The cross-sectional data were obtained by survey measurement tools such as MLQ (5X Short). However, the data were collected at different times. Data for the selected Enterprise 50 award winning SME (E50Case) were collected on December 2021. The data from SMEs in the wholesale subsector of the distributive trade sector in Klang Valley, Malaysia (KMYSME) were collected in May 2014, and data for Enterprise 50 award winning SMEs in building and construction industry in Singapore (E50SSME) were collected in January 2022. The research also used the normality data, NSUSA, which uses the same survey measurement tool, MLQ (5X short). The online survey conducted consisted of demographic questions and the MLQ (5X short) questionnaire. The common demographic questions, including Gender, were included in our descriptive analyses and discussion. A comparative analysis was deemed most appropriate based on the common demographic variables and the same set of MLQ (5X short) questionnaires. The MLQ (5X short) was used to assess three leadership styles: Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, and Laissez-faire; nine leadership factors – Idealised Influence-attribute (IA), Idealised Influence-behaviour (IB), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Individualized Consideration (IC), Contingent Reward (CR), Active Management-by-exception (MBEA), Passive Management-by-exception (MBEP) and Laissez-faire (LF); and three outcomes of leadership factors – Extra Efforts (EE), Effectiveness (EFF) and Satisfaction (SAT). The variable, research questions and MLQ 5X (Short) questions are tabulated in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5.

**Table 2**

Variable of demographics and online survey section A

Demographic Questions – Section A	Demographic (Attribute Independent Variable)
Gender	Gender
Age Range	AgeRange
Highest Education Level	Education
Company Ownership	COOwn

Source: Developed for this research

**Table 3**

Variable of full range of leadership factors and online survey section B

MLQ (5X Short) Items – Section B	Leadership Factors (Dependent Variable)	Leadership Style (Dependent Variable)
Mean (MLQ10, MLQ18, MLQ21, MLQ25)	SPSS_IA	TFL
Mean (MLQ06, MLQ14, MLQ23, MLQ34)	SPSS_IB	
Mean (MLQ09, MLQ13, MLQ26, MLQ36)	SPSS_IM	
Mean (MLQ02, MLQ08, MLQ30, MLQ32)	SPSS_IS	
Mean (MLQ15, MLQ19, MLQ29, MLQ31)	SPSS_IC	
Mean (MLQ01, MLQ11, MLQ16, MLQ35)	SPSS_CR	TSL
Mean (MLQ04, MLQ22, MLQ24, MLQ27)	SPSS_MBEA	
Mean (MLQ03, MLQ12, MLQ17, MLQ20)	SPSS_MBEP	
Mean (MLQ05, MLQ07, MLQ28, MLQ33)	SPSS_LF	LFL

Source: Adapted from Lim (2016)

**Table 4**

Variable of full range of leadership and online survey section B

MLQ (5X Short) Items – Section B	Leadership Style (Dependent Variable)
Mean (MLQ10, MLQ18, MLQ21, MLQ25, MLQ06, MLQ14, MLQ23, MLQ34, MLQ09, MLQ13, MLQ26, MLQ36, MLQ02, MLQ08, MLQ30, MLQ32, MLQ15, MLQ19, MLQ29, MLQ31)	SPSS_TFL
Mean (MLQ01, MLQ11, MLQ16, MLQ35, MLQ04, MLQ22, MLQ24, MLQ27, MLQ03, MLQ12, MLQ17, MLQ20)	SPSS_TSL
Mean (MLQ05, MLQ07, MLQ28, MLQ33)	SPSS_LFL

Source: Adapted from Lim (2016)

**Table 5**

Variable of outcome of leadership and MLQ(5X Short) items

MLQ (5X Short) Items	Outcomes of Leadership (Dependent Variable)
Mean (MLQ39, ML42, MLQ44)	SPSS_EE
Mean (MLQ37, MLQ40, MLQ43, MLQ45)	SPSS_EFF
Mean (MLQ38, MLQ41)	SPSS_SAT

Source: Adapted from Lim (2016)

Quantitative analyses were performed using IBM's Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 26. The following analyses were performed:

- Descriptive analysis to provide frequency distribution, measure of central tendencies and spread of variables for demographics and leadership questionnaire.
- Mean score comparative analyses of the samples (KMYSME, E50SSME and E50Case) and normality report from MLQ (5X short) that was denoted by NSUSA

#### 4. RESULTS

##### 4.1 Descriptive analysis of full range of leadership and factors of E50Case in comparison with E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA

When comparing with E50SSME, the managers and employees of E50Case manifested a slightly higher score on Transformational Leadership style (+1.87%). The actors manifested a higher Transactional Leadership style (+4.35%), whereas they registered lower Laissez-faire (-2.70%). Transformational Leadership factor, SPSS\_IB (+8.52%) of E50Case was found to register a higher mean score difference, while Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEA (+9.66%) and SPSS\_MBEP (+9.23%) registered higher mean score differences. E50Case scored better in Transformational Leadership style (+8.76%) when compared to KMYSME. The Transactional Leadership style (-1.03%) registered a small difference. On the other hand, the actors registered a much lower score on Laissez-faire (-41.84%). Transformational Leadership factors, SPSS\_IB (+14.90%), SPSS\_IC (+12.44%), SPSS\_IS (+8.63%) and SPSS\_IA (+7.38%) of E50Case were found to register higher mean score differences while Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEA (+7.58%) registered higher mean score difference. On the other hand, SPSS\_MBEP (-30.39%) registered a much lower mean score difference.

When comparing with NSUSA, the managers and employees of E50Case manifested a lower score of Transformational Leadership style (-4.21%) while registered a higher score on Transactional Leadership style (3.23%). On the other hand, Laissez-faire style (-44.62%) registers a much lower score. Transformational Leadership factors, SPSS\_IB (+5.78%) was found to register higher mean score differences. However, SPSS\_IC (-11.23%) and SPSS\_IA (-10.88%) were found to register lower mean score differences. Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEA (+35.93%) registered a much higher mean score difference, whereas SPSS\_MBEP (-31.07%) registered a much lower mean score difference. The managers and employees of E50Case manifested the highest mean score difference for Transformational Leadership style (+8.76%) against KMYSME. The lowest mean score difference was Laissez-faire style (-44.62%) against NSUSA. Please refer to Table 6 and Figure 1 for details.

**Table 6**

Mean score and standard deviation of leadership styles and leadership factors of E50SSME, KMYSME, NSUSA and E50Case

Leadership Style/Factors	E50SSME (N = 76)		KMYSME (N = 62)		NSUSA (N = 27,285)		E50Case (N = 13)		Mean difference		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	E50Case vs E50SSME	E50Case vs KMYSME	E50Case vs NSUSA
SPSS_TFL	2.68	0.68	2.51	0.63	2.85	NA	2.73	0.8	1.87%	8.76%	-4.21%
SPSS_IA	2.71	0.8	2.44	0.8	2.94	0.8	2.62	0.9	-3.32%	7.38%	-10.88%

SPSS_IB	2.7	0.8	2.55	0.8	2.77	0.7	2.93	0.9	8.52%	14.90%	5.78%
SPSS_IM	2.79	0.8	2.74	0.8	2.92	0.8	2.84	0.9	1.79%	3.65%	-2.74%
SPSS_IS	2.71	0.8	2.55	0.8	2.78	0.7	2.77	0.9	2.21%	8.63%	-0.36%
SPSS_IC	2.51	0.8	2.25	0.8	2.85	0.8	2.53	0.7	0.80%	12.44%	-11.23%
SPSS_TSL	1.84	0.44	1.94	0.52	1.86	NA	1.92	0.5	4.35%	-1.03%	3.23%
SPSS_CR	2.77	0.8	2.66	0.8	2.87	0.7	2.74	0.9	-1.08%	3.01%	-4.53%
SPSS_MBEA	2.07	0.9	2.11	0.9	1.67	0.9	2.27	0.9	9.66%	7.58%	35.93%
SPSS_MBEP	0.65	0.6	1.02	0.6	1.03	0.8	0.71	0.7	9.23%	-30.39%	-31.07%
SPSS_LFL	0.37	0.51	0.62	0.68	0.65	0.7	0.36	0.5	-2.70%	-41.94%	-44.62%

Source: Developed for this research

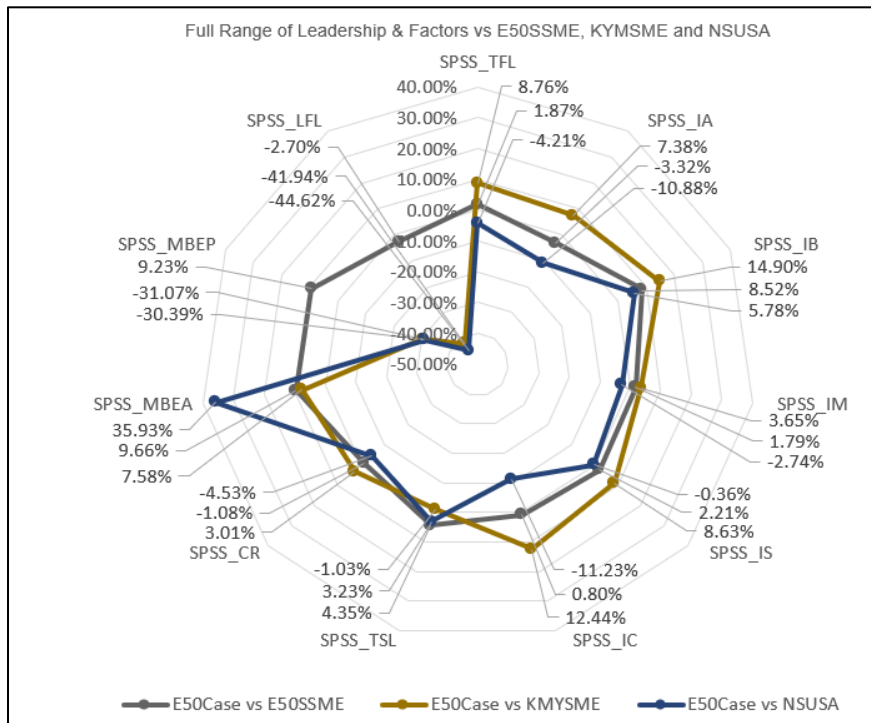


Fig. 1. Full range of leadership & factors vs E50SSME, KYMSME and NSUSA

Source: Developed for this research

**4.2 Descriptive analysis of full range of leadership, outcomes of leadership and factors crosstab gender of E50Case in comparison with E50SSME and KMYSME**

When comparing with E50SSME, the male managers and employees of E50Case manifested a higher score on Transformational Leadership style (+8.66%). The actors manifested a higher Transactional Leadership style (+6.63%), whereas they registered much lower Laissez-faire (-41.30%). Transformational Leadership factors, SPSS\_IB (+12.98%), SPSS\_IS (+9.68%), SPSS\_IM (+8.80%) of E50Case were found to register higher mean score differences while Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEA (+9.28%) and SPSS\_CR (+6.86%) registered higher mean score differences. Males in E50Case scored better in Transformational Leadership style (+17.12%) when compared to KMYSME. The Transactional Leadership style (+6.63%) registered a higher score. On the other hand, the actors registered a much lower score on Laissez-faire (-51.79%). Transformational Leadership factors, SPSS\_IB (+20.15%), SPSS\_IA (+19.60%), SPSS\_IS (+17.24%), SPSS\_IC (+16.67%) and SPSS\_IM (+11.15%) of E50Case were found to register higher mean score differences. Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEA (+22.17%) and SPSS\_CR (+9.63%), registered higher mean score differences, whereas SPSS\_MBEP (-31.68%) registered a much lower mean score difference.

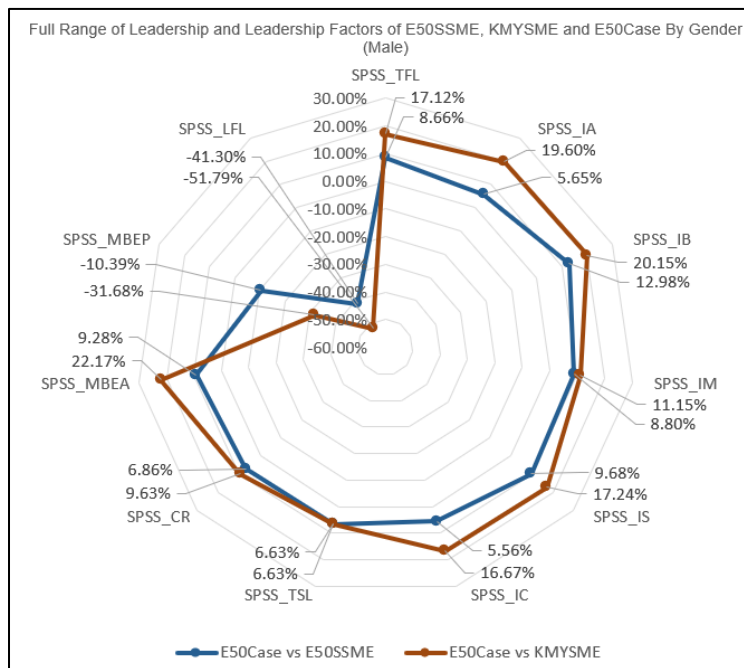
The male managers and employees of E50Case manifested the highest mean score difference for Transformational Leadership style (+17.12%) against KMYSME. The lowest mean score difference was Laissez-faire style (-51.79%) against KMYSME. Please refer to Table 7 and Figure 2 for details.

**Table 7**

Mean score and standard deviation of full range of leadership styles and leadership factors of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case grouped by gender (male)

Gender	Leadership Style/Factors	E50SSME (n = 44)		KMYSME (n = 46)		E50Case (n = 16)		Mean difference	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	E50Case vs E50SSME	E50Case vs KMYSME
Male	SPSS_TFL	2.77	0.7	2.57	0.6	3.01	0.6	8.66%	17.12%
	SPSS_IA	2.83	0.7	2.5	0.7	2.99	0.6	5.65%	19.60%
	SPSS_IB	2.85	0.8	2.68	0.7	3.22	0.6	12.98%	20.15%
	SPSS_IM	2.84	0.8	2.78	0.8	3.09	0.7	8.80%	11.15%
	SPSS_IS	2.79	0.8	2.61	0.8	3.06	0.6	9.68%	17.24%
	SPSS_IC	2.52	0.9	2.28	0.8	2.66	0.8	5.56%	16.67%
	SPSS_TSL	1.96	0.5	1.96	0.5	2.09	0.5	6.63%	6.63%
	SPSS_CR	2.77	0.8	2.7	0.7	2.96	0.8	6.86%	9.63%
	SPSS_MBEA	2.37	0.8	2.12	0.8	2.59	0.8	9.28%	22.17%
	SPSS_MBEP	0.77	0.7	1.01	0.8	0.69	0.8	-10.39%	-31.68%
	SPSS_LFL	0.46	0.5	0.56	0.6	0.27	0.4	-41.30%	-51.79%

Source: Developed for this research



**Fig. 2.**

Full range of leadership and leadership factors of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case by gender (male)

Source: Developed for this research

When comparing with E50SSME, the female managers and employees of E50Case manifested a lower score on Transformational Leadership style (-12.16%). The actors manifested a lower Transactional Leadership style (-3.59%). However, they registered much higher Laissez-faire (+120.83%). Transformational Leadership factors, SPSS\_IA (-22.53%), SPSS\_IS (-13.85%), SPSS\_IM (-11.81%) and SPSS\_IC (-7.23%) in E50Case were found to register lower mean score differences. Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_CR (-15.58%) registered a lower mean score difference, but

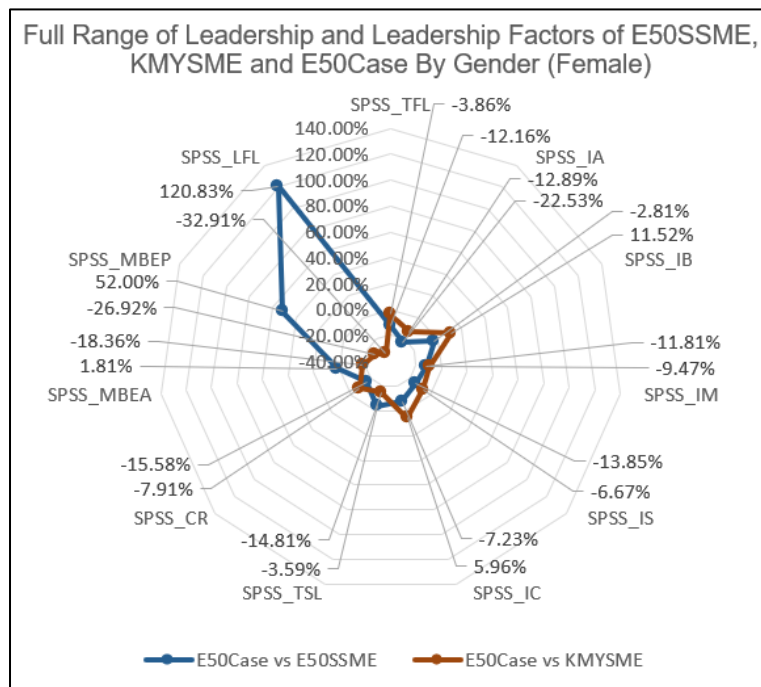
SPSS\_MBEP (+120.83%) registered a much higher score difference. Females in E50Case scored lower in Transformational Leadership style (-3.86%) when compared to KMYSME. The Transactional Leadership style (-14.81%) registered a lower score too. Similarly, the actors registered a much lower score on Laissez-faire (-32.91%). Transformation Leadership factors, SPSS\_IB (+11.52%) were found to register higher mean score difference while SPSS\_IA (-12.89%), SPSS\_IM (-9.47%) and SPSS\_IS (-6.67%) registered lower mean score differences. Transactional Leadership factors, SPSS\_MBEP (-26.92%), SPSS\_MBEA (-18.36%) and SPSS\_CR (-7.91%) registered lower mean score differences. The female managers and employees of E50Case manifested the highest mean score difference for Laissez-faire style (+120.83%) against E50SSME. The lowest score difference was Laissez-faire style (-32.91%) against KMYSME. Please refer to Table 8 and Figure 3 for details.

**Table 8**

Mean score and standard deviation of full range of leadership styles and leadership factors of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case grouped by gender (female)

Gender	Leadership Style/Factors	E50SSME		KMYSME		E50Case		Mean difference	
		(n = 32)		(n = 16)		(n = 9)		E50Case vs E50SSME	E50Case vs KMYSME
	Leadership Style	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Female	SPSS_TFL	2.55	0.6	2.33	0.6	2.24	0.9	-12.16%	-3.86%
	SPSS_IA	2.53	0.8	2.25	0.8	1.96	1	-22.53%	-12.89%
	SPSS_IB	2.49	0.7	2.17	0.8	2.42	1.1	-2.81%	11.52%
	SPSS_IM	2.71	0.8	2.64	0.8	2.39	1.1	-11.81%	-9.47%
	SPSS_IS	2.6	0.8	2.4	0.8	2.24	1	-13.85%	-6.67%
	SPSS_IC	2.49	0.8	2.18	0.7	2.31	0.7	-7.23%	5.96%
	SPSS_TSL	1.67	0.4	1.89	0.5	1.61	0.5	-3.59%	-14.81%
	SPSS_CR	2.76	0.8	2.53	0.8	2.33	1.1	-15.58%	-7.91%
	SPSS_MBEA	1.66	0.8	2.07	0.7	1.69	1	1.81%	-18.36%
	SPSS_MBEP	0.5	0.5	1.04	0.8	0.76	0.5	52.00%	-26.92%
	SPSS_LFL	0.24	0.4	0.79	0.8	0.53	0.7	120.83%	-32.91%

Source: Developed for this research



**Fig. 3.**

Full range of leadership and leadership factors of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case by gender (female)

Source: Developed for this research

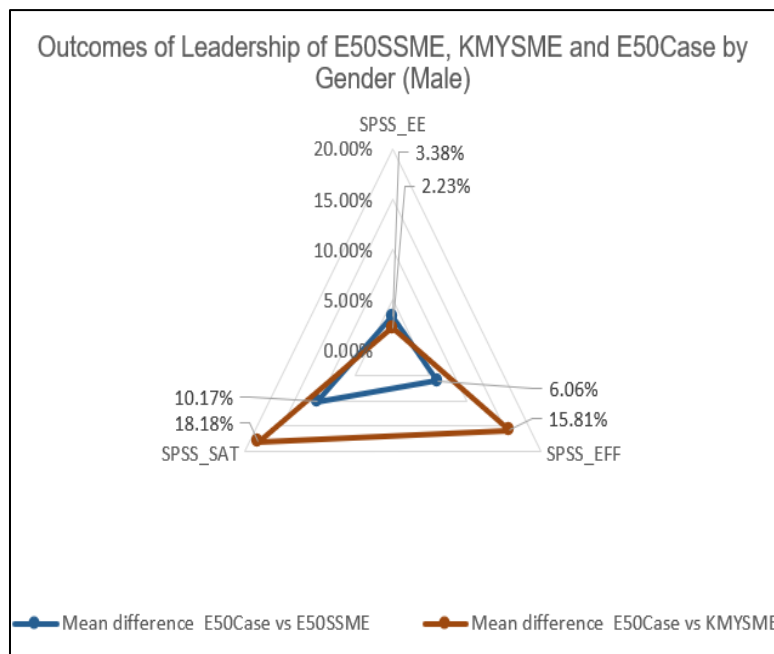
When comparing the actors with E50SSME, the male managers and employees of E50Case manifested higher Extra Effort (+3.38%), Effectiveness (+6.06%) and Satisfaction (10.17%). Male managers and employees of E50Case scored higher in Extra Effort (+2.23%), Effectiveness (+15.81%) and Satisfaction (+18.18%) when compared with KMYSME. The male managers and employees of E50Case manifested the highest mean score difference for Satisfaction (+18.18%) against KMYSME. The lowest mean score difference was Extra Effort (+2.23%) against KMYSME. Please refer to Table 9 and Figure 4 for details. When comparing the actors with E50SSME, the female managers and employees of E50Case manifested lower Extra Effort (-14.89%), Effectiveness (-20.00%) and Satisfaction (-16.11%). Female managers and employees of E50Case scored lower in Extra Effort (-11.11%) and Effectiveness (-4.60%). However, Satisfaction (+5.04%) scored higher when compared with KMYSME. The female managers and employees of E50Case generally manifested lower mean scores across Extra Efforts, Effectiveness and Satisfaction against E50SSME. The lowest mean score difference was Extra Effort (-20.00%) against E50SSME. Please refer to Table 9 and Figure 5 for details.

**Table 9**

Mean score and standard deviation of outcomes of leadership of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case grouped by gender

Gender	Outcomes of Leadership	E50SSME		KMYSME		E50Case		Mean difference	
		(N = 76)		(N = 62)		(N = 25)		E50Case vs E50SSME	E50Case vs KMYSME
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Male	SPSS_EE	2.66	0.79	2.69	0.7	2.75	0.74	3.38%	2.23%
	SPSS_EFF	2.97	0.66	2.72	0.59	3.15	0.62	6.06%	15.81%
	SPSS_SAT	2.95	0.75	2.75	0.72	3.25	0.45	10.17%	18.18%
Female	SPSS_EE	2.35	0.82	2.25	1.02	2	1.14	-14.89%	-11.11%
	SPSS_EFF	2.85	0.85	2.39	1.22	2.28	1.18	-20.00%	-4.60%
	SPSS_SAT	2.98	0.64	2.38	1.27	2.5	0.79	-16.11%	5.04%

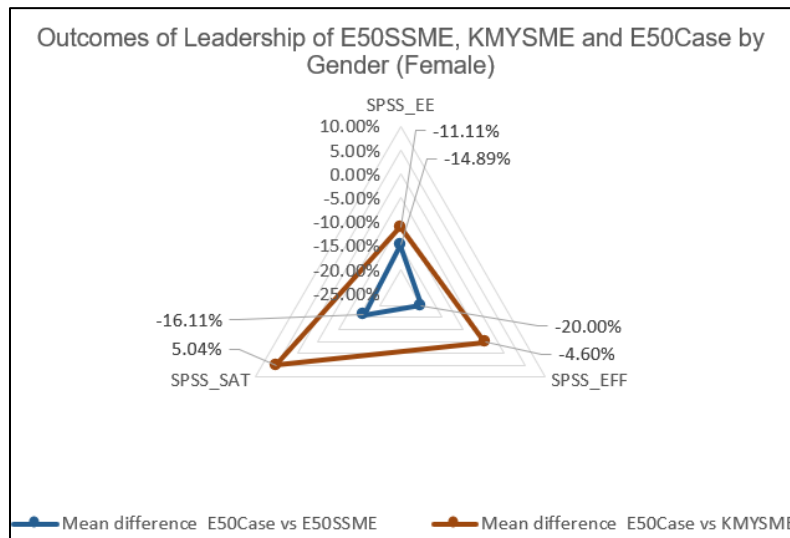
Source: Developed for this research



**Fig. 4.**

Outcomes of leadership of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case by gender (male)

Source: Developed for this research



**Fig. 5.** Outcomes of leadership of E50SSME, KMYSME and E50Case by gender (female)  
 Source: Developed for this research

**4.3 Findings from full range of leadership and factors of E50Case in comparison with E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA**

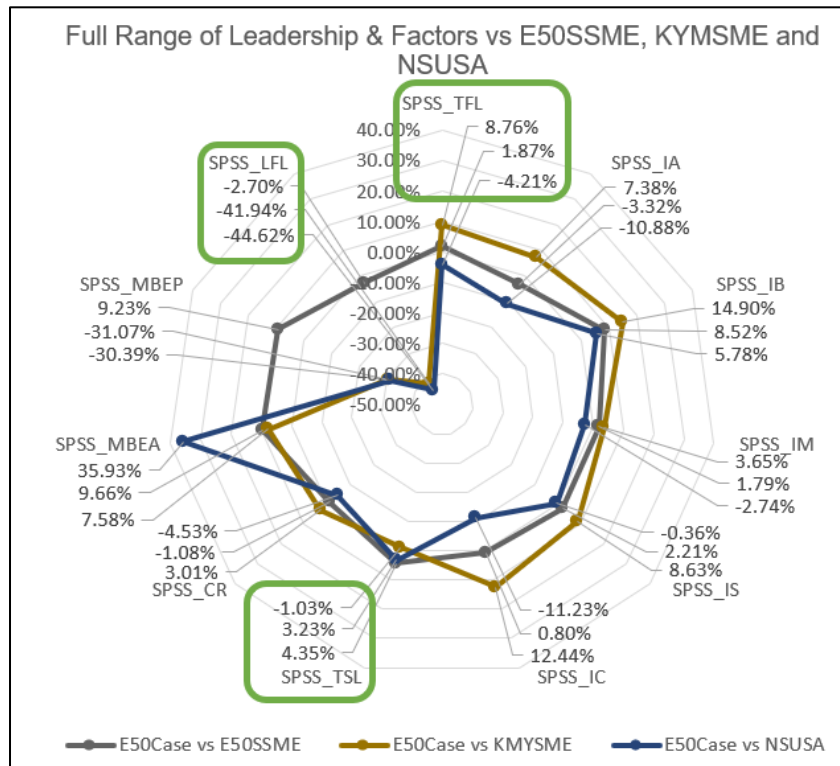
E50Case manifested more Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles when compared with E50SSME in Figure 6. E50Case manifested lower Laissez-faire style when compared to E50SSME. A higher Transformational Leadership score suggested that leaders of E50Case manifested more influence and power over their followers. The followers developed more trust, confidence, and inspiration to accomplish the joint vision through extra personal effort. A higher Transactional Leadership score suggested that leaders of E50Case also manifested more in recognising and satisfying the needs and desires of followers and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, leaders of E50Case manifested lower Laissez-faire and suggested that they exhibited less responsibility avoidance which is beneficial to organisational performance. The increased manifestation of Transformation Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles in a combination of reduced Laissez-faire style leads to desirable Outcomes of Leadership. As shown in Table 10, Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, and Effectiveness were slightly lower, while Satisfaction was slightly higher. In light of this, E50Case may need to improve their Extra Effort and Effectiveness scores as they are slightly lower than most of their peers in Singapore as represented by E50SME.

E50Case manifested a more Transformational Leadership style when compared with KMYSME. A higher Transformational Leadership score suggested that leaders of E50Case manifested more influence and power over their followers. The followers developed more trust, confidence, and inspiration to accomplish the joint vision through extra personal effort. E50Case manifested a slightly lower Transactional Leadership style and significantly lower Laissez-faire style compared to KMYSME. Finally, leaders of E50Case manifested much lower Laissez-faire and suggested that they exhibited significantly less responsibility avoidance which is beneficial to the organisational performance. The increased manifestation of the Transformation Leadership style in a combination of reduced Laissez-faire style leads to desirable Outcomes of Leadership. As shown in Table 10, Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort was slightly lower while Effectiveness and Satisfaction were comparatively higher. In light of this, E50Case may need to improve their Extra Effort score as they are slightly lower than most of their peers in Singapore as represented by KMYSME.

E50Case manifested a lower Transformational Leadership style when compared with NSUSA. The lower Transformational Leadership score suggested that leaders of E50Case manifested lower influence and power over their followers. The followers developed less trust, confidence, and inspiration to accomplish the joint vision through extra personal effort. E50Case manifested a higher Transactional Leadership style when compared with NSUSA. A higher Transactional Leadership score suggested that leaders of E50Case manifested more in recognising and satisfying followers' needs and desires and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire, suggesting that they exhibited significantly less responsibility avoidance, which is beneficial to organisational performance. As shown in Table 10, Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction were lower. In light of this, E50Case may need to improve their Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction scores as they are lower than most of their peers in global settings as represented by NSUSA.

The leaders of E50Case manifested higher Transformational Leadership style across all datasets except for that of NSUSA. Leaders of E50Case manifested higher Transactional Leadership style across all datasets except for KMYSME. Finally, leaders of E50Case manifested lower Laissez-faire compared to E50SSME and KMYSME. E50Case manifest lowest Laissez-faire when compared with NSUSA. Table 10 revealed that E50Case were lower across all datasets for Outcomes of Leadership factor Extra Effort. E50Case were lower across all datasets for Outcomes of Leadership factor Effectiveness except for KMYSME. E50Case were higher across all datasets for Outcomes of Leadership factor Satisfaction except for NSUSA.

Please refer to Table 6 for the mean score and standard deviation of Leadership Styles and Leadership Factors of E50Case vs E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA.



**Fig. 5.** Full range leadership and factors of E50Case vs E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA  
 Source: Developed for this research

**Table 10** Mean score of leadership styles and outcomes of leadership of E50Case in comparison with E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA

Leadership Style	Mean difference										
	E50Case vs E50SSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs E50SSME	Leadership Style	E50Case vs KMYSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs KMYSME	Leadership Style	E50Case vs NSUSA	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs NSUSA
SPSS_TFL	1.87%	SPSS_EE	-1.98%	SPSS_TFL	8.76%	SPSS_EE	-3.88%	SPSS_TFL	-4.21%	SPSS_EE	-9.49%
SPSS_TSL	4.35%	SPSS_EFF	-2.74%	SPSS_TSL	-1.03%	SPSS_EFF	7.58%	SPSS_TSL	3.23%	SPSS_EFF	-7.49%
SPSS_LFL	-2.70%	SPSS_SAT	0.34%	SPSS_LFL	-41.94%	SPSS_SAT	12.45%	SPSS_LFL	-44.62%	SPSS_SAT	-3.25%

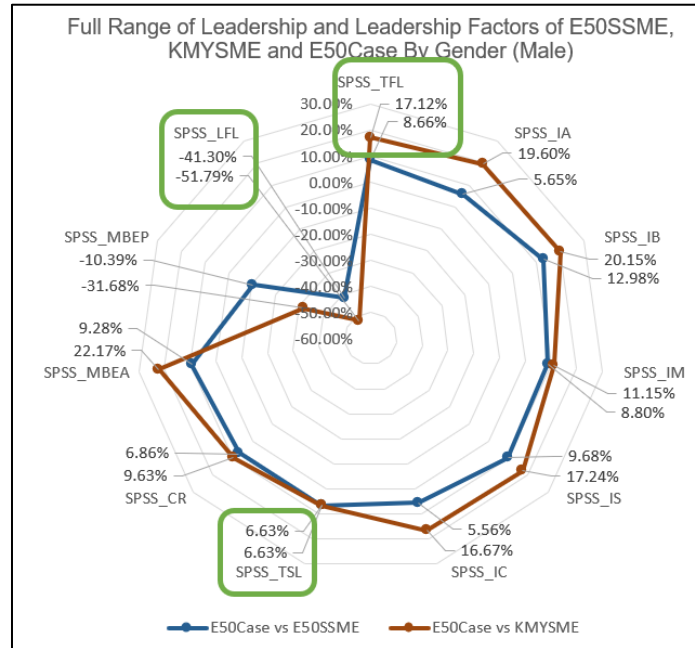
Source: Developed for this research

**4.4 Findings from full range of leadership, outcomes of leadership and factors crosstab gender of E50Case in comparison with E50SSME and KMYSME**

Male leaders of E50Case manifested more Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles when compared with E50SSME. Male leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire style when compared to E50SSME. The higher Transformational Leadership score suggested that male leaders of E50Case manifested more influence and power over their followers. The followers developed more trust, confidence and inspiration to accomplish joint vision through extra personal effort. The higher Transactional Leadership score suggested that male leaders of E50Case also manifested more in recognising and satisfying the needs and desires of followers and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, male leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire, suggesting that they exhibit significantly less responsibility avoidance, which is beneficial to organisational performance. The increased manifestation of Transformation Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles in a combination of reduced Laissez-faire style leads to desirable Outcomes of Leadership. Table 11 revealed that Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction are higher. In light of this, this suggests that male leaders of E50Case manifested better leadership efficacy and organisation performance than their peers in Singapore, as represented by E50SSME.

Male leaders of E50Case manifested more Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles when compared with KMYSME. Male leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire style when compared to E50SSME. The higher Transformational Leadership score suggested that male leaders of E50Case manifested more influence and power over their followers. The followers developed more trust, confidence and inspiration to accomplish joint vision

through extra personal effort. The higher Transactional Leadership score suggested that male leaders of E50Case also manifested more in recognising and satisfying the needs and desires of followers and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, male leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire, suggesting that they exhibit significantly less responsibility avoidance, which is beneficial to organisational performance. The increased manifestation of Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles in a combination of reduced Laissez-faire style leads to desirable Outcomes of Leadership. Table 11 shows that Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction are higher. In light of this, this suggests that male leaders of E50Case manifested better leadership efficacy and organisation performance than their peers in Malaysia, as represented by KMYSME. The male leaders of E50Case manifested higher Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership while manifesting significantly lower Laissez-faire style than E50SSME and KMYSME. As shown in Table 11 and Figure 7, Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction are higher across both datasets.



**Fig. 6.** Full range leadership and factors of E50Case (male) vs E50SSME and KMYSME  
 Source: Developed for this research

**Table 11** Mean score of leadership styles and outcomes of leadership of E50Case (male) in comparison with E50SSME and KMYSME

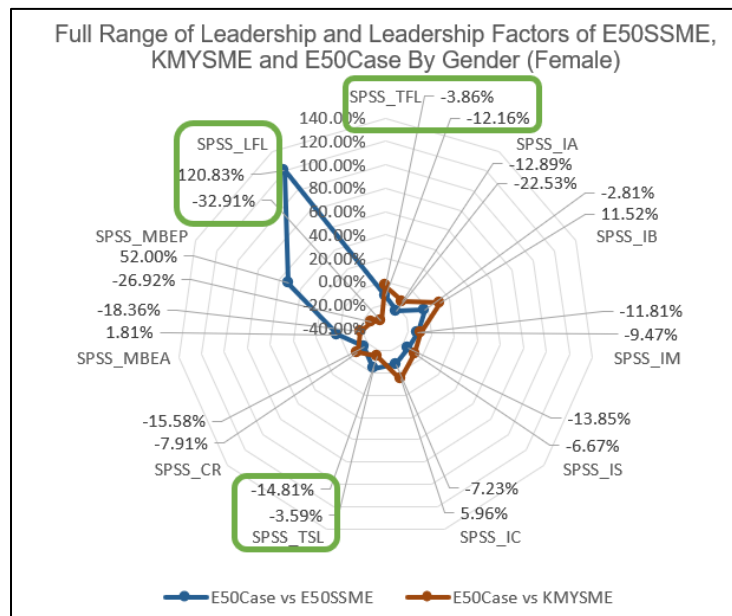
Gender	Leadership Style	Mean difference						
		E50Case vs E50SSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs E50SSME	Leadership Style	E50Case vs KMYSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs KMYSME
Male	SPSS_TFL	8.66%	SPSS_EE	3.38%	SPSS_TFL	17.12%	SPSS_EE	2.23%
	SPSS_TSL	6.63%	SPSS_EFF	6.06%	SPSS_TSL	6.63%	SPSS_EFF	15.81%
	SPSS_LFL	-41.30%	SPSS_SAT	10.17%	SPSS_LFL	-51.79%	SPSS_SAT	18.18%

Source: Developed for this research

Female leaders of E50Case manifested lower Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles compared with E50SSME. Female leaders of E50Case manifested significantly higher Laissez-faire style when compared to E50SSME. The lower Transformational Leadership score suggested that female leaders of E50Case manifested lesser influence and power over their followers. The followers developed less trust, confidence and inspiration to accomplish the joint vision through extra personal effort. The lower Transactional Leadership score suggested that female leaders of E50Case also manifested less in recognising and satisfying the needs and desires of followers and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, female leaders of E50Case manifested significantly higher Laissez-faire, suggesting that they exhibit significantly more responsibility avoidance, which is beneficial to organisational performance. The decreased manifestation of Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles in a combination of significantly increased Laissez-faire style leads to undesirable Outcomes of Leadership. Table 12 revealed that Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction are lower. In light of this, E50Case may need to improve their Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction scores as they are lower than most of their peers in Singapore as represented by E50SSME.

Female leaders of E50Case manifested lower Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles when compared with KMYSME. Female leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire style when compared to E50SSME. The lower Transformational Leadership score suggested that female leaders of E50Case manifested lesser influence and power over their followers. The followers developed lesser trust, confidence and inspiration to accomplish joint vision through extra personal effort. The lower Transactional Leadership score suggested that female leaders of E50Case also manifested less in recognising and satisfying the needs and desires of followers and motivating them to expend efforts to achieve the tasks. Finally, female leaders of E50Case manifested significantly lower Laissez-faire, suggesting that they exhibit significantly less responsibility avoidance, which is beneficial to organisational performance. The decreased manifestation of Transformation Leadership and Transactional Leadership styles leads to undesirable Leadership Outcomes. However, significantly lower Laissez-faire style may lead to some desirable Outcomes of Leadership. Table 12 shows that Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort and Effectiveness are lower while Satisfaction is higher. In light of this, E50Case may need to improve their Extra Effort, and Effectiveness scores as they are lower than most of their peers in Malaysia as represented by KMYSME.

The female leaders of E50Case manifested lower Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership compared to E50SSME and KMYSME. Female leaders of E50Case also manifested lower Laissez-faire style as compared with KMYSME. However, female leaders of E50Case manifested a higher Laissez-faire style than E50SSME. Table 12 and Figure 8 show that Outcomes of Leadership factors, Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction were lower across both datasets except when compared with KMYSME.



**Fig. 7.** Full range leadership and factors of E50Case (female) vs E50SSME and KMYSME  
 Source: Developed for this research

**Table 12** Mean score of leadership styles and outcomes of leadership of E50Case (female) in comparison with E50SSME and KMYSME

Gender	Leadership Style	Mean difference						
		E50Case vs E50SSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs E50SSME	Leadership Style	E50Case vs KMYSME	Outcomes of Leadership	E50Case vs KMYSME
Female	SPSS_TFL	-12.16%	SPSS_EE	-14.89%	SPSS_TFL	-3.86%	SPSS_EE	-11.11%
	SPSS_TSL	-3.59%	SPSS_EFF	-20.00%	SPSS_TSL	-14.81%	SPSS_EFF	-4.60%
	SPSS_LFL	120.83%	SPSS_SAT	-16.11%	SPSS_LFL	-32.91%	SPSS_SAT	5.04%

Source: Developed for this research

### 5. CONCLUSION

A comparison of E50Case with E50SSM, KMYSM and NSUSA as shown in Table 10, revealed that a comparative increase in favourable Leadership styles did not increase the Extra Effort and Effectiveness. However, when compared with KMYSME, E50Case displayed a significant decrease in Laissez-faire which contributed to the increase of two factors of Outcomes of Leadership. However, when compared with NSUSA, E50Case comparatively manifested favourably in Transactional Leadership style, and Laissez-faire style but the intensity or frequency were not enough to do better than

NSUSA's Outcomes of Leadership. Despite E50Case being an E50 Award winner, the results conclude that E50Case recorded the following:

- Marginal differences in the comparative values in FRL resulted in marginal differences in the OOL when compared to the E50SSME.
- Significant decrease in the comparative values in Laissez-faire style resulted in the comparative increases in Effectiveness and Satisfaction when compared to the KMYSME. The comparative result suggests that E50Case could be better in performance.
- Significant decrease in the comparative values in Laissez-faire style resulted in the comparative decreases in all Outcomes of Leadership factors when compared to the NSUSA. The comparative result suggests that E50Case could be better in performance.

Cross tab with Gender (Male) as shown in Table 11, revealed that comparative increase in favourable Leadership styles increases Outcomes of Leadership which meant comparative increase in organisational performance for E50Case (Enterprise Award-winning SME in the Singapore building and construction industry). Cross tab with Gender (Female) as shown in Table 12, revealed that comparative decrease in favourable Leadership styles decreases Outcomes of Leadership which meant comparative decrease in organisational performance for E50Case (Enterprise Award-winning SME in the Singapore building and construction industry). A worthy note is that a comparative decrease in Laissez-faire style (positive increase for Outcomes of Leadership) seems to contribute to the comparative increase of Satisfaction, a factor of Outcomes of Leadership. Similarly, earlier research by Lim (2022) found that female managers scored lowest for Extra Effort (SPSS\_EE) and also scored lower than male managers. The demographics of female respondents in E50Case included ownership of the company, manager or subordinate, education level, number of years with E50Case and age range. Perhaps for future studies, more demographic questions including the years in their current job role, years in their past job role and ethnicity may yield insights to the findings of current study. These recommendations are included in Chapter 6 Limitations and Delimitations.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Given the differences in the time when the E50SSME, KMYSME and NSUSA studies were conducted, the limitation is the aged data from NSUSA and KMYSME surveys. First, the data from the KMYSME and NSUSA surveys provided a comparative baseline of a case beyond Singapore's E50 award-winning SMEs. Second, this study inherits the limitation of the FRL model, which does not include factors such as cultural differences, ethnicity and competitiveness of the business environment. The inclusion of these factors may provide more insights in future research. Thirdly, KMYSME and NSUSA data were not categorised as belonging to the industry sector, unlike E50SSME, which is from the building and construction industry. A more detailed study into specific sector(s) may provide insights in the differences in leadership behaviours in future studies. The Enterprise 50 (E50)'s performance award may not be recognised internationally as it is a Singapore-centric award subjected to local market conditions (The Business Times, 2022).

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