

**Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences**

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| **Proposed Title:** Understanding the neuropsychological leadership qualities associated with the BIG Ten Capabilities of SMEs’ growth**Project Reference Number 16** |
| **School:** Business School |
| **Proposed Supervisory Team:** Prof. Mark Gilman**,** Prof. Alexandros Psychogios**,** Prof. Eirini Mavritsaki  |
| **Abstract:**This research project will be based on the BIG Ten™ capabilities targeting at expanding our knowledge towards cognitive capabilities of SME leaders (business owners and managers). Focusing on cognitive capabilities of leaders and owners of SMEs requires us to take a multidisciplinary approach drawing on other social sciences e.g. Neuro-psychology. Advances in cognitive neuroscience and other approaches to understanding human behaviour are only now beginning to filter into leadership research. However, there is still a lot to know about how specific social behaviours are related to neuro-cognitive capabilities and how they influence leadership in general and leading people in SMEs in particular. In this respect, this study will be based on applying neuroscientific tools and techniques to investigate SME leadership. Specific biometrical tools will be used to carry out research that will explore cognitive capabilities of SMEs’ leaders, namely: 1. Motivation (“approach” or “avoid” tendencies measured by increased frontal asymmetry in the brain) and
2. Resilience, (the ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity and stress measured by the theta/beta brain waves ratio).

The study will be based on two groups of experiments carried out on a specific sample of 50-80 SME leaders of in the West Midland. Beyond the participation in experiments, SME leaders will also fill in a series of questionnaires related to leadership perceptions and leadership style. Finally, the BIG Ten diagnostic will be used in order to evaluate their leadership role.  |
| **Research Environment:**The project will build on the present situation to forecast a possible impact of leadership attitudes in SMEs and development programmes in the coming years. This research will contribute to extent knowledge through publication and dissemination. In addition, specific seminars and other events will be organised around the idea and findings of this study, targeting at attracting SME stakeholders, policy makers, scholars, consultants, etc. There is potential for collaborating with government agencies to develop more effective leadership development programmes for SMEs. Finally, this research aligns with the university strategy of ‘informing and transforming practice’. The findings will allow us to be at the forefront in terms of teaching and engagement of leadership and growth.  |
| **Applicant Requirements:**The student is expected to obtain a PGCert as part of his/her development. Other requirements are a good first degree in social sciences or compatible disciplines and strong analytical skills. Experience of working within organisations is desirable. Understanding of data collection methods is important. Previous experience of knowledge of biological/neurosciences or psychology basic principles and possibly an experience in conducting neuropsychological experiments will be highly desirable. |
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