Journal of Education and Learning Reviews, 3 (6): November-December 2026. ISSN: 3057-0387
Website: https://so19.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JELS/about
Article ID: e2985

Dispositional and Contextual Determinants of Informational Leadership: The Mediating Role of Organizational Climate in Thai Private Higher Education

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Received 19/02/2026	Revised 24/06/2026	Accepted 30/07/2026

Abstract

Background and Aim: Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped governance structures in higher education, particularly within tuition-dependent private institutions operating under competitive pressures. Informational leadership, defined as the strategic governance of data-driven decision-making, digital strategy implementation, and institutional information systems, has emerged as a critical capability. However, limited empirical research has examined how administrators' personality traits and organizational climate jointly shape informational leadership. This study investigates the mediating role of organizational climate in the relationship between administrators' personality traits and informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions.

Materials and Methods: A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed using survey data from 350 administrators across private higher education institutions in Thailand. Personality traits were measured based on the Five-Factor Model, organizational climate was assessed using established climate dimensions, and informational leadership was operationalized within a digital governance framework. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validated the measurement model. Mediation was tested using bias-corrected bootstrapping (5,000 resamples). Effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), competing model comparisons, and multi-group analysis were conducted to evaluate robustness.

Results: Personality traits significantly influenced informational leadership. In the structural model, personality traits had a significant direct effect on informational leadership ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$). Bootstrap mediation analysis further indicated that, after accounting for the mediating role of organizational climate, the direct effect decreased to 0.23 ($p < .001$), while the indirect effect through organizational climate was 0.18 ($p = .001$), confirming partial mediation. Organizational climate exerted the strongest structural influence on informational leadership ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < .001$; $f^2 = 0.41$, large effect). The model explained 55% of the variance in informational leadership ($R^2 = 0.55$) and demonstrated strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.32$). Multi-group analysis revealed that senior administrators exhibited stronger direct dispositional effects, whereas middle-level administrators were more dependent on organizational climate in enacting informational leadership.

Conclusion: This study advances digital leadership theory by integrating dispositional and contextual determinants within a unified structural framework. Findings indicate that informational leadership in private higher education is not solely disposition-driven but structurally amplified through innovation-supportive organizational climates. Institutions aiming to strengthen digital governance capacity should adopt a dual strategy that integrates leadership development with systematic climate-building initiatives.

Keywords: Informational Leadership; Organizational Climate; Personality Traits; Digital Transformation; Higher Education; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Introduction

The accelerating pace of digital transformation has fundamentally reconfigured governance structures in higher education institutions worldwide. Digital technologies have evolved from peripheral administrative tools into strategic infrastructures that shape institutional resilience, academic innovation, data governance systems, and long-term organizational sustainability. (Le et al., 2025). For private higher education institutions in emerging economies such as Thailand, these pressures are intensified by tuition-dependent financial models, demographic decline, regulatory accountability requirements, and increasing expectations for digitally integrated academic and administrative systems. In such environments, the strategic capacity to govern information and digital infrastructures is no longer optional but central to institutional survival and competitiveness.

Within this evolving landscape, informational leadership has emerged as a distinct and increasingly critical governance capability. (Makjod et al., 2025). Informational leadership refers to the

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strategic orchestration of data-driven decision-making, digital strategy formulation, institutional analytics, and information governance mechanisms. (Yasuttamathada and Worapongpat, 2025). While it intersects conceptually with digital leadership, it differs in emphasis. Digital leadership broadly concerns leading technological change and innovation, whereas informational leadership specifically centers on the governance, integration, and strategic utilization of information as institutional capital. Unlike IT management, which focuses on operational technology administration, informational leadership operates at the strategic level of institutional direction and decision architecture. Despite its growing relevance, empirical research examining the determinants of informational leadership remains limited.

Leadership scholarship has consistently demonstrated that individual differences shape leadership emergence and effectiveness. (Nițǎ, Guțu, 2023). The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality provides a robust dispositional framework for understanding leadership behavior across contexts. (Xue et al., 2025). Openness to Experience is associated with innovation receptivity and adaptability; Conscientiousness predicts strategic planning and disciplined execution; Emotional Stability supports decision-making under uncertainty; Extraversion enhances influence and communication; and Agreeableness facilitates collaboration and trust-building. Although extensive research links these traits to transformational, charismatic, and strategic leadership styles, their influence on informational leadership, particularly within digitally intensive higher education environments, remains under-theorized.

However, leadership is not enacted in a vacuum. Organizational Climate Theory posits that shared perceptions of institutional policies, practices, and norms shape behavioral expectations and performance outcomes. Organizational climate functions as a socio-psychological context that can amplify or constrain leadership influence. In digitally transforming institutions, a climate characterized by innovation support, transparency, trust, and collaborative engagement may strengthen the translation of dispositional tendencies into informational leadership practices. Conversely, bureaucratic rigidity or fragmented communication structures may inhibit such enactment. Thus, personality traits may influence informational leadership not only directly, but also indirectly through the climate leaders cultivate.

Despite expanding scholarship on digital transformation in higher education, three critical gaps remain. First, existing studies predominantly focus on leadership styles or technological readiness, rather than examining stable dispositional antecedents of informational leadership. Second, limited empirical research has investigated organizational climate as a mediating mechanism linking personality traits to digital governance outcomes. (Orhan and Akbulut, 2026). Third, evidence from Southeast Asian higher education systems, particularly private institutions operating under market-driven constraints, is scarce. In tuition-dependent contexts such as Thailand, ineffective informational leadership may directly affect enrollment forecasting, financial sustainability, accreditation performance, and strategic positioning. Therefore, understanding the dispositional and contextual foundations of informational leadership is not merely a theoretical exercise but a governance imperative.

Addressing these gaps, the present study proposes and empirically tests a structural equation model examining the direct and indirect relationships among administrators' personality traits, organizational climate, and informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions. Specifically, this study investigates whether organizational climate mediates the relationship between personality traits and informational leadership, thereby clarifying the socio-organizational mechanisms through which dispositional characteristics translate into digital governance effectiveness.

This research contributes to the literature in three significant ways. (Ramayah, 2024). Theoretically, it integrates dispositional psychology and Organizational Climate Theory within a unified digital governance framework, advancing a multilevel explanation of informational leadership. (Worapongpat, 2025a). Methodologically, it applies Structural Equation Modeling to test complex mediation effects with robustness assessments, including effect size and predictive relevance evaluation. Contextually, it provides empirical evidence from private higher education institutions in

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Thailand, contributing to the diversification of global higher education leadership scholarship beyond Western-dominated settings.

Practically, the findings offer implications for leadership selection, executive development, and digital strategy implementation. By demonstrating that informational leadership is shaped not only by personality traits but also by climate conditions, the study highlights the importance of combining leadership development initiatives with systematic climate-building strategies.

Objectives

1. To develop and empirically validate a structural equation model explaining the relationships among administrators' personality traits, organizational climate, and informational leadership.
2. To examine the direct effect of administrators' personality traits on informational leadership.
3. To examine the direct effect of administrators' personality traits on organizational climate.
4. To examine the direct effect of organizational climate on informational leadership.
5. To examine the mediating role of organizational climate in the relationship between administrators' personality traits and informational leadership.

Literature review

1. Digital Transformation and Informational Leadership in Higher Education

Digital transformation has become a structural imperative in contemporary higher education governance. (Worapongpat, 2025b). Universities are increasingly required to integrate digital infrastructures across academic administration, quality assurance systems, student services, research management, and institutional analytics. Unlike earlier stages of technological adoption, primarily centered on instructional technologies, the current digital transformation entails systemic restructuring of decision architectures through data governance, analytics integration, and information ecosystems.

Within this evolving governance landscape, informational leadership represents a distinct strategic capability. Informational leadership extends beyond traditional administrative authority and even beyond generalized digital leadership. Whereas transformational leadership emphasizes vision and motivational alignment, and digital leadership broadly addresses technological innovation and change management, informational leadership specifically centers on the strategic orchestration of data-driven decision-making, institutional analytics, digital governance mechanisms, and the integration of information resources as institutional capital.

2. Personality Traits as Dispositional Foundations of Informational Leadership

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality provides a stable dispositional framework for explaining individual differences in leadership behavior. (Worapongpat, 2026). Across meta-analytic studies, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability have consistently predicted leadership emergence and effectiveness.

In digitally transforming institutions, certain traits may be particularly consequential. Openness to Experience supports innovation receptivity and cognitive flexibility capabilities necessary for navigating technological change. (Worapongpat and Kangpheng, 2025). Conscientiousness enhances structured planning and disciplined implementation, both critical for data governance and strategic digital execution. Emotional Stability enables decision-making under technological uncertainty. Extraversion and Agreeableness facilitate collaboration and communication, which are essential for institutional alignment in digital initiatives.

3. Organizational Climate as a Contextual Transmission Mechanism

Organizational Climate Theory posits that shared perceptions of institutional policies, practices, and procedural norms shape behavioral expectations and performance outcomes. (Worapongpat and Song, 2025). Unlike organizational culture, which reflects deeper value systems, climate represents more immediate, perceptual dimensions that are responsive to leadership influence.

Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping climate through communication transparency, participatory decision-making, innovation encouragement, and trust-building practices. (Worapongpat et al., 2026). In higher education settings, climate may encompass dimensions such as innovation support, collaborative norms, administrative flexibility, digital openness, and psychological safety.

In digitally transforming institutions, organizational climate operates as a structural amplifier or constraint. A climate supportive of experimentation and data transparency may enable leaders'

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dispositional tendencies toward innovation to translate into informational leadership behaviors. Conversely, bureaucratic rigidity may suppress such translation even when leaders possess high openness or conscientiousness.

4. Informational Leadership in Private Higher Education Contexts

Private higher education institutions operate under governance conditions distinct from public universities. In Thailand, private institutions face intensified enrollment competition, tuition-dependent financial sustainability pressures, regulatory oversight, and increasing demands for digital modernization to maintain institutional attractiveness.

Under such conditions, informational leadership becomes strategically central. Data-driven enrollment forecasting, accreditation reporting, financial analytics, and digital branding strategies require coordinated information governance. Informational leadership thus transcends administrative competence and becomes a structural determinant of institutional viability.

However, empirical investigations of digital or informational leadership within Southeast Asian higher education remain limited. Much of the literature is Western-centric, often reflecting governance structures and institutional autonomy models that differ substantially from those in emerging economies. Consequently, contextualized examination of personality–climate–leadership relationships in Thai private institutions contributes not merely geographic diversity but theoretical boundary testing.

Conceptual Framework

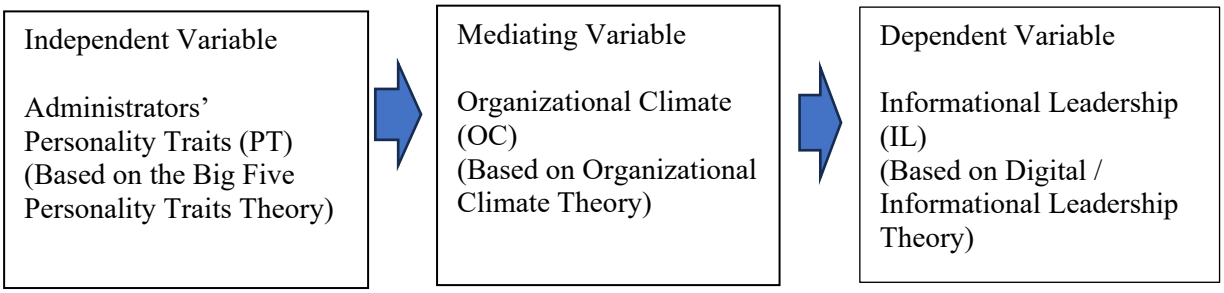


Figure 1 Research Framework

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research approach to evaluate the structural links between administrators' personality qualities, organizational climate, and informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to investigate the hypothesized direct and indirect interactions between the study variables in a theoretically stated mediation model.

A quantitative technique was suitable for the study, as it sought to evaluate and validate a theoretical model, rather than produce a new theory. In particular, the study combined the Five-Factor Model of personality with Organizational Climate Theory to describe the interplay of individual personality and organizational environment in defining informational leadership in the context of digital governance in higher education.

2. Population and Sampling

2.1 Population

The target population comprised administrators in private higher education institutions in Thailand. They comprised presidents, vice presidents, deans, associate deans, program directors, and other administrators involved in institutional governance, implementation of digital strategy, and data-driven decision-making. The choice of these respondents is justified by the fact that their functions directly relate to the exercise of informational leadership and the institutional digital transformation.

2.2 Sampling Technique

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A stratified random sample was used to guarantee proper representation of institutional size and administrative level. The technique was suitable due to the fact that private higher education institutions have different governance structures, organizational capabilities, and administrative hierarchies. Stratification contributed to reducing sampling bias and increasing sample representativeness.

2.3 Sample Size Determination

Sample size adequacy was tested with statistical power analysis and SEM methodological recommendations. First, power analysis using G*Power (based on a medium effect size (f 2 = 0.15), statistical power of 0.80, and significance level of 0.05) was conducted and revealed that more than 200 respondents were needed. Second, SEM guidelines propose a sufficient case-to-parameter ratio for model stability and reliable parameter estimation. Taking into account the intricacy of the suggested mediation model, a target sample of some 400 respondents was decided upon. The number of valid replies obtained was 350 and used for the final analysis, which was judged as sufficient for SEM analysis.

3. Research Instrument

Data were obtained using a standardized questionnaire based on the recognized theoretical constructs and tailored to the setting of Thai private higher education institutions. The questionnaire was divided into four sections that included demographic information, three latent variables, and a total of 20 measurement items, excluding the demographic questions.

Section 1 gathered demographic data, including administrative position, years of administrative experience, institutional size, and academic discipline cluster.

Section 2: The independent variable was the personality qualities of administrators measured in Section 2. The items were taken from the Five-Factor Model of personality, and consisted of five dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Each factor was framed in the light of leadership dispositions relevant to digital governance and institutional decision-making.

Section 3 measured the mediating variable of organizational climate. The construct had five elements, which are innovation support, cooperation, openness of communication, trust, and administrative flexibility. These factors reflected administrators' assessments of the organizational conditions that foster learning, innovation, and digital transformation.

Section 4: Informational leadership – dependent variable. This construct was operationalized using notions from digital leadership, information governance, and higher education administration. It featured five dimensions: data-driven decision making, digital strategy creation, ICT integration, institutional analytics use, and information governance procedures.
All measurement questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

4. Instrument Validation

4.1 Content Validity

Content validity was evaluated by five experts in educational leadership, organizational behavior, higher education administration, and digital governance. Experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of each item for the study objectives and theoretical notions. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was determined for each item. The IOC varied from 0.80 to 1.00, higher than the acceptable value of 0.50, suggesting satisfactory content validity.

4.2 Construct Validity

Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Convergent validity was measured by standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). The criteria used were standardized factor loadings of 0.50 or higher, CR values of 0.70 or higher, and AVE values of 0.50 or higher. Fornell-Larcker criterion. Discriminant validity was examined. The results confirmed the acceptable convergent and discriminant validity of all the constructs.

4.3 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability were used to test internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha was between 0.83 and 0.86, and Composite Reliability was between 0.84 and 0.88.

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These values were above the proposed cut-off value of 0.70, which indicated the measurement device had acceptable dependability.

5. Data Collection Procedure

After getting institutional approval and ethical clearance, questionnaires were disseminated electronically to administrators of selected private higher education schools. Participation was voluntary; respondents were informed of the goal of the study, the confidentiality of responses, and their freedom to withdraw at any time. Anonymity was maintained to reduce the impact of social desirability bias and to promote honest responding. Data collection took place during a specific time period to maintain the cross-sectional aspect of the research.

6. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed with SPSS and AMOS or comparable SEM software. The analysis was performed in three phases.

First, descriptive statistics, data distribution, normality, and multicollinearity were examined in preliminary analysis. Normality was checked using skewness and kurtosis values, and multicollinearity was checked to see whether the independent variables created problems of estimation.

Second, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to test the measurement model. The fit of the model was examined with many goodness-of-fit indices, χ 2 /df, GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Acceptable indices were $\chi^2/df < 3.00$, GFI and AGFI ≥ 0.90, CFI and TLI ≥ 0.90, RMSEA ≤ 0.08, and SRMR ≤ 0.08.

Third, SEM was used to investigate the hypothesized direct impacts among administrators' personality qualities, organizational atmosphere, and informational leadership through structural modeling. To assess the mediating influence of organizational climate, bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used. Statistical significance of mediation was determined when the 95% confidence interval of the indirect impact did not contain zero.

7. Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the standards of the Declaration of Helsinki for research involving human subjects. All responders were given information about informed consent before participating. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously ensured. The data collected were utilized strictly for scholarly reasons and only in aggregate form.

Results

1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and discriminant validity assessment of the three primary constructs are presented in Table 1. Overall, respondents reported rather high levels across all variables in the study. Informational leadership had the highest mean score (M = 4.01, SD = 0.49), followed by organizational climate (M = 3.92, SD = 0.51) and administrators' personality qualities (M = 3.87, SD = 0.54). All inter-construct correlations were positive and statistically significant (p<.001). Personality qualities of administrators showed moderate correlations with organizational environment (r =.40) and informational leadership (r =.56). The strongest relationship was found between organizational environment and informational leadership (r = .67). This gave initial empirical evidence for the proposed mediation paradigm. Moreover, the square roots of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct were greater than the inter-construct correlations, thereby meeting the Fornell–Larcker criterion and establishing sufficient discriminant validity.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Personality Traits (PT)	3.87	0.54	**0.76**		
2. Organizational Climate (OC)	3.92	0.51	0.40	**0.72**	
3. Informational Leadership (IL)	4.01	0.49	0.56	0.67	**0.74**

Note. N = 350. Values on the diagonal represent the square roots of AVE. All correlations are significant at p < .001.

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2. Measurement Model Evaluation

To test the reliability and validity of the measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. The factor loadings standardized varied from .62 to .87 and were statistically significant ($p < .001$) as shown in Table 2, demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability. Composite Reliability (CR) scores varied from 0.84 to 0.88, greater than 0.70 as required. The values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.52 to 0.58, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50 and confirming the convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients varied from 0.83 to 0.86, indicating good internal consistency and dependability. Overall, these results suggest that the measuring model displayed good reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Construct	Items	Standardized Loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Personality Traits	5	0.62–0.87	0.88	0.58	0.86
Organizational Climate	6	0.64–0.82	0.86	0.52	0.84
Informational Leadership	4	0.66–0.85	0.84	0.54	0.83

Note. All standardized factor loadings were statistically significant at $p < .001$. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model showed a good fit to the empirical data as all the fit indices were within the required levels: $\chi 2/df = 1.76$, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.046, SRMR = 0.039. These results imply a good fit of the predicted structural model to the observed data. All expected direct effects were substantial (Table 3). The personality qualities of administrators significantly positively affected informational leadership ($\beta = 0.39$, SE = 0.05, $t = 5.89$, $p < .001$), therefore confirming H1. Personality qualities also had a substantial positive effect on organizational environment ($\beta = .35$, SE = .04, $t = 6.11$, $p < .001$), which supports H2. In addition, organizational climate had a substantial, favorable effect on informational leadership ($\beta = 0.54$, SE = 0.06, $t = 7.48$, $p < .001$), supporting H3. Of the three structural routes, the organizational environment had the greatest direct effect on informational leadership. The structural model explained 16% of the variance in organizational climate ($R2 = 0.16$) and 55% of the variance in informational leadership ($R2 = 0.55$). The R^2 value for informational leadership shows a considerable explanatory power, indicating that the combination of dispositional and contextual variables significantly explains informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions.

Table 3 Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	SE	t-value	p	Result
H1	PT → IL	0.39	0.05	5.89	< .001	Supported
H2	PT → OC	0.35	0.04	6.11	< .001	Supported
H3	OC → IL	0.54	0.06	7.48	< .001	Supported

4. Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of organizational climate was examined using the bias-corrected bootstrap approach of 5,000 resamples. The total effect of administrators' personality qualities on informational leadership was statistically significant (effect = 0.41, 95% CI [0.29, 0.53], $p < .001$), as shown in Table 4. When organizational environment was included as the mediating variable, the direct effect remained significant (effect = 0.23, 95% CI [0.11, 0.34], $p < .001$). Also, the indirect effect through organizational environment was significant (effect = 0.18, 95% CI [0.09, 0.29], $p = .001$). Both the direct and indirect effects were significant, and the confidence interval of the indirect impact did not contain zero, thereby confirming organizational climate as a partial mediator of the association between administrators' personality traits and informational leadership. The finding suggests that personality qualities affect informational leadership directly and indirectly through the organizational climate produced and preserved in organizations.

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Table 4 Mediation Analysis Using Bias-Corrected Bootstrapping

Effect Type	Path	Effect	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p
Total Effect	PT → IL	0.41	0.29	0.53	< .001
Direct Effect	PT → IL	0.23	0.11	0.34	< .001
Indirect Effect	PT → OC → IL	0.18	0.09	0.29	.001

Note. Confidence intervals were estimated using the bias-corrected bootstrap method with 5,000 resamples.

5. Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Moreover, effect size and predictive relevance were also tested to evaluate the practical significance and resilience of the model. The results of Table 5 demonstrate that the effect of personality traits on organizational climate was moderate (f2 = 0.19). The effect of personality traits on informational leadership was moderate (f2 = 0.21). The influence of organizational climate on informational leadership was large (f 2 = 0.41), thus highlighting the major importance of organizational climate as a crucial contextual predictor of informational leadership. The predicted relevance values also indicate the model is robust. Organizational climate had small-to-medium predictive value (Q2 = 0.11) while informational leadership had high predictive relevance (Q2 = 0.32). The results demonstrate that the model has considerable predictive power beyond the in-sample explanatory power.

Table 5: Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Path	f^2	Effect Size Interpretation
PT → OC	0.19	Medium
PT → IL	0.21	Medium
OC → IL	0.41	Large

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Q^2	Predictive Relevance
Organizational Climate	0.16	0.11	Small–Moderate
Informational Leadership	0.55	0.32	Strong

6. Multi-Group Analysis

Multigroup analysis was used to test whether the structural linkages differed across administrative levels. Measurement invariance was established before comparing the groups, ΔCFI < .01, indicating the model was adequate for comparing senior and medium-level administrators. As shown in Table 6, the direct effect of personality factors on informational leadership was larger for senior administrators (β = 0.46) than for middle-level administrators (β = 0.31). While the impact of organizational environment on informational leadership was more pronounced among middle-level administrators (β = 0.62) than senior administrators (β = 0.47). The impact of personality factors on organizational climate was similar for both groups. These findings show that senior administrators depend more on dispositional qualities while practicing informational leadership, while middle-level administrators are more dependent on favorable organizational climate conditions.

Table 6 Multi-Group Analysis by Administrative Level

Path	Senior Administrators (β)	Middle-Level Administrators (β)	Difference
PT → IL	0.46	0.31	Higher for senior administrators
PT → OC	0.33	0.37	Comparable
OC → IL	0.47	0.62	Higher for middle-level administrators

Note. Measurement invariance was established (ΔCFI < .01). All paths were significant at p < .001.

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7. Competing Model Comparison

The robustness of the proposed model was tested by comparing the anticipated partial mediation model with two alternative models. The suggested partial mediation model has the best overall fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.76$, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.046) as presented in Table 7. The full mediation model had a poorer match to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.89$, CFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.082) while the direct effects only model had a poor fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 3.21$, CFI = 0.87, RMSEA = 0.091). The results further support the partial mediation model as the best description of the interactions between personality factors, organizational climate, and informational leadership.

Table 7 Competing Model Comparison

Model	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	Interpretation
Proposed Partial Mediation Model	1.76	0.97	0.046	Best fit
Full Mediation Model	2.89	0.89	0.082	Inferior fit
Direct-Effects-Only Model	3.21	0.87	0.091	Poor fit

The results, in general, provide significant empirical support for the proposed structural model. Personality qualities of administrators had great effects on both organizational climate and informational leadership, with organizational climate having the strongest direct influence on informational leadership. The mediation analysis showed that the organizational climate partially mediated the effect of personality factors on informational leadership. Additionally, the robustness of the suggested framework was supported by the effect magnitude, predictive relevance, multi-group analysis, and competing model comparison. The findings imply that informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions is a function of the interaction between individual dispositional qualities and favorable organizational climate conditions.

Discussion

1: To develop and empirically validate a structural equation model explaining the relationships among administrators' personality traits, organizational climate, and informational leadership

The results showed that the suggested structural equation model had excellent goodness-of-fit indices and considerable explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.55$), showing that informational leadership is a multidimensional construct formed by individual and contextual variables. This conclusion aligns with contemporary leadership theories that suggest that leadership effectiveness is a function of the interaction between personal traits and organizational contexts, rather than individual abilities per se (Judge et al., 2002; Oc, 2018). This fusion of organizational climate and personality traits within a single framework is also consistent with the proposition of Trait Activation Theory that personality characteristics are expressed and become influential when organizational contexts provide opportunities for their manifestation (Tett & Burnett, 2003).

The present findings are also in line with the literature that suggests that digital and information-oriented leadership is increasingly dependent on organizational systems, collaborative cultures, and institutional readiness for change (Kane et al., 2019; Cortellazzo et al., 2019). Digital transformation in higher education demands leaders to have individual competencies and to work in organizational climates that foster creativity, communication, and knowledge sharing (Bond et al., 2018; Alenezi, 2021). Therefore, the notion of informational leadership as an organizational skill created by the interaction of leader dispositions and institutional conditions should be taken into consideration.

2: To examine the direct effect of administrators' personality traits on informational leadership

The results of the study revealed that the personality qualities of administrators had a significant and beneficial effect on informational leadership ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with a significant body of literature that indicates the Five-Factor Model is one of the best predictors of leadership effectiveness in organizational contexts (Judge et al., 2002; Bono & Judge, 2004). Leaders who are open to experience are more likely to be adaptable and innovation-oriented, both of which are crucial in digitally transforming institutions (Feist, 2019; Potočnik et al., 2021).

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In a similar vein, conscientiousness is beneficial for strategic planning, successful achievement of goals, and organizational efforts, while emotional stability is useful in decision making with uncertainty and technological disruption (Judge et al., 2002; De Vries, 2012). Communication, collaboration, and stakeholder involvement are made possible by extraversion and agreeableness, and these are key characteristics for leaders charged with implementing information governance and digital strategy (Antonakis et al., 2017).

The results also corroborate recent digital leadership studies, which found that leaders must display cognitive flexibility, learning agility, and openness to technological innovation to achieve successful digital transformation (Zeike et al., 2019; Cortellazzo et al., 2019). This implies that personality qualities might be viewed as psychological resources that allow administrators to be successful in data-driven governance and strategic information management.

3: To examine the direct effect of administrators' personality traits on organizational climate

The results demonstrated that the personality of administrators strongly affected organizational climate ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with organizational climate theory, which believes leaders are critical to molding employees' perceptions of organizational practices, communication systems, trust connections, and innovation support (Schneider et al., 2013).

Earlier research has shown that personality features of leaders have a substantial impact on the environment in the workplace through leadership behaviors, interpersonal interactions, and decision-making processes (Zaccaro et al., 2018). Open and emotionally stable leaders build learning-oriented climates that enable experimentation and the sharing of knowledge, whereas conscientious leaders are linked with organizational clarity, consistency, and accountability (Judge et al., 2002).

Furthermore, transformational and participative leadership behaviors that are typically related to positive personality traits have been shown to improve organizational climates of trust, collaboration, and psychological safety (Banks et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2017). Such climates are particularly pertinent for higher education institutions undertaking digital transformation, since they lessen resistance to change and enhance collective adaptation to technological advancements (Bond et al., 2018).

4: To examine the direct effect of organizational climate on informational leadership

Organizational climate had the largest direct effect on informational leadership ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < .001$), pointing to the importance of contextual factors for practices of digital governance. This finding is in line with prior studies that showed organizational climate as the primary predictor of innovation, knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and leadership effectiveness (Schneider et al., 2013; Isaksen & Akkermans, 2011).

Open communication, trust, collaboration, and support for an innovation environment are conducive to information sharing and evidence-based decision-making. These characteristics are especially critical for digitally evolving firms where leaders need to orchestrate complex information systems and facilitate data-driven strategic activities (Kane et al., 2019).

The significant effect in this study further supports the findings of other studies that organizational climate is an important enabler of digital transformation that works through employees' willingness to adopt new technologies and to participate in organizational change initiatives (Alenezi, 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021). Consequently, a positive organizational climate in higher education institutions may improve leaders' abilities to exploit institutional data, execute digital strategies, and bolster information governance processes.

5: To examine the mediating role of organizational climate in the relationship between administrators' personality traits and informational leadership

The results indicated that organizational climate somewhat mediated the association between personality traits and informational leadership (indirect impact = 0.18, $p = .001$). This study indicates that personality factors influence informational leadership directly and indirectly through the organizational settings that leaders build.

The mediation effect is consistent with multilevel leadership theories that consider leadership outcomes as the result of the interaction of individual, interpersonal, and organizational elements (Yammarino et al., 2005; Zaccaro et al., 2018). While positive personality traits provide a foundation

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for effective leadership conduct, their influence is significantly enhanced when integrated in organizational environments that promote innovation, collaboration, and trust.

This conclusion is also in line with Trait Activation Theory, which proposes that contextual circumstances are what decide whether personality features may be effectively translated into observable leadership behaviors (Tett & Burnett, 2003). In the digital transformation of organizations, organizational climate is a channel that translates leaders' dispositional strengths into actual governance capabilities.

The partial mediation revealed in this study further indicates that neither personality qualities nor organizational climate alone is a sufficient explanation of informational leadership. Rather, it is the confluence of human psychological resources and enabling organizational settings that results in effective informational leadership. Recent research on digital leadership emphasizes that effective digital governance relies on leader capabilities, organizational culture, and institutional readiness for transformation (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Kane et al., 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021), which supports this interpretation.

Conclusion

The study effectively achieved the five research objectives. First, the proposed structural equation model, which combined the administrators' personality traits, organizational climate, and informational leadership, showed reasonable model fit and considerable explanatory power; thus, it was empirically valid in explaining informational leadership in Thai private higher education institutions. Second, the personality features of administrators had a strong direct impact on informational leadership. Third, personality attributes also proved to be strongly influential on organizational atmosphere. Fourth, organizational climate showed a favorable and significant effect on informational leadership, and it was the greatest structural predictor in the model. Finally, the organizational climate partially moderated the association between personality qualities and informational leadership. It indicates that the influence of administrators' personality traits is conveyed directly and indirectly through organizational climate. The findings indicate that informational leadership is molded not just by leaders' dispositional features but also by supportive organizational environments that promote the translation of individual talents into effective digital governance practices. Thus, leadership development initiatives should be supplemented with strengthening organizational climate, particularly through fostering innovation, collaboration, trust, communication openness, and administrative flexibility to enhance informational leadership and sustain digital transformation in competitive private higher education institutions.

Knowledge Contribution

From the study entitled: "Integrating the Five-Factor Model of Personality and Organizational Climate to Explain Informational Leadership in Private Higher Education Institutions in Thailand" New knowledge was generated that can be summarized in the following conceptual model.

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Journal of Education and Learning Reviews, 3 (6): November-December 2026. ISSN: 3057-0387
Website: https://so19.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JELS/about
Article ID: e2985

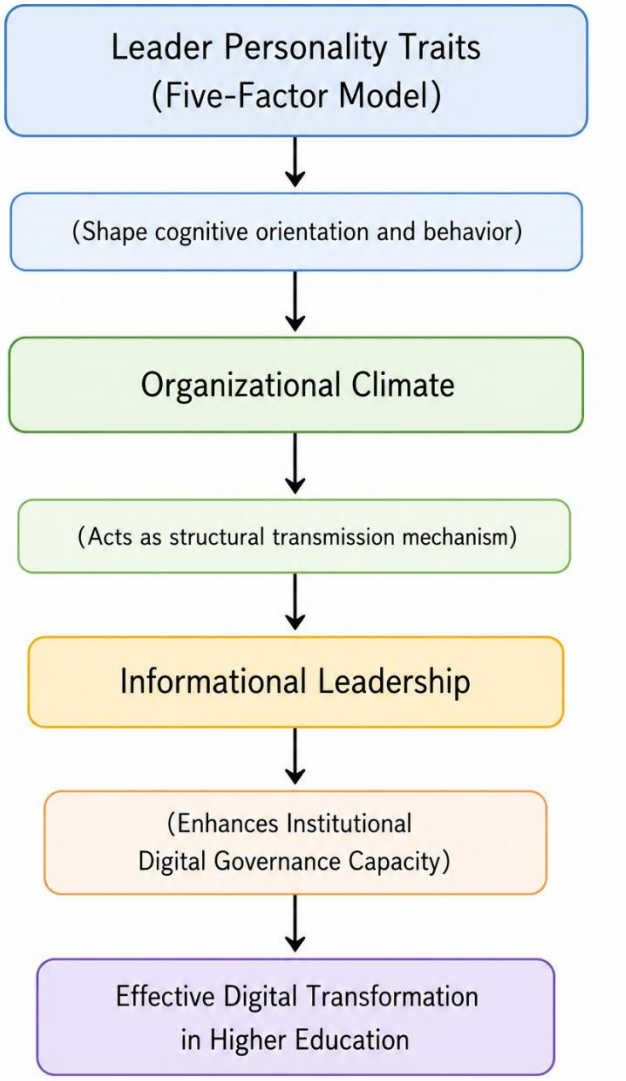


Figure 1: Informational leadership does not emerge directly from technological infrastructure, but rather from a structured multi-level process consisting of three interconnected levels.

Dispositional Level (Individual Basis) Personality traits of leaders, described under the Five-Factor Model, are basic psychological resources. These attributes affect leaders' cognitive styles, receptiveness to innovation, willingness to take risks, and proclivity for making data-driven decisions. 2. Context Level (Organizational Environment) The personality attributes influence leaders' development of the organizational climate. An atmosphere of trust, adaptability, collaboration, and access to data is a crucial contextual enabler. In this case, organizational climate is a mediating process that translates personality-based tendencies into institutional practices.3 Governance Outcome Level (Digital Leadership Enactment) A conducive organizational atmosphere either supports or limits the enactment of informational leadership. When aligned, it improves the capability of digital governance and enables sustained digital transformation in higher education institutions.

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for higher education institutions and relevant agencies.

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1.1 The validated structural model demonstrated that administrators' personality traits, organizational climate, and informational leadership jointly explain digital governance effectiveness. Therefore, higher education institutions should adopt an integrated leadership development framework that simultaneously strengthens individual leadership competencies and organizational climate rather than relying solely on technological infrastructure investments.

1.2 Since administrators' personality traits significantly influenced both organizational climate and informational leadership, leadership recruitment, selection, and succession planning should incorporate personality-based assessment criteria. In addition, institutions should establish organizational systems that promote innovation, collaboration, communication openness, trust, and administrative flexibility to strengthen informational leadership and support data-driven decision-making.

1.3 Because organizational climate exerted the strongest direct influence on informational leadership, institutional policies should prioritize the development of supportive organizational environments that encourage knowledge sharing, digital innovation, and participatory governance. Strengthening organizational climate is likely to produce greater improvements in digital governance than technology investment alone.

1.4 The findings further indicate that organizational climate partially mediates the relationship between administrators' personality traits and informational leadership. Consequently, leadership development programs should combine individual competency development with systematic organizational climate improvement initiatives. Such integrated interventions are particularly important for middle-level administrators, whose leadership effectiveness appears to depend more strongly on supportive organizational conditions.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should extend the present study in several directions.

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine how organizational climate and informational leadership evolve throughout digital transformation processes.

2. Investigate additional moderating variables, such as institutional size, governance autonomy, digital maturity, organizational culture, or technological readiness, to strengthen the explanatory power of the proposed model.

3. Compare public and private higher education institutions to determine whether the structural relationships identified in this study remain consistent across different governance contexts.

4. Employ multi-source and multi-level data collection methods, including subordinate evaluations, peer assessments, and institutional performance indicators, to reduce common method bias and improve the robustness of the findings.

5. Validate the proposed structural model across different countries and higher education systems to assess its cross-cultural generalizability and theoretical applicability.

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