Abstract

Although organizational contexts have an influence on leadership, and some of their characteristics may facilitate (through weak structures) or inhibit (through strong structures) the leaders' behaviors, the extent of their influence has rarely been studied. Indeed, research of the influence of some types of contexts (entrepreneurial vs. non-entrepreneurial) on the emergence of certain variables (leaders' motives) is even scarcer. This paper analyses this influence in 40 companies, interviewing their leaders to obtain a qualitative register of their motives, and administering questionnaires to members of their respective management teams. The hypothesis considered was that, in 'weak' contexts (entrepreneurial), the leaders' motives would be more salient than in 'strong' contexts (non-entrepreneurial). The results largely confirm this hypothesis with respect to behaviors that are directly related to three main motives (power, affiliation and achievement). These results are discussed, and practical suggestions are provided for future research.