



**EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND
SUBORDINATE QUALITY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP:
A STUDY BASED ON SRI LANKA ARMY**

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ABSTRACT

The art of influencing and directing men in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation in order to accomplish the mission is defined as military leadership. Usually military effectiveness is associated with the use of technology, regime type and strategy but very little recognition is given to military leadership as a key constituent of military effectiveness. Researchers have studied the impact made by military leadership in achieving tasks in different countries but little to no studies are done in the context of Sri Lankan military. Hence, this work studied the effectiveness of the military leadership in achieving tasks based on Sri Lanka Army. Sri Lanka Army together with other forces gained much respect and trust from the general public of Sri Lanka, especially in the past four decades and became the face of the nation whenever Sri Lankans were faced with non-combat tragedies including natural disasters. For this research, mixed methods research approach has been considered with interpretivism research philosophy in mind and was conducted using thematic analysis together with a structured survey. A comprehensive literature review was carried out in order to understand leadership theories and styles so that the finding can be discussed in context of such theories and styles. Service papers written by military personnel on both combat and non-combat missions were analyzed followed by in-depth interviews of three retired military leaders in Sri Lanka Army and surveyed 740 active military personnel in order to collect data. Results of the respective study confirmed the objectives of this study that the effectiveness of military leadership plays a crucial role in achieving tasks both in combat and non-combat missions and further revealed that the key traits of military leaders include honesty, flexibility, loyalty and decisiveness. External factors such as geo political stability also play a significant role in achieving tasks by military leaders. Multiple regression analysis show that the Traits of Military Leaders and Quality of Subordinates affect on the Effectiveness of Military Leadership. However, with highest 'Beta' value, it indicates that Traits of Military Leaders is the mostly affecting factor on the Effectiveness of Military Leadership. This finding provides empirical evidence to the 'Trait Theory' in Leadership, which support the argument that 'Leaders are born; not made'

Key Words: Traits of Leaders, Effectiveness, Leadership Styles, Military Leadership, Quality of Subordinates,