

LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS WHO HOLD POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

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Abstract

The current work intended to explore the perceptions about leadership as reported by teachers who hold positions of leadership, management, and coordination. In specific, we proposed to investigate which leadership dimension is perceived as more frequent (i.e., transformational, transactional, or laissez-fair) and further explore the endorsement of specific categories within each leadership dimension. Also, these leadership profiles were tested across gender and age. Finally, the associations between leadership dimensions and outcomes were also investigated. We expect to find that: 1) the transformational and transactional models values of leadership will be predominant in comparasion with the laissez fair model value; 2) the perceptions of men and women will differ (genre); 3) The perceptions of participants will vart with age; and 4) the transformational and transactional leadership dimesnsions and respective categories would be associated with more positive outcomes (i.e., efficiency, satisfaction and extra effort).

Keywords: Leadership perceptions; Management; Coordination.



Resumo

O estudo apresentado pretendeu explorar as percepções sobre liderança relatadas por professores que ocupam posições de liderança, gestão e coordenação. Em específico, propusemos investigar qual a dimensão de liderança que é percebida como mais frequente (transacional, transacional ou laissez-faire) e explorar ainda mais o endosso de categorias específicas dentro de cada dimensão de liderança. Além disso, esses perfis de liderança foram testados em género e idade. Finalmente, as associações entre dimensões de liderança e resultados também foram investigadas. Os dados obtidos nesta investigação evidenciam que 1) Os valores transformacionais e transacionais dos modelos de liderança são predominantes em comparação com o valor do modelo de "*laissez faire*"; 2) As percepções de homens e mulheres são diferentes; 3) As percepções dos participantes variam com a idade; e 4) As dimensões de liderança transformacional e transacional e respectivas categorias são associadas a resultados mais positivos (isto é, eficiência, satisfação e esforço extra).

Palavras-chave: Percepções de liderança; Gestão; Coordenação.

Introduction

According to Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie and Reichard (2008) the leadership prototype differs from gender (Theory of Congruence of Role). The female leadership corroborates with sensitivity and male leadership by force. The dimensions of the female leadership prototype are positively correlated with transformational leadership. Although there may be a similarity of behaviors, the same behaviors exhibited by men and women are perceived differently due to gender roles (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie & Reichard, 2008) that give men the most effective leadership.

Method

Sample

Participants in this work were 64 teachers who at the time held hold positions of leadership, management, and coordination in their respective schools. Of those, 47 were women (73.4%) and 17 were men (26.6%), aged 27 to 58 years old ($M = 44.1$; $SD = 6.9$). When considered as age groups, 19 were below 39 years old or younger



(29.7%), 29 were aged between 40 and 49 years old (45.3%) and 14 were 50 years old or older (25.0%).

Instruments

Socio-demographic Questionnaire

For collecting the socio-demographic data covering all relevant variables, a socio-demographic questionnaire was designed within the current work. It included the following variables: gender, age at termination of basic academic training, specific training acquired, positions held, length of experience in the position currently held, and number of subordinates. These variables allow a qualitative methodological approach in this study, although not statistically explored much, but it allows a more detailed and deeper knowledge of the subjects considered.

MLQ Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire Short

The MLQ was developed within the framework of the theoretical model of Bass and Avolio (2004), and intends to assess the perceptions of the respondents using a set of 45 items that they should rate using a 5 point likert type scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). A lower score on a given item reflects a perception of lower frequency/ observation of the behavior it portrays, and not a perception on the value of that behavior. The short version of this instrument includes 45 items, which are grouped into 12 categories, in turn spread over 3 dimensions of leadership, namely, transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership; the outcomes of leadership are also assessed by 9 of those items.

The five categories that correspond to the dimension of transformational leadership and the respective internal consistency values they attained within the current sample are: individual consideration (IC; $\alpha = .67$), inspirational motivation (IM; $\alpha = .67$), intellectual stimulus (IS; $\alpha = .73$); attitudes of idealized influence or charisma (IIA; $\alpha = .52$), and behaviors of idealized influence (IIB; $\alpha = .44$). IC considers the providing of emotional and social support and the concern with meeting each follower personal and professional development needs. IM concerns the leader's ability to convey a positive and motivating meaning and a challenge to the tasks, thus instilling commitment to the goals. IS refers to the leaders' tries of encouraging others to be creative and innovative at work, by reformulating existing problems and giving new



suggestions on the tasks. IA refers to the subordinates' perception of the leader as a model to be followed, associated with admiration, respect and confidence in what is thought of as a charismatic leader. IIB concerns the groups' cohesion and intention to achieve mutual goals, share risks, and adopt behaviors that reflect the respect for the groups' ethic and moral principles. The total transformational leadership dimension achieved an internal consistency value of $\alpha = .85$ within the current sample

The dimension of transactional leadership, which achieved an internal consistency value of $\alpha = .70$ within the current sample, is, in turn, composed of two categories: contingent reward or reinforcement (CR; $\alpha = .42$) and management by exception – active (MBEA $\alpha = .81$). The first defines the act of leadership as based on an exchange between the leader and the led, in which the leader offers rewards (i.e., prizes the led find valuable) for desired behaviors while also trying to create the best conditions for the achievement of defined performance standards. The second also encompasses an exchange, in which punishment follows behaviors that do not abide by the standards that the leader has established for the led's performance; the leader, therefore, is invested in monitoring deviations and mistakes on the part of the led, and develops corrective actions as soon as they occur.

Finally, another two categories represent the laissez-faire leadership dimension ($\alpha = .48$): management by exception - passive (MBEP; $\alpha = .49$) and laissez-faire (LF; $\alpha = .52$). MBEP involves also a corrective attitude on the part of the leader, but only when problems actually occur (i.e., no engagement in monitoring deviations and mistakes). LF identifies the absence of the exercise of leadership, resulting in work environments where the leader does not provide defined goals, assumes no plan of action, is not present when it is necessary, postpones making important decisions, ignores his/her responsibilities and authority, and lets others assume them for him/her.

The MLQ also includes a final set of questions that intend to address the outcomes of leadership ($\alpha = .83$), which are grouped into three categories: effectiveness (Eff; $\alpha = .72$), satisfaction (S; $\alpha = .26$), and extra effort (EE; $\alpha = .70$).

Procedure

Teachers currently placed in the Portuguese district of Santarém from five schools involved in the study for the convenience of empirical work were approached and the evaluation protocols were taken to each school by a member of the school staff, not affiliated with the current work; he/she delivered the questionnaire to each inquired



teacher with management positions. The evaluation protocol was presented in the last two of three A4 sheets; the first sheet was reserved for filing instructions. All participants provided written consent, after having been debriefed on the goals of the current work; the anonymity and confidentiality of the data was also guaranteed; accordingly, each participant delivered his/her filled protocol by placing it in a box placed in the school office.

All data analyses were conducted using the IBM SPSS Statistics v21.0 software. To determine leadership profiles (i.e., which leadership dimensions and their specific categories would be more highly endorsed), repeated measures ANOVAS were conducted using leadership measures as the within-subject factor. Gender and then age was added to this data analysis strategy as between-subject factor, in order to ascertain if these leadership profiles were stable across gender and age groups. Descriptive analyses were always relied upon to better interpret the data resulting from these mean comparisons analyses. Finally correlation analyses were carried out relating the leadership measures with outcome indicators.

Results

Leadership profiles

A repeated measures ANOVA design with a one within-subject factor of leadership dimension was conducted. A significant effect was found ($F(2,63) = 319.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .84$). Pairwise comparisons always showed significant differences: transformational with transactional ($p = .02$), transformational with laissez-faire ($p < .001$), and transactional with laissez-faire ($p < .001$). According to the descriptive data presented in Table 1, the most endorsed leadership dimension was the transformational, followed by the transactional, and finally the laissez-faire.

The same data analyses design was applied considering the the specific categories within the transformational leadership dimension as the within-subject factor. Again, a significant effect was found ($F(4, 63) = 26.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$). Pairwise comparisons specifically place the differences between attitudes of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation ($p < .001$), attitudes of idealized influence and individualized consideration ($p < .001$), behaviors of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation ($p = .008$), behaviors of idealized influence and individualized consideration ($p < .001$), inspirational motivation and individualized consideration ($p < .001$), and



intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration ($p < .001$). The individualized consideration was the most reported one, followed by intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and then similar levels of attitudes and behaviors of idealized influence (cf. Table 1).

Table 1 – Descriptive values (mean and standard deviation) for leadership measures, by sample

	Complete sample		Male participants		Female participants		Younger than 39 years old		Aged between 40 and 49 years old		Older than 50 years old	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Transformational	2.79	0.40	2.74	0.5	2.81	0.37	2.79	0.44	2.81	0.40	2.77	0.38
Attitudes of idealized influence	2.73	0.53	2.68	0.59	2.76	0.52	2.76	0.52	2.76	0.55	2.67	0.55
Behaviors of idealized influence	2.81	0.51	2.75	0.64	2.83	0.46	2.82	0.61	2.83	0.48	2.78	0.44
Inspirational motivation	2.84	0.51	2.78	0.49	2.85	0.52	2.79	0.52	0.87	0.53	2.84	0.47
Intellectual stimulation	3.03	0.51	3.03	0.57	3.03	0.49	3.09	0.49	3.09	0.51	2.86	0.49
Individualized consideration	3.34	0.45	3.35	0.39	3.34	0.47	3.43	0.37	2.26	0.52	3.38	0.41
Transactional	2.63	0.55	2.70	0.50	2.60	0.57	2.66	0.63	2.56	0.51	2.71	0.54
Contingente reward	2.76	0.60	2.95	0.56	2.69	0.62	2.58	0.63	2.84	0.54	2.81	0.67
Active management by exception	2.49	0.75	2.45	0.77	2.51	0.76	2.75	0.79	2.27	0.74	2.61	0.65
Laissez-Faire	1.22	0.41	1.28	0.52	1.20	0.38	1.08	0.37	1.26	0.47	1.29	0.32
Passive management by exception	1.49	0.55	1.72	0.69	1.42	0.49	1.31	0.32	1.57	0.68	1.55	0.50
Laissez-faire	0.94	0.57	0.85	0.57	0.97	0.57	0.84	0.66	0.95	0.52	1.05	0.53

A significant difference was also found when comparing the categories included in the transactional leadership dimension (i.e., contingent reward and active management by exception; $t(63) = 2.61$, $p = .01$), with contingent reward being more highly reported. Finally, within the categories of the laissez-faire leadership dimension, passive management by exception was significantly more endorsed than laissez-faire ($t(63) = 5.78$, $p < .001$; cf. Table 1).

Leadership profiles, gender, and age

A mix-design ANOVA was conducted using the three leadership dimensions as the within-subject factor and gender as the between-subject factor. A significant effect



was found for leadership ($F(2,63) = 220.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .78$) but not a significant interaction effect ($F < 1$), indicating that leadership profiles are similarly considered by men and women in the current sample. Though women report higher mean values for transformational leadership than men, whereas men report higher mean values for transactional leadership than women, both men and women scored higher on the transformational, then the transactional, and, lastly, the laissez-faire leadership (cf. Table 1).

Similar results were found when considering the transformational leadership categories as the within-subject factor and gender as the between-subject factor (within gender effect: $F(4,63) = 20.86, p < .001, \eta^2 = .25$; interaction effect: $F < 1$); men and women scored each individual category and ordered them among each other analogously. When considering the transactional leadership categories as within-subject factors and gender as the between-subject factor, again a significant main effect for category was found ($F(1,63) = 8.54, p = .005, \eta^2 = .12$) but not a significant interaction effect ($F(2,63) = 1.74, p = .19$). Though individually men scored contingent reward higher than women and the reverse was found for active management by exception, both men and women reported perceiving higher contingent reward than active management by exception (cf. Table 1). Finally, taking the laissez-faire categories as the within-subject factor and gender as the between-subject factor, again a significant main effect was found ($F(1,63) = 35.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .37$) but not a significant interaction effect ($F(2,63) = 3.49, p = .066$). Though individually men scored contingent passive management by exception higher than women and the reverse was found for laissez-faire, both men and women reported perceiving higher passive management by exception than laissez-faire (cf. Table 1).

Age correlated significantly only the laissez-faire leadership dimension ($r = .31, p = .014$) and with the passive management by exception category of that same leadership dimension ($r = .25, p = .047$); older participants, hence, tend to score higher on that leadership dimension and category.

Still, when conducting a mixed-design ANOVA putting the transactional leadership categories as the within-subject factor and age groups (i.e., younger than 39 years old, between 40 and 49 years old, and older than 51 years old) as the between-subject factor, a significant interaction effect was found ($F(2,63) = 5.81, p = .005, \eta^2 = .16$), in addition to a significant main effect ($F(1,63) = 4.44, p = .039, \eta^2 = .068$). Specifically, a significant mean difference between the contingent reward and active management by



exception categories was only found for participants aged 40 and 49 years old. Interestingly, though not statistically significant, whereas the two older groups scored contingent reward higher than active management by exception, the younger group (i.e, younger than 39 years old) scored these dimensions in the opposite direction (cf. Table 1). The same data analyses as applied to leadership dimensions, to the transformational leadership categories, or to the laissez-faire categories yield no significant interaction effects.

Leadership and leadership outcomes

Positive and significant correlations were found between the transformational and transactional leadership dimensions and their respective categories. The transformational dimensions correlated higher with effectiveness and extra effort than the transactional; the reverse was true for the satisfaction. As for the specific transformational categories, effectiveness correlated the highest with individualized consideration and the lowest with behaviors of idealized influence, satisfaction correlated the highest with attitudes of idealized influence and the lowest with inspirational motivation, and extra effort correlated the highest with behaviors of idealized influence and the lowest with inspirational motivation. In turn, and considering the transactional leadership categories, effectiveness and satisfaction correlated the highest with active management by exception whereas contingent reward correlated the highest with extra effort (cf. Table 2).

Table 2 – Correlation between outcomes and leadership measures

	Effectiveness	Satisfaction	Extra effort
Transformational	.50**	.35**	.63**
Attitudes of idealized influence	.41**	.47**	.51**
Behaviors of idealized influence	.37**	.27**	.55**
Inspirational motivation	.39**	.08 ^{ns}	.42**
Intellectual stimulation	.41**	.34**	.53**
Individualized consideration	.55**	.25*	.46**
Transactional	.37**	.46**	.43**
Contingente reward	.26**	.35**	.42**
Active management by exception	.33*	.39**	.29*

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$



The correlations between the laissez-faire dimension and associated categories were mostly positive but always non significant and of residual magnitude (i.e., $r \leq .20$); the correlations between the laissez-faire category and extra effort, on the one hand, and satisfaction, on the other were negative, though non-significant and of residual magnitude (i.e., $r \leq -.08$).

Discussion

The issue of leadership has been widely explored in this literature. The multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) of Bass and Avolio (2004), served as the starting point for this study, along with its underlying theoretical model. Such model focus on the idea that the effective leader demonstrates a complex range of behaviors and attitudes. Specifically, the current work set out to explore the perceptions of teachers who assume the role of leaders in their respective schools, according to the dimensions and categories associated to leadership by Bass and Avolio (2004). Also, it proposed to investigate if these perceptions would vary by gender or age groups. Given that improving management practices and educational administration in schools.

1. Our findings show that the dimension of leadership perceived as more frequently employed by teachers who hold leadership positions was transformational leadership, followed by transactional leadership, and then the laissez-faire leadership. Thus, it would seem that the evaluated schools area adopting effective leadership styles.
2. Same profile seen by men and women, although men have higher means than women in transactional and women have higher averages than men in transformational. According to Lindo (2003), some studies identify that women, in general, present a transformational style of leadership based on socialization. The transactional style is more present in the masculine universe, involving the motivation based on rewards and the relation of power only through the position that occupies. Feminine attributes such as intuition, preference for consensus, and encouragement (versus logic, individual decision making, and command) are considered less efficient. According to Vecchio (2003) women are more effective than men in decision-making, as a result of their analytical, relationship and vision abilities. Women have a more collaborative style of leadership, unlike men who have a leadership style based on command, control, and affirmation of power. Women suffer some disadvantages when subjected to prejudiced assessments of their competence as leaders, especially in male organizational contexts.



According to Bass (1985, 1997, 1999), the male inclination of impersonality, which was once valued by organizations, is opening up a space for a relationship-oriented leadership, a characteristic considered feminine. According to the author, successful leaders must present both the feminine and masculine qualities, forming an androgenic leadership style. 3. Same profile by different age groups. Within transformational, more individualized consideration, then intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation values, and similar levels of attitudes and behaviors of idealized influence (Table 1).

A1: same profile seen by men and women more. B1: same profile seen by different age groups. The perceptions displayed by the current sample do not represent an optimal leader, in as much as the highest mean values were not found for MBEP, then MBEA, then CR and, finally, the 4th of transformational categories (i.e. IC, IS and IIA). The most frequently reported category within transformational leadership was Individualized Consideration (IC). It appears that leaders within the current sample care about the needs subordinates may have for achievement and personal and professional development, and at the same time acknowledges and accepts the individual differences each subordinate may present in terms of their desires and needs. Moreover, the leader is capable of adapting his/ her behaviours to those individual characteristics, enhances their particular strengths. That is achieved by opening communication to all members of the group. These behaviors represent greater the willingness to make sacrifices and give up personal interests when necessary, the recovery of ideals and values, the alignment and involvement with the collective vision and mission of the group and the existence of greater feelings of competence and effectiveness at work (Bass & Avolio, 2004). These behaviors reflect the investment in clarifying and defining expectations and promote performances that lead to goal achievement, the exchange of positive or negative outcomes to positive and negative performance respectively, and the observation and monitoring of the performance of followers, particularly in how it may deviate from established patterns, in order to correct errors (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

A2: same profile seen by men and women, although men have higher means than women in contingent reward and women have higher means than men in active management by exception. B2: the difference in the perception of contingent reward and MBEA are only visible for participants aged 40 to 49; for younger or older subjects, there is no difference in the price of these categories. Also, younger subjects perceive more contingent reward than MBEA, while subjects over the age of 40 perceive MBEA



rather than contingent reward. They clearly relate to avoid becoming involved in important issues and/ or making decisions, but rather delaying response to urgent issues, expecting things to go wrong before acting, or letting the problem drag before taking any action.

A3: same profile seen by men and women, although men have more mean averages than women in MBEP and women have weights higher than men in LF. B3: same profile seen by different age groups, although there is a tendency for older respondents to report more LF leadership style and MBEP category in particular.

Conclusions

When greater transformational and transactional leadership, greater positive outcomes. The theoretical model was confirmed in results dimension leading advocates for the effective leader is found predominantly in the transformational dimension, followed by transactional leadership and lastly low frequencies with the laissez-faire leadership (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

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