



Lisbon School
of Economics
& Management
Universidade de Lisboa

MASTERS IN MANAGEMENT (MIM)

MASTERS FINAL WORK

DISSERTATION

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE COMPANIES

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PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is an important determinant for organizational and individual performance, thus providing grounds to study the effect of different leadership practices on workplace dynamics. In this thesis, I investigate the relationship of the five leadership practices in the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) on organizational performance.

The results show that each of the 5 leadership practices is pertinent; however, they vary based on the type of leader, the Primary Job Function or the Organizational context. Therefore, for example, there is a tendency for younger leaders to lean more towards Enable Others to Act, which emphasizes teamwork and collaboration, while older leaders placed a heavier emphasis on Model the Way, making clearer statements about stability and strategic direction. The findings also suggest that leadership behavior itself is affected by the type of organizational structure, with private companies tending to enhance flexibility and public-sector organizations leaning towards hierarchical control.

The findings of this study contribute to understand how leaders may maximize each one of the 5 practices (LPI) for the motivational enhancement of individuals, as well as to company performance.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), Organizational Performance, Portuguese Companies, Portugal

RESUMO

A liderança é um fator importante para o desempenho individual e organizacional, proporcionando bases para estudar o efeito de diferentes práticas de liderança no ambiente laboral, começando com a identificação das cinco *Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)*. Além destes cinco comportamentos de liderança são analisadas as tendências no comportamento de liderança e impacto na eficácia organizacional, com base em variáveis sociodemográficas como idade, sexo, nível educacional e função profissional.

Os dados revelaram que cada uma das cinco práticas de liderança (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) revela-se pertinente, mas apresenta variações de padrões base no tipo de liderança, na Função Profissional ou no contexto Organizacional. Assim há, por exemplo, uma tendência para os líderes mais jovens incentivarem os outros a agir, que enfatiza o trabalho em equipa e a colaboração; enquanto os líderes mais velhos colocam uma maior ênfase em direcionar, tomando decisões mais claras sobre estabilidade e direção estratégica da organização. As conclusões também sugerem que o próprio comportamento da liderança é afetado pelo tipo de estrutura organizacional, com as empresas privadas a tenderem a aumentar a flexibilidade e as organizações do sector público a tenderem para o controlo hierárquico.

Os resultados deste estudo contribuem para compreender como os líderes podem maximizar cada uma das cinco práticas (LPI) para a melhoria motivacional dos indivíduos, bem como para o desempenho da empresa.

Palavras-chave: Empresas Portuguesas, Liderança, Performance Organizacional, Portugal, Práticas de Liderança (LPI)

ABBREVIATIONS

CHAL: Challenge the Process

CPWR: The Center for Construction Research and Training

ENA: Enable the Others to Act

ENC: Encourage the Heart

ERM: Enterprise Risk Management

INE: Instituto Nacional de Estatística

INSP: Inspire a Shared Vision

LPI: Leadership Practices Inventory

MOD: Model the Way

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextualization

The crucial determinant of a company's performance and employee well-being is Leadership. Changes brought to the 21st-century by the globalized markets have posed new challenges for leaders: manoeuvring not only gives maximum profit output, but also ensures a facilitating and inspiring climate toward overall employee well-being (Price, 2024).

The Leadership Practices Innovatory (LPI) includes a measurement tool to assess leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Originally meant to measure transformational leadership, the LPI also appears to apply to a variety of leadership approaches: transactional, democratic, or autocratic, for example. The model identifies five exemplary-practice behaviours for an exemplary leader: Model the Way (MOD), Inspire a Shared Vision (INSP), Challenge the Process (CHAL), Enable Others to Act (ENA), and Encourage the Heart (ENC) (The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, 2025).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) face a unique set of challenges, as they must fight with limited resources and adapt quickly to multiple changes in the market. Therefore, understanding how the business leaders in Portugal are using the five Leadership Practices (LPI) is essential to explore the connection between leadership and business performance.

This thesis deals with the investigatory mechanisms of leadership styles, exercised by Portuguese companies. It also takes into consideration the demographic and organizational characteristics, that shape their effectiveness in different contexts.

1.2. Objectives and Relevance

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse the five leadership practices proposed by Kouzes and Posner, in 1987, in the context of Portuguese companies, understanding, how these practices shape organizational performance. Furthermore, the study investigates how social demographic characteristics such as age, professional experience and time in the position, influence, shape leadership practices influence. Additionally, the adoption of the interaction of cultural and organizational factors in these practices is examined, such as the type of organization and the diversity of professional functions (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

1.3. Research Gaps

This study aims to fill some gaps in the context of LPI. While frameworks like LPI effectively measure leadership behaviour's, there is still gaps for its application across diverse industries and sectors. In the future the study could be broadened to include a greater breadth of industries; applying the LPI in organizations from technology, healthcare, and NGOs would illustrate versatility and demonstrate differences in leadership practice across varied environments (Goleman et al., 2013). The soaring LPI also does not cater to sufficient analysis of social demographic differences. Such an extension hinders the possibility of the tool's understanding of data and the different manifestations it displays in different contexts regarding leadership practices (Posner, 2016).

In Portugal, although the study of LPI is not extensive, it was possible to verify that the practices Encourage the Heart, Inspire a Shared Vision, and Enable Others to Act are influenced by cultural factors such as in-group collectivism, assertiveness, and uncertainty avoidance (Teodósio, J. P, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to discuss the impact of the socio-demographic and performance variables on leadership behaviour within Portuguese companies, through the analysis of data from an online survey, which has not been deeply explored in Portugal.

1.4. Structure of the Research

The Introduction outlines the general context of the study, indicating how central leadership is in Portuguese companies, and thus bringing out the objective and purpose of the study.

The literature review concerns theories and models existing on leadership, with specific attention on Kouzes and Posner's framework and the leadership practices it proposes (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Moreover, the discussion extends to the role of leadership in organizational effectiveness, whereby particular attention will be put to the applicability of the model in different contexts, with consideration of social demographic characteristics, as well as organizational factors that may shape leadership.

The methodology details the approach adopted for collecting sample data. This section will also present the survey structure (which allowed data collection) and how the five Leadership Profiles were formed, focusing on the five LPI leadership practices.

The results are presented based on the analysis of the collected data. The section will compare the data from the five profiles obtained, identifying patterns and conclusions about the application of practices in different contexts in the Portuguese companies. Thus, it will also be discussed, among other things, how leadership practices impact organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

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Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main findings of the research and the implications of each leadership practice in Portugal, summarizing each ones' differences and the need for harmony among all for a complete and diverse leadership.

This study supports SDG 4: Quality Education of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This SDG endorses quality education that promotes inclusive and equitable opportunities of lifelong learning for all. Building leadership development will form a basic part of this objective, as developing effective leadership practices supports organization success and promotes individual and career growth. Through the analysis of leadership behaviours within Portuguese companies, this study addresses the importance of developing leadership competencies, fostering environments that support learning, empowerment, and continuous improvement-the core aspects of these Sustainable Development Goal.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction to Leadership and Organizational Performance

Leadership is the set of behaviours that guide people in a common direction and objective so that through collective work, they can achieve shared objectives and adapt to changing environments (McKinsey, 2024). Organizations' leaders are dependent upon helping their organizations in the management of complex problems and in achieving elevated performance levels (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019). The ability to articulate a vision permits leaders to deploy resources, people, and strategic initiatives toward building a sustainable competitive edge. This becomes especially pertinent in contemporary situations, where industries are fast-paced; therefore, to survive it is imperative to be innovative, flexible, and robust (Khajeh et al., 2018). In addition, strong leadership is likely to lead to better financial performance, greater customer satisfaction and better involvement of the employees (Treviño & Nelson, 2016).

2.2. Organizational Performance

Effective leadership enhancement is a crucial aspect of improving organizational performance. Leadership styles (transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire) have a significant influence on various performance factors such as the financial criterion of performance, innovative performance, and employee satisfaction. For example, research states that organizations whose leaders engage in exemplary leadership experience much higher net income growth, compared to organizations whose leaders are less engaged (Carufel, 2017). Furthermore, empirical research was systematically reviewed on leadership and performance, finding that different leadership styles ameliorated firm performance, in which most used transformational leadership as style approach (Khuong et al., 2022). These findings underscore the pivotal role of leadership is, as far as, driving organizational success, and suggest that investing in leadership development can yield significant performance benefits.

2.3. Authority over Subordinates: Supervisor-Subordinate relationships

Supervisor-subordinate relationships are the basic building blocks of how organizations maintain themselves. Authority is one of the primary elements that define such roles. In fact, studies show that how supervisors behave, such as showing respect or recognition, affects the work satisfaction of a subordinate. Such congruence or incongruence of power distance orientations between supervisors and subordinates has been associated with job strain and performance outcomes,

suggesting that alignment in expectations regarding authority can affect workplace well-being (Richard et al., 2021). Further studies indicate virtual communication shaping the traditional structures of authority and the disconnection of physical cues in virtual domains affecting how people convey and accept authority, thus affecting processes of supervisor-subordinate interactions (Kelly et al., 2022). Essentially, this suggests that authority has undergone multifaceted definitions in supervisor-subordinate relationships; culture, context, and technology ought to be factored in such understandings and management of authority at the organizational setting.

2.4. Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Overview

Founded by James Kouzes and Barry Posner in 1987 (Leadership Challenge, 1st Edition), LPI explores and enhances leadership behaviours. This instrument was designed specifically to evaluate the influences of different leadership practices, to give leaders who wish to enhance their capacities clear directions. The Leadership Practices Inventory is rooted in the belief that leadership is a collection of behaviours that can be acquired and developed, which makes it useful for the evolution and establishment of an organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

The model distinguishes five major practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. All these practices are critical in ensuring that performance is under the leader's control, success is driven, and subordinates are inspired.

2.4.1. Model the Way (MOD)

This approach consists of leaders behaving in a way that can be emulated by others. In leadership, the establishment of credibility is paramount as leaders need to state their beliefs and ensure that they act in accordance with those beliefs. By doing this, they win the confidence of the followers. Leaders enact ethically in conformity, which ultimately determines the consequences to the team and the organization (Van de Vliert, 2018).

When it comes to an organization, leaders who “model the way” help establish an organizational culture where the shared values of that organization inform all the decisions and steer the members in the same direction. In this way, leaders who possess such values as openness, integrity, and dedication, generate the same virtues among their subordinates which enhances the success and unity of the organization (Forbes Finance Council, 2021).

2.4.2. Inspire a Shared Vision (INSP)

Leaders must make clear to their followers the course of action in the near future, without deviating from the goals and vision of the organization. The vision acts as a motivation and a force, that helps people to work towards fulfilling specific objectives. By "Inspire a Shared Vision", leaders show their employees "the bigger picture", giving them no reason to exist (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

One activity that invites the practice of vision through action is exemplary leadership, as practiced by real-life leaders. These are leaders, who have a defined sustainable future vision and have young and drawn employees, not because of the salaries, but because of the mission of the company. Leaders can communicate a vision that elicits participation and performance that is exemplary from the entire team (Bryman, 2011).

2.4.3. Challenge the Process (CHAL)

One quality that separates, an effective leader from an ordinary one, is the ability to challenge existing notions and take risks to improve output levels. A certain degree of risk-taking behaviour enhances creativity, and innovative thinking, which is important for the growth and adaptability of any organization. Leaders must also foresee and influence changes, if they are to win in the competition, that takes place in most rapid changes' industries.

For instance, in Amazon, the policy of Jeff Bezos was not only to minimize the risks but, to encourage constant innovation in all fields, even those for which risks of failure were exceptionally high. His desire to adapt and subvert the typical approach to retail business was precisely what led to the rise of the giant, that is now known as Amazon (Arnett et al., 2018).

2.4.4. Enable Others to Act (ENA)

It is essential for leaders to aim at the empowerment of their teams, equipping them with the appropriate tools, resources, and courage to perform their duties. To enable others to act, one must foster a climate that encourages cooperation and confidence.

Therefore, this involves keeping the loops of feedback constantly active, providing opportunities for growth and inclusivity. Employees who are empowered tend to be more satisfied with their work and exhibit peaks of creativity. Leaders who emphasize training and cultivating team experience, raise levels of employee participation since such individuals feel appreciated and able to help the organization in attaining its goals (Castrillon, 2024).

2.4.5. Encourage the Heart (ENC)

This practice is vital because it ensures that the accomplishments of any scale are recognized and appreciated. Appreciation helps create an atmosphere, where a person feels valued and inspired to keep giving their best. Leaders acknowledge the efforts of the team in building a sense of achievement and attachment, which are critical components in promoting morale and devotion (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Within organizations, managers who often commemorate achievements and give rewards tend to decrease their workers' burnout and turnover. Strong recognition and good feedback tools can seriously be regarded as factors affecting work performance and job satisfaction (Hussain et al., 2019).

2.4.6. The Relevance of LPI to Leadership Research and Organizational Contexts

There have been opportunities for the LPI to serve social research purposes in leadership across the different organizational types. The research is intense in leadership execution, precisely focused on the goals of leadership studies, that is, the investigation of leadership practice and its effects on employee involvement, performance, and adaptability (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). As for the higher education setting, the LPI was extensively employed in getting access to leadership and its characteristics, as well as fostering the area.

In addition, the effective nature of the concept for organizations makes it usable to enhance their leadership capabilities, as it deals with concrete actions only. The five LPI practices are encouraged to create collaboration, innovation, and high performance. In recommending these practices to the leaders, organizations would want to show the influence of leaders on organizational performance (Goleman, 2018).

2.5. External Moderating Factors: age and gender

Social demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and experience greatly differentiate leadership practice among organizations. Such variables can be critical in providing insights into how leadership can be tailored for development and its outcomes.

2.5.1. Age and Leadership Effectiveness

Age typically has co-variability with organization as well with more than one dimension of leadership, such as measure of adaptability, style preference, and decision-making process. Younger (and less experienced) leaders tend to be regarded as better innovators being more open to new ideas, since they use their adaptability to thrive in a more dynamic environment. However, such leaders may not have enough experience to solve more analytical and technical problems or

navigate an organization's internal policies, which can be problematic in high-pressure moments. On the opposite side, older (and more experienced) leaders are primarily into the knowledge and experience accumulated and, as a result, possess a greater sense of strategy in their decisions, leaning from a more cautious approach toward risk management. Such balance between adaptability and experience is in tandem with how age interacts with leadership (Zacher et al., 2011).

Research reveals that age diversity in teams would harness a better premise for decision-making and creativity, since the factual perspectives of the young leaders discussed above will then complement the knowledge and stability brought by those older leaders. A leader's age can impact the leadership style, which is more transformational and participative for younger leaders, and transactional or authoritarian styles for older leaders, due to their values typically being on the more traditional side (Epitropaki et al., 2016).

2.5.2. Gender and Leadership Effectiveness

There has been an extensive body of research in the field of leadership effectiveness and perception, that have further addressed gender differences. Highest among these differences are women in leadership positions; most likely transformational leaders, who emphasized batteries in collaboration, empathy, communication, and other care and relationship-oriented characteristics that are expected to increase the linkages and morale of any given or possible team. On the other hand, the general description of male leadership is much more transactional than autocratic. As it becomes clear that they tend to concentrate on results, metrics, and structured hierarchical profiles, thus appropriately address various, though not all, situations. They show how gender expectations typically shape the leadership behaviour and internal perceptions (Tremmel & Wahl, 2023).

Gender bias can affect the development of maximum effectiveness in leadership. Women leaders are often put under much more scrutiny than their male counterparts, such that they constantly need to perform better than their male colleagues to be considered equally competent. Research shows that diverse-gender teams outperform in innovation, financial performance, and employee engagement, making it imperative to have gender-inclusive leadership in teams (Kirsch, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample

The survey was conducted using QualtricsXM and comprised multiple questions, divided into three major topics: Respondent Information/Profile; Company's specifics; Identifying the most dominant LPI practice. The survey was distributed to a list, sent by email in Portuguese language, of a convenience 20,000 Portuguese companies' sample. Although the response rate was low, this is a common limitation in survey-based research targeting top managers. The total number of initial responses were 597, but only 162 of these were valid and considered in this study, due to the remaining 435 being incomplete, where not all questions were answered. Those involved participated voluntarily without monetary compensation and/or exposure of their identities.

3.2. Descriptive Statistics and Model

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is measured from 0-10, through a set of 30 statements (6 statements for each one of the 5 Practices) (Table A2), to determine the most dominant leadership practice for each individual (The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, 2025).

Table 1 presents the 5 leadership practices, as well as the number of individuals allocated to each practice throughout the study. Acknowledging that everyone evaluates themselves with a certain level of severity in the 30 statements of the LPI, where the answers were from 0-10, and for that reason it does not make sense, in the context of this study, to compare the averages of 0-10 between different individuals. Thus, each of the five practices have six questions associated with it (Table A2). Therefore, for each individual, averages of 0-10 were calculated for each of the five practices, through the average of the six questions for each practice. The Leadership Practice with the highest average, was considered as the preferred of the 5 Practices for that individual.

Table 1 – The 5 Leadership Practices

Leadership Practice	Number of individuals who prioritize this practice	Percentage of individuals who prioritize this practice (%)	Average for the Individuals who prioritize this practice (0-10)
Model the Way	38	23.46%	8.41
Inspire a Shared Vision	13	8.02%	7.82
Challenge the Process	23	14.20%	8.18
Enable the Others to Act	40	24.69%	8.43
Encourage the Heart	48	29.63%	8.49
Total	162	100%	

Of the 162 individuals in the sample, 14.20% reveal predominance in "Challenge the Process", 24.69% in "Enable the Others to Act", 29.63% in "Encourage the Heart", 8.02% in "Inspire a Shared Vision" and 23.46% in "Model the Way", results that will be analysed later in the Results and Discussion section.

3.3. Variables

The respondent's "Age" in years is the biological age. "Years of Experience" is the total number of years of work experience and the "Years in Position" is the total number of years in the current work position, within the company.

"Sex" corresponds to the biological respondent's Sex, Male or Female. The "Marital Status" is a categorical variable that comprises: Single; Married; Divorced; Common-law marriage; Widowed. The "Level of Education" is the highest academic level achieved and is divided into Basic Education, Secondary Education, Bachelor's Degree, and Master's Degree.

The "Primary Job Function" is the main activity of the individual. The categorical variable comprises: Accounting and Auditing; Commerce; Construction; Health and Well-being; Agriculture and Livestock; Education and Training; Retail; Food and Beverages; Consulting and Advisory; Marketing and Advertising; Property Management; Banking and Insurance; Investment Management; Automotive Industry; Information Technology (IT); Textiles and Fashion; e-commerce; Legal and Law Practice; Audiovisual Production and Cinema; Food Industry; Real Estate; Buying and Selling; Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals; Public Transport; Renewable Energy; Human Resources and Recruitment; Logistics and Warehousing.

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“Employment Status” measures the employment relationship the individual has, whether being self-employed, working for themselves, or employed by another organization. The “Organization Type” distinguishes between private sector companies from the public sector ones. “Hierarchical Position” assesses the respondent’s position in the organization’s hierarchy, identifying whether they occupy a top, middle or even first-line management, or if they have no management role.

Organizational Performance is measured using the scale of Wiklund & Shepherd (2003). This scale has the advantage of considering the several dimensions of performance and allowing comparisons between competitive firms. This includes the classification of the performance of the organization in which they work, taking into account the last three years, with regard to the following measures and in relation to its main competitors, on a scale from "Very Minor (1), Minor (2) , Similar (3), Bigger (4) and Much Bigger (5)", focusing on the following aspects: “Sales Growth”; “Revenue Growth”; “Growth in the Number of Company Employees”; “Return on Assets”; “Innovation in Products and Services Offered by the Company”; “Innovation in the Processes Adopted by the Company”; “Adoption of New Technologies”; “Quality of the Products and Services Provided by the Company”; “Variety of the Products and Services Provided by the Company”; “Customer Satisfactions” (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Table 2 summarizes variable operationalization, in the 5 Leadership Practices: Challenge the Process (CHAL), Model the Way (MOD), Inspire a Shared Vision (INSP), Enable the Others to Act (ENA) and Encourage the Heart (ENC).

Table 2 – Organizational Performance Summary

Measures	Average for the Individuals who prioritize each practice (1-5)					
	Overall	CHAL	MOD	INSP	ENA	ENC
Sales Growth	3.38	3.43	3.34	3.46	3.33	3.40
Revenue Growth	3.28	3.52	3.47	3.08	3.13	3.19
Growth in the Number of Company Employees	2.70	2.87	2.82	2.77	2.75	2.48
Return on Assets	3.09	3.00	3.29	3.54	2.93	3.00
Innovation in Products and Services Offered by the Company	3.44	3.48	3.66	3.23	3.18	3.54
Innovation in the Processes Adopted by the Company	3.43	3.39	3.74	3.54	3.23	3.33
Adoption of New Technologies	3.39	3.30	3.68	3.46	3.28	3.27
Quality of the Products and Services Provided by the Company	3.93	4.09	4.08	3.46	3.73	4.02
Variety of the Products and Services Provided by the Company	3.62	3.70	3.79	3.85	3.45	3.52
Customer Satisfaction	4.05	4.26	4.13	3.69	3.85	4.15

“Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management” was measured using the Personal Sense of Power Scale, using four of the 8 items (Anderson et al., 2012). This variable measures the Authority and Responsibility of the individual in comparison to their subordinates, assessed on a scale of "Much less than others in my organization (1), Less than others in my organization (2), The same as others in my organization (3), More than others in my organization (4), Much

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more than others in my organization (5)" about the following statements: "I Can Punish or Reward My Subordinates"; "I Can Promote or Demote My Subordinates"; "I Am Expected to Motivate My Subordinates"; "I Supervise My Subordinates and Correct Their Work When Necessary". Table 3 summarizes variable operationalization, in the 5 Leadership Practices: Challenge the Process (CHAL), Model the Way (MOD), Inspire a Shared Vision (INSP), Enable the Others to Act (ENA) and Encourage the Heart (ENC).

Table 3 – Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management

Measures	Average for the Individuals who prioritize each practice (1-5)					
	Overall	CHAL	MOD	INSP	ENA	ENC
I Can Punish or Reward My Subordinates	3.40	3.52	3.50	3.54	3.28	3.33
I Can Promote or Demote My Subordinates	3.43	3.65	3.63	3.69	3.35	3.15
I Am Expected to Motivate My Subordinates	4.06	4.04	4.24	4.31	3.70	4.15
I Supervise My Subordinates and Correct Their Work When Necessary	3.95	4.00	4.24	3.77	3.78	3.90

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. General Analysis of Results

Study participants range in age from 23 to 77 years old with a mean of 48.65, showing a wide dispersion of age. The data indicates that study participants have an average of 26.99 years of professional experience. Given that the average length of working life in Portugal is 39.1 years, it suggests that the contributors to the study have already worked more than half of their working life. (INE, 2024.) (Figure A1).

Most respondents have a high level of education. About 38% of them had attained a bachelor's degree, while 20% had a master's degree or more. This means that a cumulative percentage of more than half (58%) are university-educated (Figure A2).

Figure A3 points toward the fact that stable unions are predominant, with 54% of couples being married and 16% in common-law marriage. The sample comprises 64% of male respondents and is also highly oriented toward the private market (90%), which could imply greater flexibility, results-orientation, and competitiveness. In turn, the 64% of autonomous participants, who are self-employed, may have more interdependence and control over their own work, resulting in more autonomous and flexible leadership, moving away from traditional leadership norms. The 36% who work with a formal contract may face other challenges, particularly hierarchical ones, impacting the way they deal with organizational challenge (McKinley & Shmidt, 2019) (Table A1).

Most participants in this sample occupy top positions (71%), which indicates a predominance of leaders in the study who answer the questionnaire. The greatest number of them are primarily involved in functions related to Accounting and Auditing (21%) and Commerce (12%), showing possibly a heavy bias toward the financial and business sectors. Yet, construction (11%), health, and well-being (7%) refer to those other participants, indicating that there is vast coverage in different sectors, represented by 43% from other sectors, thereby broadening the sample's representation. (Figure A 4)

4.2. Leadership Profiles

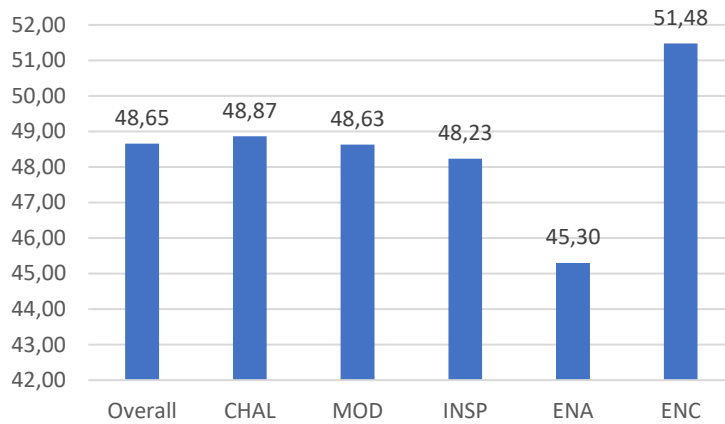
4.2.1 *Challenge the Process (CHAL) focused profile*

The practice of "Challenge the Process" reveals questioning the status quo and the advancement of ongoing innovations. The practice advises leaders to think outside the box and try new strategies. Such practices create an adaptability culture with strong confidence to take risks,

improving the scope of progress and innovation over time within organizations. This makes the practice of challenge-oriented processes in leadership survive and transform itself, typically with the mindset; "You can't achieve anything new or extraordinary by doing things the same way you've always done them" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

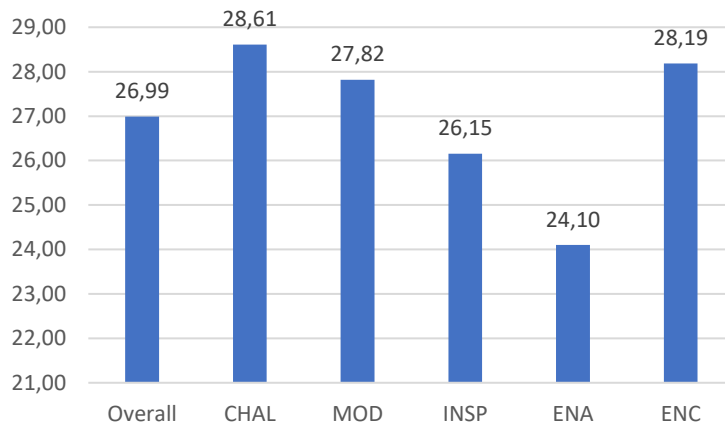
The average age of the 23 individuals who favour CHAL as a leadership practice is 48.87, slightly higher than the sample average (48.65) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Average Age for the 5 LPI



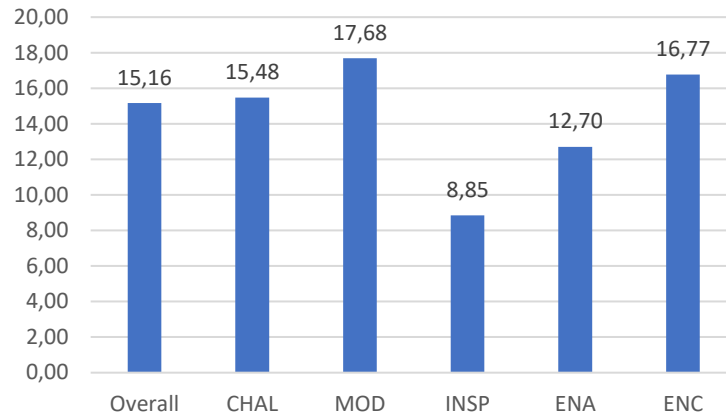
This difference is more pronounced in years of experience, with 1 and a half years of experience more than the global average, with the difference being 28.61 to 26.99 years (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Average Years of Experience for the 5 LPI



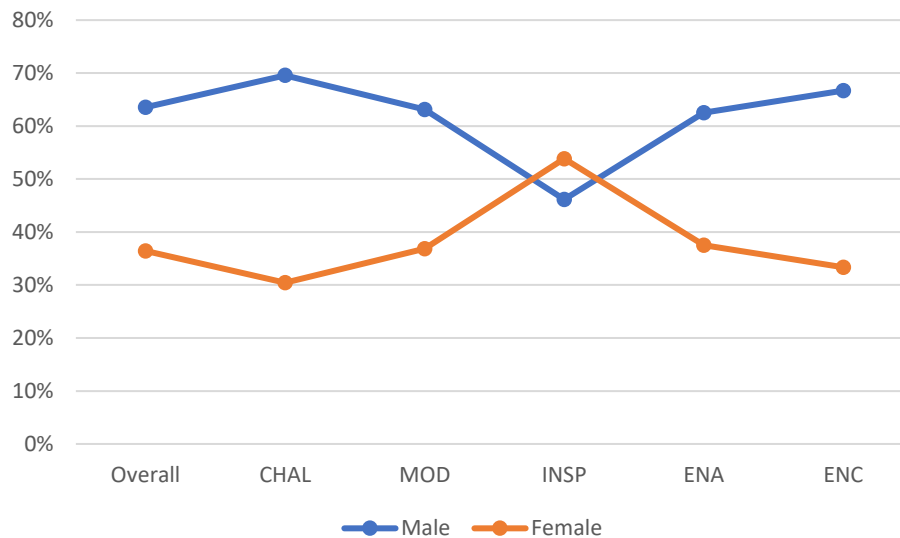
Additionally, leaders have a long tenure in their current roles (15.48), slightly above the sample average of 15.16, which may indicate organizational stability needed to challenge the status quo more effectively to implement profound changes (Figure 3). Prolonged stay in a role allows for a full understanding of the processes, which makes it possible to identify with greater precision the areas that require innovation and improvement. Thus, it is possible to strike a balance between innovation and organizational continuity, typical of long-term tenure (Musaigwa, 2023).

Figure 3 – Average Years in Position for the 5 LPI



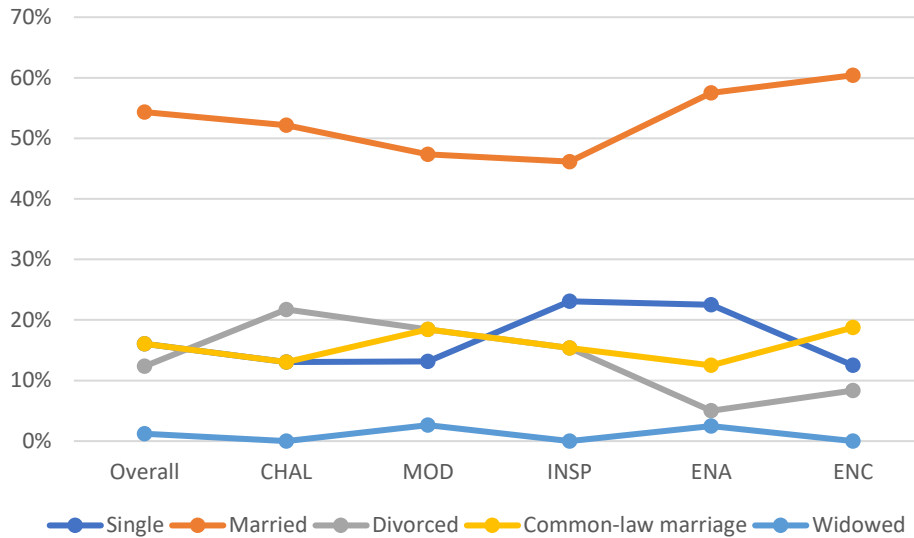
The data reveals a predominance of men adopting CHAL (70% compared to 64% for the general average), which reveals that many of the risk takers in this sample are men, which may be related to some excess of confidence or even historical characteristics (Eagly & Carli, 2003) (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Sex in the 5 LPI (%)



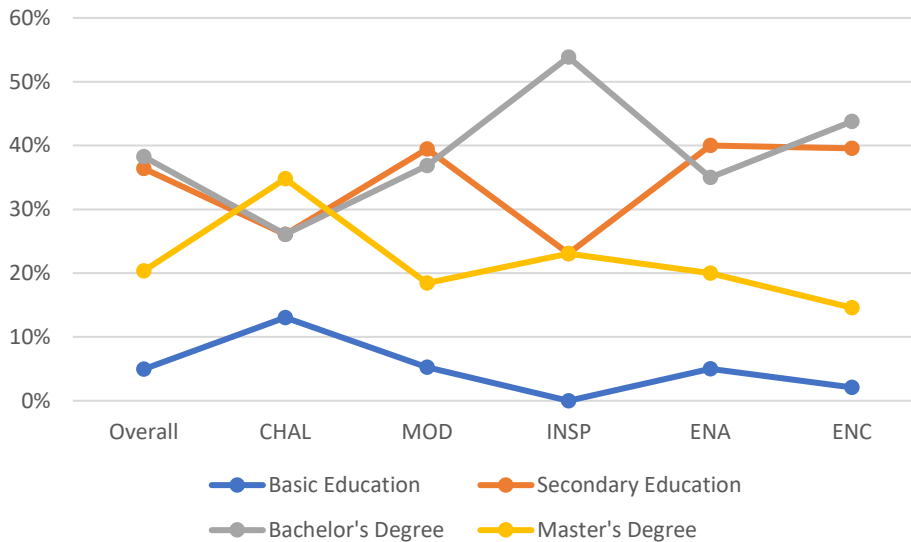
Furthermore, divorced individuals are more frequent among "Challenge the Process" leaders (22% versus 12% in the overall average), which may indicate that divorced individuals are more used to the sudden change in their personal lives, which they also bring to their professional lives and this type of leadership practice (Figure 5).

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Figure 5 - Marital Status in the 5 LPI (%)



Education in CHAL leaders is one of extremes. Although it has 35% of individuals with a master’s degree (compared to the general sample of 20%), it also has a relatively high percentage of individuals with only basic education (13% compared to the 5% general average) (Figure 6).

Figure 6 - Educational Level in the 5 LPI (%)

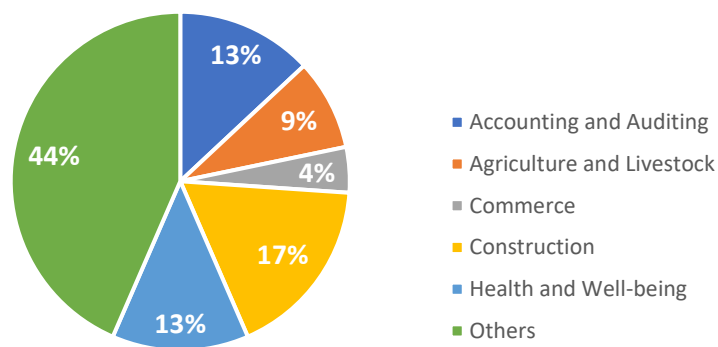


The diversity of organizational contexts of leaders, who excel in this practice, means that people with a high degree of education are more likely to develop analytical skills and critical thinking, as well as individuals with only basic education, who can have acquired this leadership practice through practical experiences and direct exposure to various obstacles and challenges in the work environment. On the one hand, individuals with greater education are more adept at risk, as they have greater emotional stability. On the other hand, individuals with a lower level of education are also slightly risk-taking (although to a lesser extent), as they have less to lose, compared to those with secondary education (the midpoint of these two extremes), which are completely averse to risk because they are neither desperate enough, nor stable enough to take risks (ERM Initiative,

2016). Therefore, it is natural that those who practice "Challenge the Process" are these two extremes of schooling.

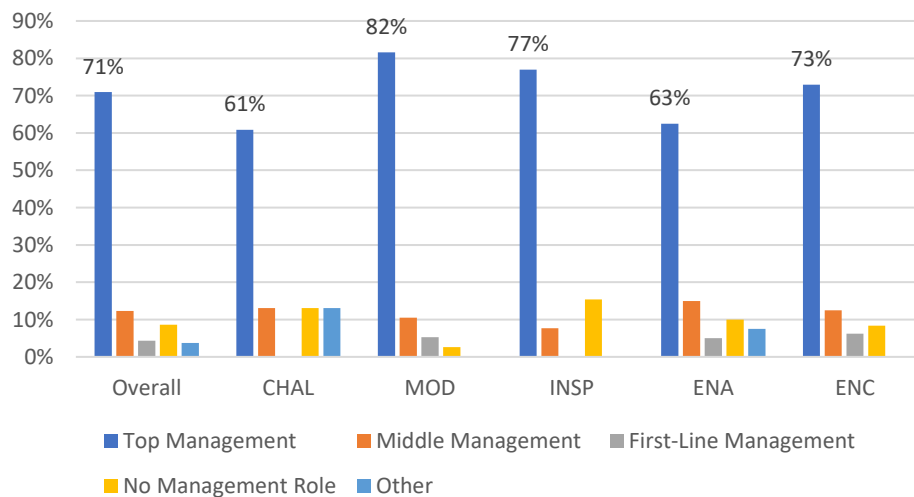
Professional sectors such as Construction (17%) and Agriculture and Livestock (9%) stand out in CHAL due to their practical nature, associated with unpredictability and a lower level of education (CPWR, 2019). More technical sectors such as Health and Well-being (13%) and Accounting and Auditing (13%) balance innovation and stability, more associated with individuals with greater professional training (Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2021). This analysis helps to prove the opposites in approaching this practice from the LPI (Figure 7).

Figure 7 - CHAL Primary Job Function



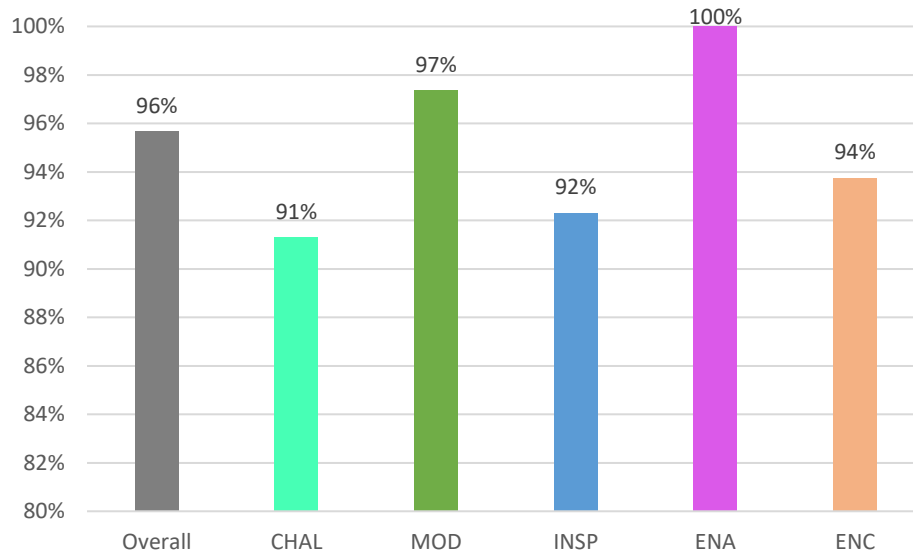
"Challenge the Process" individuals tend to occupy top management positions, although at a lower percentage than the general sample average (61% in CHAL, 71% overall) (Figure 8).

Figure 8 - Hierarchical Position in the 5 LPI (%)



Additionally, these leaders, and those in the entire sample, work mostly in the private sector (91%), but with 9% in the public sector, which shows that there are still those who consider themselves to be challengers and adept at innovation in more rigid sectors such as public companies (European Commission, 2013) (Figure 9).

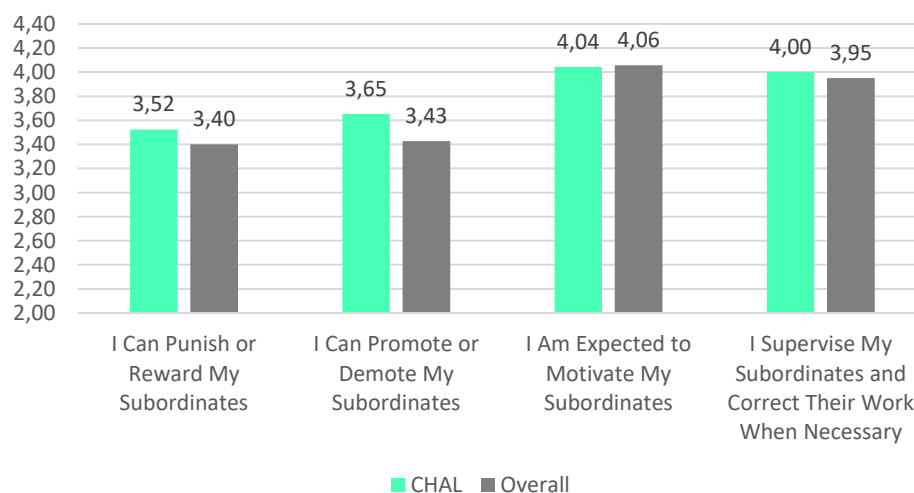
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE COMPANIES
Figure 9 - Organization Type: Private Company Distribution (%)



In the organizational performance of this LPI practice (Table 2) a greater revenue growth than the average stands out (2.87 and 2.70 respectively (from 1 to 5)), something that may be associated with companies of individuals with master's degrees, who identify themselves as more with "Challenge the Process". This may also be linked to the quality of the company's products and services, which is also higher than the average (4.09 and 3.93 respectively). The greater customer satisfaction seen at CHAL (an impressive 4.26, compared to the average 4.05) can be explained by the innovation and adaptability characteristic of this leadership practice, which captivate and satisfy customer needs (Forbes Technology Council, 2023) (Table 2).

The CHAL leadership practice, in the context of this respondents, shows that the individual can punish and reward, promote and demote their subordinate, at a higher level than the media, which reinforces the number of years of experience and years in the position, previously verified in this practice (Figure 10).

Figure 10 - Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management: CHAL vs. Overall



Thus, the 23 individuals in whom the greatest practice is CHAL are characterized by mostly men, with greater professional experience than the average of the total sample and with a high divorce rate. The level of education is extreme, with a large percentage of individuals with only basic education, but also the highest of all practices for individuals with a master's degree, which means there is a greater diversity of professional sectors, from the less specialized (such as Agriculture and Livestock; Construction) to the most technical and bureaucratic ones (Accounting and Auditing; Health and Wellbeing). The individual with an emphasis on this practice also tends to have greater revenue growth and product quality, as well as an individual with some power (perhaps due to the high specialization of part of the sample associated with this practice) over their subordinates.

4.2.2. Model the Way (MOD) focused profile

Model the Way includes the value of action-holding, as it is one of the key pillars of LPI. This practice is meant to bring authenticity and consistency. Additionally, leaders can convey a clear and concise message about their values and use them to direct their teams effectively. Thus, Leaders set themselves up as an effective example to follow through with modelling the desired behaviours, inspiring confidence throughout the organization. Effective leadership is not based on authority, but rather on integrity and leads others to follow out of choice, rather than obligation.

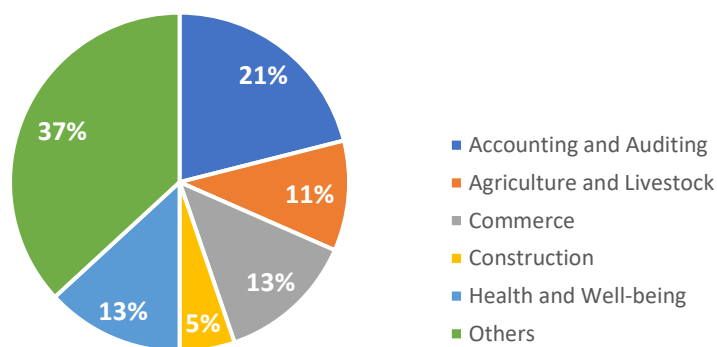
This practice, therefore, reinforces culture through values-driven actions and internal-out leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The average age of individuals who prioritize this practice is very close to the general average of the sample (only 0.02 difference between the two averages) (Figure 1). Of the 38 individuals (Almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of the respondents) who favour MOD as a leadership practice, the minimum age is 27 years old, and the maximum is 64 years old. The average professional experience is higher than the sample average (27.82 and 26.99 respectively) (Figure 2), but the average time in the position is much higher than the respondent's average, with more than 2 years difference (17.68 and 15.16 respectively) (Figure 3). This means that exemplary MOD behaviour requires stability and a deep understanding of the role and the organization. This pattern reveals the importance of knowledge of the specific position you perform, more than the number of years of professional experience, thus suggesting that more than quantity of experience, specialized experience in the position is essential to be an example for your subordinates.

MOD presents a female participation (37%) similar to the sample average (36%), even though not so far from the 30% of the "Challenge the Process" practice (Figure 4). In relation to marital status, the percentage of married people in this practice is lower than the sample average (47% and 54%, respectively), but the percentage of Common-law marriage is slightly higher than the average. (18% and 16%) (Figure 5). The variation is not very wide, but it can reveal the authenticity of the

leaders who excel in this practice, since they challenge more traditional foundations, such as marriage. Leaders who strive for example are, above all, genuine and transparent (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

What stands out most about the level of education in this leadership practice is the predominance of individuals with secondary education (39%), which is even higher than individuals with a degree (37%), noticeably that only happens in other of the five practices. The percentage of individuals with a master's degree is below the general average (18% and 20% respectively), and there is also still 5% of individuals with only basic education, which although not as predominant as in CHAL, is still important to notice (Figure 6). These results may indicate the accessibility of this practice, being widely accessible and not requiring extreme levels of qualification and studies, but rather a great responsibility and commitment to setting an example. The distribution of the primary job function is also somewhat curious. In comparison to CHAL which, due to the predominance of individuals with primary education, there was a lot of preponderance in the construction sector and little in commerce (the predominance between Accounting and Auditing; Health and Well-being remains). Here, where secondary education stands out, there is a greater predominance of the commerce sector and less of the construction sector. In fact, the Commerce sector, in its most primitive definition, is something that is falling into disuse, to the detriment of e-Commerce. Thus, the Commerce sector appears linked to the older population, which in turn, has on average, a lower level of education. The practical notion of being a marketer makes one perceive being associated with leading by example (MOD) (Figure 11) (Eurostat, 2024).

Figure 11 - MOD Primary Job Function



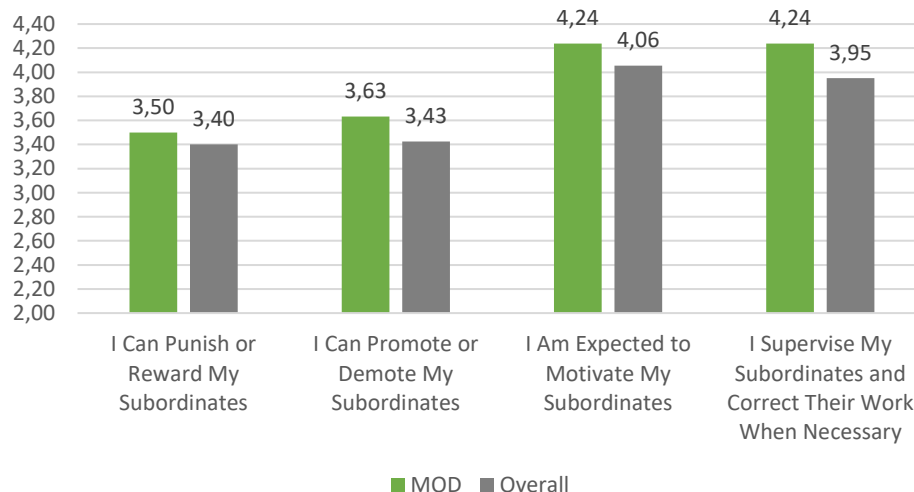
It is important to highlight the percentage of the 38 individuals who consider MOD to be the predominant practice, 76% are self-employed, the largest of the 5 practices included in the study of this sample. (97% of companies in this practice are also private) (Figures 9; A 5). The fact that there are more self-employed individuals means that, in this leadership practice, 82% are top management, compared to 71% on average. They "Model the Way" are their own bosses, which can also be associated with more practical businesses such as Commerce (Eurostat, 2024) (Figure

8).

MOD surpasses the general average in almost all performance indicators, standing out in Innovation in the Processes Adopted by the Company and Adoption of New Technologies, where it surpasses the general average of the sample by 0.3 (from 1 to 5). Thus, leading by example builds trust and inspires positivity in teams. On the other hand, a variable that did not increase much (only 0.08) in relation to the average was customer satisfaction, something curious considering that the questionnaire is based on the worker's opinion, comparing their business with the competition, and not from the customer itself and given the predominance of commerce, a very customer-oriented sector (Table 2).

Leading by example shows great power over subordinates, where all variables are above the overall sample average. It is worth highlighting the difference of almost 0.3 (from 1 to 5) in "I Supervise My Subordinates and Correct Their Work When Necessary" showing that corrections in the work of subordinates are part of a leader who tries to "Model the Way" his subordinates, so that they can follow the example set by him (Kouzes & Posner, 2017) (Figure 12).

Figure 12 - Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management: MOD vs. Overall



Thus, leaders who prioritize the practice of MOD are characterized by staying in the same position for a long time, which facilitates the automation of processes and then serves as an example for their subordinates. In this practice, the educational level of individuals is largely secondary education, something that can be interconnected with Commerce as a Primary Job Function emerging in this practice, due to its practical nature, business independence (companies that are mostly private and self-employed), something more characteristic, in its traditional form, of older individuals with less education. Those who favour this practice are also very positive in evaluating their business, something natural since there are (in the sample associated with this practice) many self-employed people, who highly value their business/job. Furthermore, there is a lot of power under subordinates, in an attempt to set an example as an excellent leader.

4.2.3. *Inspire a Shared Vision (INSP) focused profile*

An integral part of this form of leadership practice must be in bringing teams together to work as part of a common future. This is by looking back into the past, dreaming of the long-term visions, and pouring forth the vision with conviction. Leaders enthuse their subjects with this expectancy about the future, which generates excitement in their minds. Thus, the act of listening to others' perspectives and weaving in their visions, such as having a common purpose, is important. When individuals realize that their dreams amplify those of the organization, then their commitment to the common, shared goals grows. This practice then promotes collaboration in the whole team while enhancing indurated stamina in the most testing times for the organization's success (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

The average age of individuals who have "Inspire a Shared Vision" as their predominant practice is similar to the general average (48.65 and 48.23, respectively) (Figure 1). In relation to years of professional experience, the average for "Inspire a Shared Vision" is very similar to the average (26.15 and 26.99, respectively) (Figure 2). What stands out most is the time in the position is just 8.85 years, relatively lower than the average of 15.16 years (Figure 3). This can represent a relentless search for new challenges or opportunities for growth. This type of leader looks for teams that align with their vision and personal and organizational aspirations (Forbes Finance Council, 2021).

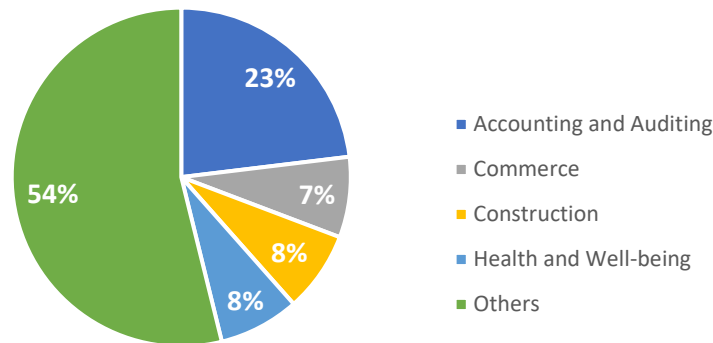
"Inspire a Shared Vision" is the only one of the five leadership practices (LPI) that has a female predominance, with 54% women (Figure 4). Women are often linked to transformational leadership, associated with this leadership practice, due to the tendency to build emotional connections, foster collaboration, and collective purpose (Padraig, 2020). The group that favours INSP has a higher proportion of single individuals compared to the average (23% in INSP and 16% in the sample average) and a lower proportion of married individuals (46% in INSP and 54% on average) (Figure 5). The shorter time spent in the position in this practice may explain the predominance of single people more associated with experiencing new challenges in contrast to a greater attachment to a comfortable and more stable life as a married individual.

What stands out most in the level of education of the individuals, who collaborate in this survey and favour this practice (INSP) is the predominance of individuals with a degree, 54%, compared to the average of 38%, to the detriment of individuals with only secondary education (23% at INSP vs. This suggests that INSP is composed of professionals with higher academic education (23% of individuals with a master's degree, compared to 20% of the general sample) (Figure 6). In relation to Primary Job Function, the great diversity of professional functions stands out, with

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54% of individuals occupying functions outside the 5 largest portions of the sample (Construction, Health and Well-being, Accounting and Auditing, Agriculture and Livestock, Commerce). The predominant sector is Accounting and Auditing, but this diversity of Primary Job Functions can mean that it is possible to inspire a team and lead it towards common goals in all sectors of the job market, with qualified people (due to the great predominance of individuals in this leadership practice with a degree) (Figure 13).

Figure 13 - INSP Primary Job Function



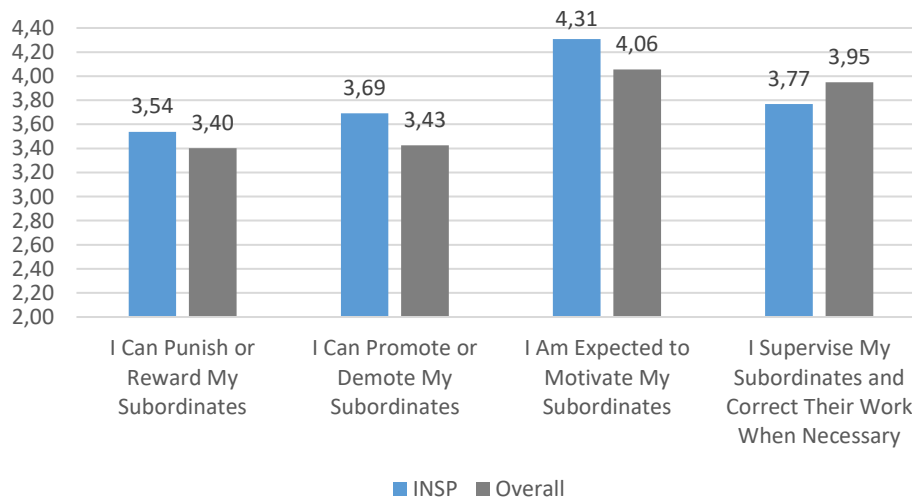
This practice follows the average patterns in employment status with 62% working on their own, while the sample average is 64% (Figure A5). INSP operates mainly in private companies, something that is observed in all aspects of this study (92% in INSP and 96% in the general average) (Figure 9). Where we can really notice some differences in the patterns is in the hierarchical position, where 77% of the individuals in this practice are Top management (6% more than the average). Another interesting fact is the 15% of "No management role", the highest of all practices, which suggests that in "Inspire a Shared Vision" either individuals have a "Top Management Role" or "No management role", showing that there are two sides of the coin of this philosophy: the vision of the supreme leader who inspires the team, and the vision of the subordinate who feels inspired by his leader (Figure 8).

In terms of organizational performance (from 1 to 5), the negative aspects include revenue growth (3.08 compared to the sample's overall average of 3.28), Innovation in Products and Services Offered by the Company (3.23, 0.21 below average), Quality of Products and Services Provided by the Company (3.46 vs. 3.93), Customer Satisfaction (3.69 vs. 4.05 of overall sample). these leaders do not are so concerned with innovation, which in turn can deteriorate revenue and product quality, in some practical results, which can leverage the company. This leadership practice is very far from the sample average and therefore there are also some indicators that present values (from 1 to 5) higher than the average. In "Inspire a Shared Vision" there is a high return on assets, at 3.54, compared to 3.09 in the sample average. Low revenue growth and high return on assets

(ROA) may indicate that the company is not focused on expansion, but rather on maximizing the efficiency of the assets it already has. This suggests effective management of existing resources, with a focus on profitability rather than a more aggressive growth policy, thus reflecting a more conservative strategy (Afza & Nazir, 2007). There is also another indicator that far outperforms the average: Variety of the Products and Services Provided by the Company. Diversity itself is a strategy to attract different segments and niches of customers, thus maintaining a more conservative policy, with a larger customer base (Table 2).

Individuals in this practice also have great power over their subordinates, with a difference of 0.26 and 0.25 standing out in a positive way in relation to the average, in "I Can Promote or Demote My Subordinates" and "I Am expected to Motivate my Subordinates". These indicators show concern for the team's human resources, and the importance of building a common vision. In the opposite direction, "I Supervise My Subordinates and Correct Their Work When Necessary" (3.77 in INSP and 3.95 in the general average), being the only one of the 4 indicators of Authority and Responsibility in the Management of Subordinates, which appears in a negative direction in relation to the average (Figure 14).

Figure 14 - Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management: INSP vs. Overall



Therefore, individuals who prioritize the practice of INSP are mostly women, with a completed higher education (Bachelor's). Although the average age is close to the sample, it is possible to observe through the Boxplot, a greater dispersion of ages among the greatest adopters of this LPI practice. The predominance of single individuals over married individuals is a pattern that may explain the short time these individuals hold the position on average, as they seek new environments and experiences, seeking to reconcile personal and professional happiness. These individuals are mainly found in "Top Management", but also have some focus on "No Management Position", which may explain the great diversity of Primary Job Functions found.

This suggests that INSP has a lot of potential but needs to focus on some performance indicators and convey the good internal environment of the team, which has common goals, to the outside world, to also increase revenue and customer satisfaction.

4.2.4. Enable the Others to Act (ENA) focused profile

This practice allows others to act in an atmosphere of trust and develops independence. This will encourage people to better improve through active collaboration and useful support. A great leader does not exercise control for every step but trusts people so that everyone may also succeed as an individual. ENA is to create genuine relations, where you know the needs of each team member without removing barriers to growth, so that at least every individual feels valued. Sharing power makes leadership a partnership, in which there is trust in the ability of each member (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

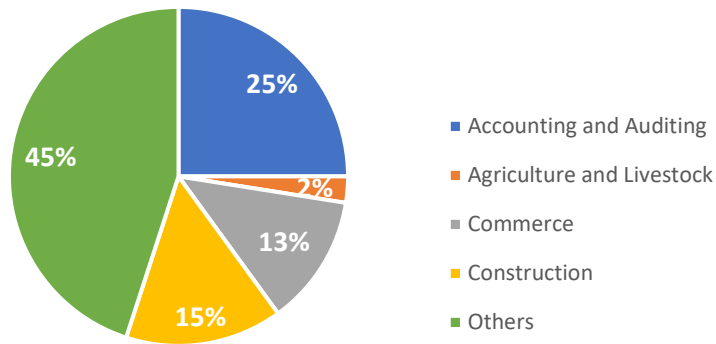
The average age of individuals is 45.30, the lowest average among all leadership practices, compared to the overall average of the sample (48.65) (Figure 1). This suggests that "Enable the Others to Act" has a younger profile, which could mean greater potential for future growth. Making the boxplot of the individuals who practice this practice, the minimum age of the 40 individuals who practice this practice is 23 years, with the maximum being 71. The professional experience of these individuals is the lowest of all practices, at 24.10 years compared to the general average of 26.99 (Figure 2). These statistics is in line with the lowest age found in ENA. Regarding time in the position, the average for this practice is 12.7, also much lower than the general average of 15.16 (Figure 3). More dynamic leadership, with shared power, is more associated with the younger generation, which rejects more traditional values and seeks collaboration with other leaders to make decisions. The lower average age is also associated with less professional experience and shorter time in the position, which we found in "Enable the Other to Act" (Florida Institute of Technology, 2013).

The percentage of men is 63% and that of women is 37% (Figure 4), very close to the sample average. In terms of marital status, we can highlight the predominance of single people (23% in ENA, 16% on average) and married people (58% in ENA, 54% on average) and a very small proportion of divorced people, with only 5% of individuals who favour this practice (Figure 5). The high percentage of singles can be explained by the lower average age, with several participants still below the ENA average age (which is 45.30).

Regarding the level of education, this practice is very similar to MOD, with a strong focus on individuals with secondary education (40%, above the average of 36%), who are more common than individuals with bachelor's degree (35%, below the average of 38%) (Figure 6). The averages

for master's or basic education are in line with the sample average. In this practice there is a huge focus on 3 Primary Job Functions: Accounting and Auditing, Commerce, Construction. In these roles, teamwork is essential, as in larger companies' coordination and collaboration between everyone is essential. This practice strives for balance, being neither too little nor too much qualified, which shows that ENA leaders are present in various sectors (Figure 15) (Forbes Human Resources Council, 2023).

Figure 15 - ENA Primary Job Function



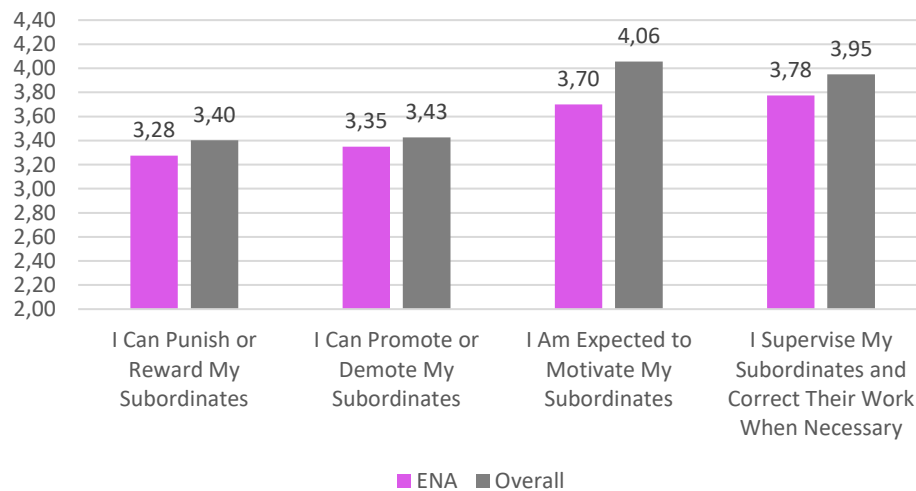
In this leadership practice there is less Top Management than average (63% in ENA and 71% on average). Thus, combined with the lower proportion of self-employed individuals in the sample (55% self-employed, well below the 64% of the sample) and the fact that all individuals work in the private sector, a unique case in the total sample, we can establish a clear pattern (Figures 8; A5). The less rigid and more flexible practices of private companies, with less bureaucracy, make it possible to implement one's own philosophy in the company and for there to be more cooperative leadership and mutual trust among team members. The fact that there is less top management (and more employed by others) demonstrates the feeling of cooperation, felt by those who are not top managers towards their superiors (Xu et al., 2022).

However, this leadership practice has problems in terms of performance, falling below the sample average in all variables, except for "Growth in the Number of Company Employees", where it exceeds the sample average by 0.05. The biggest negative highlights are "Innovation in the Processes", "Customer Satisfaction" and "Quality of Products and Services". In process innovation, the focus is on shared leadership to avoid disruptive decisions to avoid conflict, as leadership is less centralized. In terms of product quality, greater autonomy without as much supervision can allow some errors to go unnoticed and compromise the consistency of products and services, as well as customer satisfaction, where strong empowerment within the team can lead to a lack of direction (and some negligence) in meeting customer expectations. According to Warr's vitamin model, both job autonomy and well-being are expected to present a U-Inverted Shaped curve. This means that whether there is too little autonomy or too much, this will reduce employee happiness. Additionally, too much autonomy can also decrease productivity at work, as

employees feel a lack of guidance or coordination (De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998) (Table 2).

All Authority indices under subordinates are lower than the sample average. This indicates that leaders have a lower perception of authority and decision-making power over subordinates, due to a more flexible and less hierarchical structure, with less Top Management and more autonomous and distributed leadership. Each person has less power over their subordinates (Figure 16).

Figure 16 - Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management: ENA vs. Overall



This group of individuals presents a younger profile with less work, and position experience, with more dynamic leadership associated with the younger generation, which emphasizes collaboration. We can also see a large percentage of single people and a focus on individuals with secondary education (although the percentage of bachelor’s degrees is also high), which results in a greater detachment from more traditional norms, associated with public companies, which are more bureaucratic. In "Enable the Others to Act", everyone works in private companies, with the largest percentage of the sample for employed by others (45%) and focusing on the three largest sectors in the sample (Accounting and Auditing, Commerce, Construction). Furthermore, as the majority work for others in private companies, it is expected that the focus on secondary education will not lead to a high percentage of Top Managers (the lowest in the total sample, with only 63%)), which helps explain the lack of authority over subordinates. Excessive autonomy and shared leadership lead to less customer satisfaction and overall performance, where all variables are below average. The model works well within the company, but it is struggling to convey its leadership philosophy to the outside world.

4.2.5. Encourage the Heart (ENC) focused profile

In "Encourage the Heart," it is important to recognize and value the team's effort and its importance in maintaining motivation and commitment to work. This practice encourages leaders to create a culture of celebrating achievements and genuine recognition, fostering a community

spirit. Leaders recognize the importance of achieving sustainable results and balancing professional goals and objectives with emotional connection. Strengthening interpersonal ties promotes an environment where everyone feels valued and motivated to give their best (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

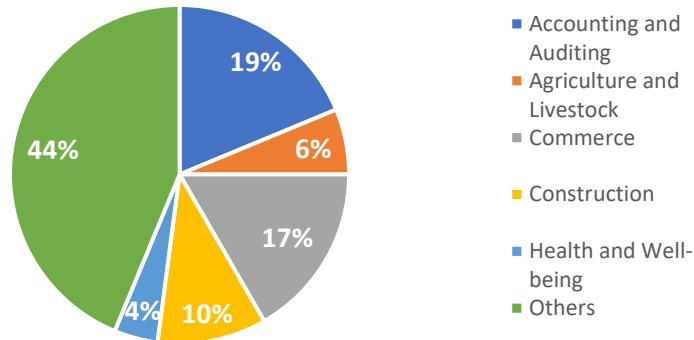
The average age in the group of individuals who prioritize ENC as a leadership practice is 51.48 years, the highest of the entire sample and much higher than the average of 48.65 (Figure 1). The professional experience of these individuals is higher than the general average of the sample (28.19 in the ENC compared to 26.99 in the sample) (Figure 2). With high professional experience comes a high average time in the position at 16.77 years, compared to the general average of 15.16 years (Figure 3). Older, more experienced leaders are associated with ENC due to their greater experience in dealing with teams, which makes them more likely to recognize the importance of celebrating each achievement and providing emotional support, with the appreciation of team members. (Living As a Leader, 2024.) This mentality is acquired over the years and perfected with maturity.

This leadership practice has a strong male predominance, being higher than the sample average (67% of men in ENC, 64% in the overall sample) (Figure 4). It is also possible to notice a strong predominance of married individuals (60%) in this section of the sample, which is clear given the high average age observed previously (Figure 5). Along with traditional marriage, ENC also has the highest average of the 5 practices for Common-law marriage, with 19%, being even higher than the percentage of singles in this practice (13%), something that only occurs in two practices: ENC and MOD.

The educational level of ENC seems very curious, due to its total focus on individuals with high school and college degrees, completely "ignoring" the other two categories. The leadership practice has 44% of graduates (bachelors) and 40% with high school education, which totals 84% in the sum of the two levels of education, the highest sum of the 5 practices. The large proportion of these two levels of education determined the level of masters (only 15%, the lowest of the entire sample) and only 2% of primary education (Figure 6). Thus, although the level of education is not top-notch, due to the lack of individuals with master's degrees (which can be explained by the high average age. A few years ago, a master's degree did not have as much weight as it does today.), the focus on graduates and individuals with secondary education leads us to believe that we are dealing with a leadership practice with quite acceptable levels of education. However, the fact that it is not so focused on a specific level of education, nor on extremes (like CHAL), makes the Primary Job Function distribution quite default. There is a greater emphasis on Accounting and Auditing, as expected, since it is the sector most represented in the general sample. The most

interesting aspect is perhaps the focus on the construction sector, which, although very well represented overall, with 12%, in this practice reaches 17%. The retail sector involves empathy with customers, something very characteristic of emotional support and celebration of the achievements of ENC (Figure 17) (Grossman, 2020).

Figure 17 - ENC Primary Job Function

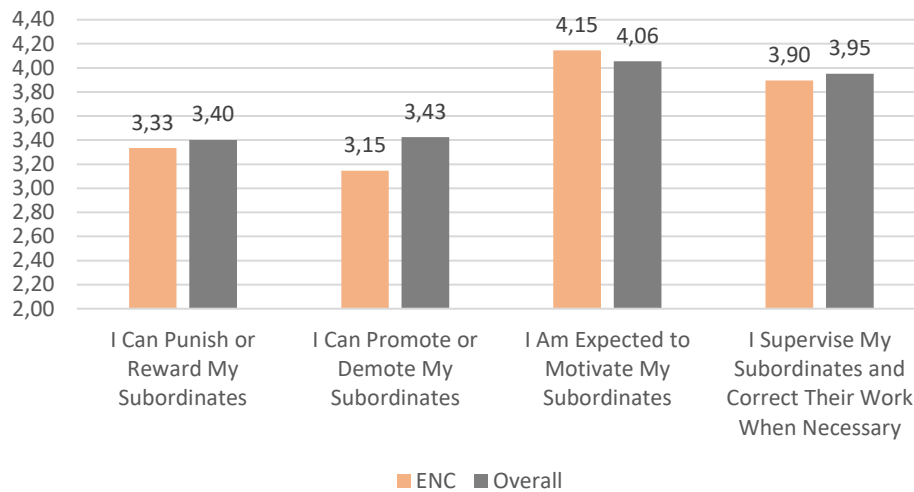


This practice is quite represented in Top Management (73%, the total sample is 71%). This suggests that the ENC has greater decision-making power and associated responsibility. Furthermore, an individual who prioritizes "Encourage the Heart" as a leadership practice is more likely to be self-employed (65%, a value in line with the sample average) and works mostly in private companies, similar to most of the respondents of this study (Figures 8; 9; A5).

Thus, 48 of the 162 respondents in this study associated themselves most strongly with this leadership practice out of the five options. This means that almost 30% of the respondents belongs to this practice, which means that it does not "stray" too far from the average in many performance (and socio-demographic) indicators. On a negative note, we can highlight "Growth in the Number of Company Employees" which is at 2.48 (from 1 to 5), well below the average of 2.70. When a team is motivated and trusts its leader, it does not necessarily need to expand its staff, which entails costs, to be more productive (Bersin, 2024). The adoption of new technologies is also not very typical of these individuals, registering 0.12 below the sample average. On a positive note, we can highlight customer satisfaction (4.15 in ENC, 4.05 on average). In fact, the focus on the retail sector, the appreciation for emotional support and empathy, are reflected in a good customer satisfaction rate (Grossman, 2020) (Table 2).

The only interesting thing about this leadership practice in relation to authority over subordinates is the low "I Can Promote or Demote My Subordinates" (3.15), where there is a large difference from the sample average at 3.43. Leaders are so focused on motivating the team and celebrating achievements and accomplishments that they don't think about promoting or demoting anyone. They try to maintain harmony and not give up on anyone (Figure 18) (Indeed, 2024).

Figure 18 - Authority and Responsibility in Subordinate Management: ENC vs. Overall



This practice is generally characterized by older and more experienced men, who are mostly married or in common-law marriage, both of which reach higher percentages than those of single men. There is a predominance of individuals with high school education or a bachelor's degree, and little focus on master's degrees. When the individuals in the sample were young, a master's degree was not seen as essential to having a successful career, something that today is increasingly indispensable. The Commerce sector is highly targeted, as is customer satisfaction, as the best performance indicator of ENC. It is important to link personal life (and the connections formed) to the professional life, to celebrate achievements and not give up on any team member (avoiding demotes or dismissals).

4.3. Dual Axis Charts

In Figure 19, the dual axis chart between percentage of male individuals and average age, shows four of the five practices with more than 60% men, and only one with more women (Inspire a Shared Vision - INSP). This Practice also happens to be close to the average age of the sample, far away from ENA and ENC.

Figure 19 - Dual Axis Chart: Male Individuals (%) vs. Average Age

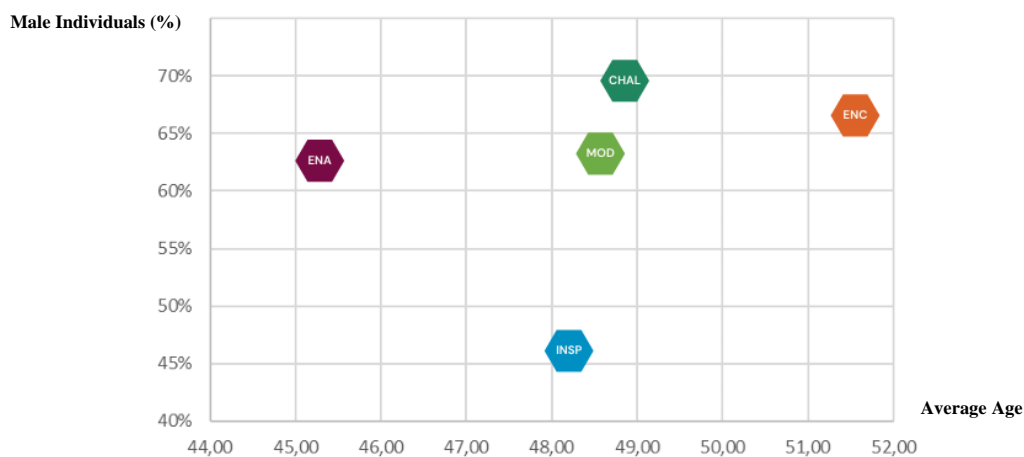
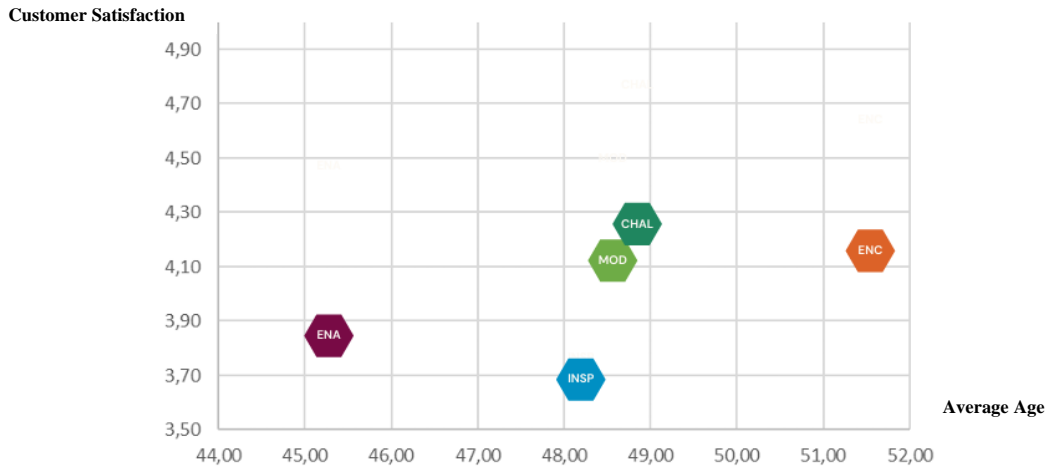


Figure 20 links between Customer Satisfaction (one measure of Organizational Performance (Table 2)) and Average Age.

Figure 20 – Dual Axis Chart: Customer Satisfaction vs. Average Age



Looking at the two Figures it is possible to notice the similarities between those two. On one hand, Practices with the most men (CHAL, MOD and ENC) are also the three Practices with better Customer Satisfaction. On the other hand, the INSP is the Practice with less men (are more women) and is the worst on Customer Satisfaction. With these, can be argued that men at least think their Customer Satisfaction is great.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The LPI used in this study was first conceived by Kouzes and Posner in the 1980s as a tool to measure and develop practices for a fully effective leader. This thinking emerged in the context of recent studies on transformational leadership, reflecting behaviours that inspire and motivate teams to achieve greater goals. Although this framework is associated with the principles of transformational leadership, the LPI can be applied to other leadership styles due to its behavioural approach (Integris, 2013). This framework evaluates universal practices that are relevant in different contexts, allowing the model to be adapted to transactional, autocratic, democratic, or even *laissez-faire* leaders.

Of the 162 respondents in this study, we were able to denote a predominance of three practices: "Enable the Others to Act", "Encourage the Heart", and "Model the Way". In fact, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents had one of these 3 practices as their favourite. Conversely, only 8% of those who responded the questionnaire have "Inspire a Shared Vision" as their favourite, the only one of the five practices that has a higher percentage of women than men.

The profile of a "Challenge the Process" individual is generally characterized by men of all ages, with many individuals under 40 years old, with a lot of professional experience and with a high percentage of unemployed people. The level of education is opposite, with many individuals having master's degrees but many having only basic education. Along with this comes a great diversity of professional sectors, with great revenue growth and product quality. This profile also has some power over subordinates.

The profile of a "Model the Way" is characterized by stability in the same work position, in order to serve as an example for their subordinates. Commerce and secondary education have a lot of weight in this practice, which has very positive leaders about their business, linked to the high percentage of self-employment. In order to be exemplary, there is a lot of power over subordinates. This practice has more focus on consistency and practical examples to achieve constant improvement.

An "Inspire a Shared Vision" is characterized by primarily women with tertiary (Bachelor's) education. These individuals stay in the same position (or role) for a short time, which can be explained by the high percentage of single people, who seek new environments to the detriment of stability. This practice has a lot of potential but needs to focus on a few performance indicators in order to boost external perspective and customer satisfaction. The high levels of motivation and the need to achieve shared goals lead this practice to transformational leadership. In addition to

this type of leadership, INSP has unique characteristics, such as engaging all levels of the organization, which can be explained by the higher percentage of individuals with "No Management Role", who, regardless of this, actively share their ideas.

"Enable the Others to Act" has a profile characterized by younger individuals with less work experience, and with a greater focus on high school education. Individuals work in the private sector and reject the more traditional norms of the public sector, despite having the highest percentage for individuals employed by others. The "young age" and the lack of secondary education means that there are few "Top Managers", which may explain the lack of authority over subordinates. Excessive autonomy can lead to less customer satisfaction and very low performance indicators. The model works within the company, with a focus on the 3 main sectors of the sample (Accounting and Auditing, Commerce, Construction), but it needs to improve if it wants to be successful in the outside world.

This practice of "Encourage the Heart" is characterized by older, more experienced men, who are mostly married. These individuals have secondary or tertiary education (Bachelor's) and there is a greater focus on the commercial sector, which can be related to customer satisfaction, the best performance indicator of this practice. The interconnection of personal and professional life and recognition of accomplishments are part of this practice. The controlled celebration of achievements, provided by the leader, can condition the autonomy of all individuals on the team.

All leaders should contain all of the five leadership practices, albeit in different percentages. The goal of a leader, in the 21st century and beyond, is to possess as much of each of these five practices as possible in their leadership, to achieve organizational success and personal fulfilment. Any leader who is balanced in these five practices will be more likely to be successful, although in certain environments and leadership styles (as seen in this study), certain practices are more fundamental than others.

5.2. Implications

5.2.1. Theoretical Implications

This study has theoretical implications for leadership practices, as it presents empirical evidence showing how Kouzes and Posner's five leadership dimensions manifest in Portuguese companies. Accounting for demographic variables and organizational characteristics extends the existing leadership literature, especially relevant to underexplored national contexts. The findings suggest that leadership practices are not only defined by individual determinants, but also by multi-organizational and cultural environments, thus emphasizing the necessity for adaptation of theoretical models to different realities. Moreover, it emphasizes the need to study leadership in

nontraditional settings.

5.2.2. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, these results contribute to the endeavour of many organizations to gain competitive advantages through leadership. Such data may be useful for Human Resources departments in designing leadership development programs that fit the demographic and functional profiles of their teams. The study serves as a reference for managers, providing insight into their behaviour and its influence on organizational outcomes. Ultimately, by integrating leadership practices such as "Enabling Others to Act" and "Encouraging the Heart", for example, a more engaged, high-performance workforce is facilitated, especially when aligned with cultural and contextual variables.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

5.3.1. Limitations

This study of the 5 Leadership Practices in the context of Portuguese Companies has, however, some methodological limitations.

One of key drawbacks is the small number of respondents despite the number of reminders that were done, to achieve more responses. Nevertheless, the data provide meaningful insights aligned with the stated objectives, even though the sample size limits the statistical power of certain analyses.

The rating (from 1-10) of each Leadership Practice is composed of the average of the six questions associated with the respective leadership practice. This classification depends on the opinion and perception of whom answer the questionnaire. Therefore, we cannot directly compare an individual whose highest score in the five Practices is MOD with 6.3, for example, with another who has MOD with 8.2, for example. This is because everyone has a certain level of requirement in their responses, which is verified and possible to compare, within the five LPI of the same individual, but which makes it impossible to compare the "degree" of that practice with other specific individuals.

In this sense, only the practice with the highest average rating is also evaluated. For example, individual 1 is INS 7.3 (from 1 to 10), with CHAL at 7.2 and individual 2 is also INSP with 7.3, but the second highest practice is MOD at 5.6. In this case, although individual 1 is almost preferential to another practice, and not just his "main" one (INSP), he is evaluated in the same way as individual 2, and both are placed in the group of individuals that favours the practice INSP.

In addition to these two drawbacks, there are still some limitations to highlight in terms of survey field responses. In the "Hierarchical Position" question, the "Other" field required manual typing of the answer, which in many cases was imprecise and did not allow many conclusions to be drawn. In this same survey question, and despite the study focusing on leadership, the responses of individuals who classified themselves as having "No Management Role" were included and separated according to their preferred leadership practice. Although they are not leaders, it is possible to draw conclusions about the percentage of leaders in each leadership practice.

5.3.2. Suggestions for Future Research

This search results will bear much relevance in theory and practice. For theory, the findings will contribute to further studies on the intersections of socio-demographic factors, particularly with unexplored areas such as non-binary experiences of leaders or the effect of socioeconomic background regarding leadership opportunities. Broadening demand in such aspects is expected to yield more inclusive leadership and new leadership models (Liu et al., 2024).

Active recommendations arise from this study, for the design of leadership programs. Specific training activities can be introduced through the identification of strengths and challenges, that are associated with different socio-demographic profiles. For instance, programs for young leaders may focus more on credibility and authority, while programs for more mature leaders may focus more on adaptability and dynamics. This ensures that leadership development will be aligned to specific needs making it more productive and impactful organization-wide (Liu et al., 2024).

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ANNEXES

Figure A 1 - Mean Values: Age, Professional Experience, Years in Position

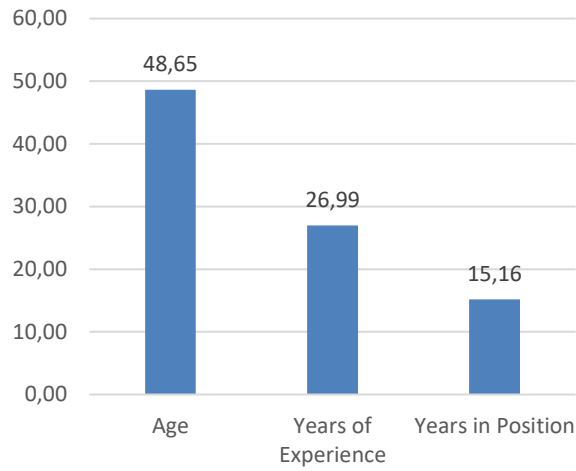


Figure A 2 - Educational Level (%)

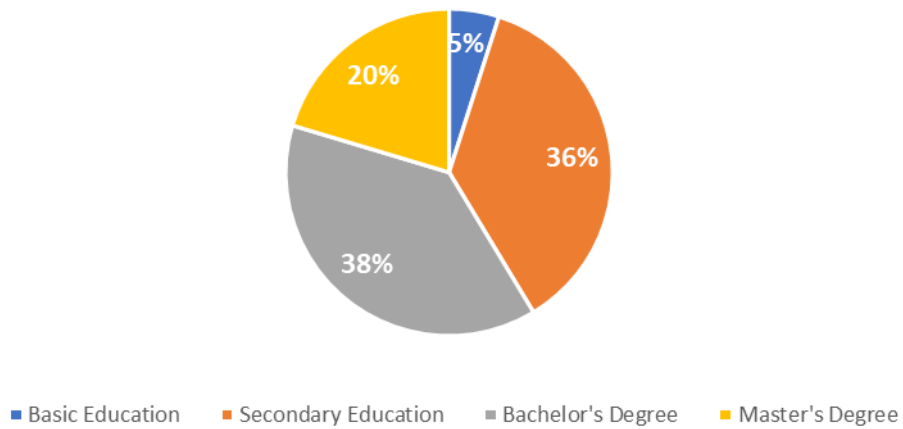
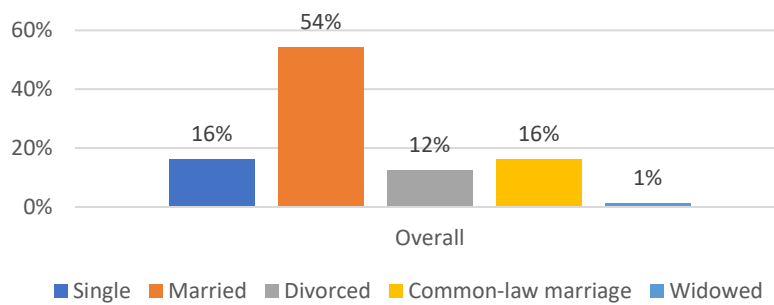


Figure A 3 - Marital Status (%)



LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE COMPANIES
Figure A 4 - Overall Primary Job Function distribution

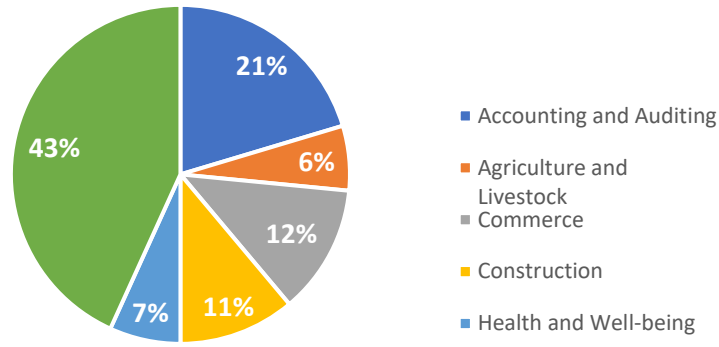


Figure A 5 - Employment Status: Employed vs. Self-employed (%)

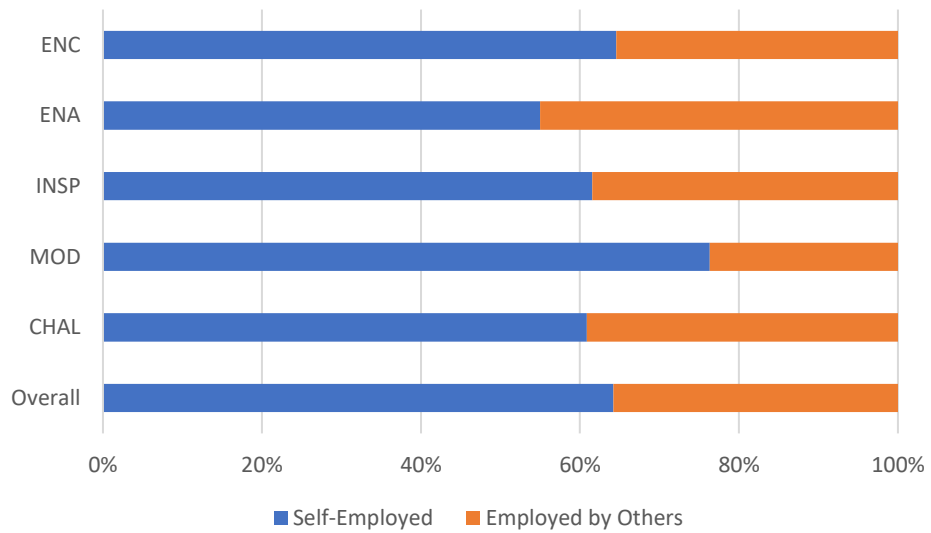


Table A 1 - Sex, Organization Type, Employment Status (%)

Sex	Male	Female	Organization Type	Private Company	Public Company	Employment Status	Self-Employed	Employed by Others
	64%	36%		96%	4%		64%	36%

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE COMPANIES
Table A 2 - The 5 Leadership Practices: Statements

Leadership Practice	Statement
Model the Way	Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others
	Makes certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon
	Follows through on promises and commitments he/she make
	Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance
	Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization
	Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership
Inspire a Shared Vision	Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done
	Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like
	Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future
	Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision
	Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish
	Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work
Challenge the Process	Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/ her own skills and abilities
	Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work
	Actively searches for innovative ways to improve what we do
	Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected
	Identifies measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward
	Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change
Enable the Others to Act	Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with
	Actively listens to diverse points of view
	Treats others with dignity and respect
	Involves people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance
	Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work
	Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves
Encourage the Heart	Praises people for a job well done
	Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities
	Makes sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects
	Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values
	Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others
	Gets personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2021). LPI: Leadership Practices Inventory. *Self Report*.