

The Development of Leadership in Confessional Schools

O Desenvolvimento de Lideranças nos Colégios das Missionárias Servas do Espírito Santo no Brasil

DOI: 10.34140/bjbv3n5-004

Recebimento dos originais: 04/03/2021

Aceitação para publicação: 30/06/2021

Zélia Cordeiro dos Santos

Mestra em Gestão e Negócios pela Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – Unisinos, curso com dupla titulação, vinculado a Université de Poitiers na França com dissertação na área de desenvolvimento de liderança

Instituição: Faculdade Sant'Ana

Endereço: Rua Senador Pinheiro Machado, 189 - CEP 84010-310; Cidade Ponta Grossa, PR/Brasil

E-mail: zeliaki97@gmail.com

Sandra Cordeiro dos Santos Aragão

Graduada em Pedagogia pela Universidade Paulista - UNIP

E-mail: sandreber@gmail.com

Patrícia Martins Fagundes Cabral

Doutora em Psicologia pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul - PUCRS
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos - Unisinos.

Endereço: Av. Dr. Nilo Peçanha, 1600 - Bairro Boa Vista, CEP 91330-002; Cidade Porto Alegre, RS/Brasil

E-mail: patriciamf@unisinos.br

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at analyzing the processes of identity construction and the development of leaders through the perception of the intermediate leaders who work in the education organizations run by the *Missionary Holy Spirit Sisters* (MSSpS) of the Southern Brazil Province, which comprises four schools located in three Brazilian states. The theoretical background of this research was based on Komives (2005), DeRue and Ashford (2010), Cabral (2018), among other scholars who investigated the development and construction of leaders' identities. This is a qualitative research that used 15 semi-structured interviews, listening to workers who have been in a position of leadership for at least three years. The data analysis was carried out from the transcripts of the interviews and the insertion of that content in the software NVivo© 10., divided into categories according to the answers given by the interviewees. The results found pointed out four central categories regarding identity construction and leadership development: (1) the perception of the qualities needed by the leader, (2) the organizational culture, (3) awareness of their own trajectory and (4) challenges. A fifth dimension was identified related to (5) the conceptions of leadership held by the institution. Each of these dimensions pointed out different implications regarding identity construction and leadership development. Among them, the experience of interaction, in which they influence and are influenced, was seen as a privileged source of learning for the development of a leader's identity.

Keywords: Leadership. Leader. Development. Identity. Confessional Institutions.

RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar os processos de construção da identidade e o desenvolvimento

das lideranças através da percepção das líderes intermediárias que atuam nas organizações educacionais mantidas pelas Missionárias Servas do Espírito Santo (MSSpS) da Província Brasil Sul, sendo 4 colégios localizados em 3 estados brasileiros. A pesquisa tomou como referencial os estudos de Komives (2005), DeRue e Ashford (2010), Cabral (2018), entre outros pesquisadores que se empenharam em investigar o desenvolvimento e a construção da identidade de líderes. Adotou-se o método de pesquisa qualitativa, através de 15 entrevistas semi-estruturadas, ouvindo funcionários que ocupam posição de liderança, por, no mínimo, três anos. Para o tratamento dos dados, realizou-se a transcrição das entrevistas e a inserção do conteúdo no software NVivo© 10., dividido em categorias conforme as respostas dos entrevistados. Os resultados encontrados apontam quatro categorias centrais para a construção da identidade e para o desenvolvimento da liderança: (1) a percepção dos atributos necessários ao líder, (2) a cultura organizacional, (3) as percepções sobre a própria trajetória e (4) os desafios. Ainda, destaca-se uma quinta dimensão que diz respeito a (5) quais concepções de liderança constituem a instituição. Cada uma dessas dimensões aponta distintas implicações para a construção da identidade e para o desenvolvimento da liderança. Entre estas, destaca-se as experiências de interação como fonte privilegiada de aprendizado para o desenvolvimento da identidade de liderança, quando influenciam e são influenciados.

Palavras-chave: Liderança. Líder. Desenvolvimento. Identidade. Instituições Confessionais

1 INTRODUCTION

The size and intensity of the *Missionary Holy Spirit Sisters* (MSSpS) education institutions in the Southern Brazil Province results in the need of a facilitating leadership, with abilities to manage flexible and fast performances and, mainly, developing their functions with integrity, justice and by transforming those led by them into leaders (KOMIVES, 2005). A relational and innovative leader, with an identity that goes beyond the relation of influence leaders-followers becomes necessary (FAGUNDES, 2007; KOMIVES et al., 2006).

Complementing Komives' idea (2005), one can look at the example of a tradition of over two thousand years of the leader Jesus Christ, the son of a carpenter who grew up to start the most popular religion on Earth. Jesus influenced and developed leaders in a relational and continuous process, creating a concept of unity in His disciples. Jesus told them that they could do whatever He did and even more. That was the true essence: everyone could be a leader. Jesus left leaders not followers, HUNTER (2004).

Hunter (2004), in his book *The Servant*, presents the idea that the essence of leadership is in the Agape love. Agape is a word of Greek origin that means love that gives unconditionally and goes through the experience of a servant. In Hunter's conception (2006), love and its virtues (honesty, patience, kindness, respect, forgiveness, commitment and humbleness), which reveal the foundations of a character, represent well the essence of a leader's identity.

Emerging forms of leadership, such as the conceptions 'authentic' and 'servant' (HOCH et al., 2018) assume workers who are involved, committed and satisfied, that is, they are prepared and able to take strategic responsibilities in the institution. Although the servant leadership is among one of the most suitable for the MSSpS institutions, ruled by the principles of sacrifice and service to the other, they follow

the dominant model of the Catholic Church, through a vertical hierarchy with well-defined functions. In the MSSpS organization, it is possible to notice the concepts defended by Morgan (1996) and Schein (2009), for presenting a humanist view with traditional features and power centralized in the nuns.

The schools investigated are part of a Christian institution and this implies the experience of faith, ethical attitudes and practice of justice regarding the workers' work and, therefore, on the development of the identity of leaders who are committed with the Ethical-Christian values that will perpetuate the legacy of the founders.

Starting from this view, this study is justified by the uncertainty provoked by the fast growth of the institution and the reduction and aging of its religious members. This results in the need to hire and qualify people to occupy leadership positions, with philosophies and objectives different from the mission and purposes of the maintenance entity.

Facing the challenge to qualify leaders, we raise the problem-question: "how does the processes of identity construction and development of leaders occur in the MSSpS schools?". The study proposes an analysis, based on the perception of the intermediate leaders, of the identity construction process and the development of leaders in the MSSpS schools, seeking to explain how the workers notice their own development as leaders, offer elements for reflection and, at the same time, guides the high administration of the MSSpS in the Southern Brazil Province regarding the development of leadership, identification, selection and hiring future leaders.

The following sections present the theoretical background, the research methodology, data collection and discussion, results obtained and the final considerations

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

For many, the complexity of the theme leadership is of great interest since it might be characterized as a gift or talent, or even the knowledge owned by certain people that distinguish them from others. Cabral (2018) considers that from the individual's point of view, the current concept of leadership goes beyond having specific technical knowledge. It is associated to the ability to lead, motivate, listen to, create fascination and enthusiasm. Luhrmann and Ebert (2007) also consider motivation, authenticity, power and relationships as elements, which are directly related to the construction of a leader's identity.

DeRue and Ashford (2017), highlight the dynamics through which leader and followers mutually influence and are influenced by the context, by the inter-relations established and the culture in which they are inserted and suggests three phases in the construction of a leader's identity: **a) personal internalization**; appropriation and internalization of the leader's identity as part of their being, **b) relational recognition**; construction and development of one's identity through reciprocal relationships. **c) community and/or institutional approval**; collectiveness in the identity construction. Networks are built through the relationships between leaders and followers that stimulate shared leadership identity.

The promotion of co-working, through the interaction of the team confirms/approves individuals as part of a group or institution. Debebe and Reinert (2012) recognize this process as a socio-political context that has the power of shaping social identities.

In addition to the social interactions, the individual's identity is built through concession and claims, either as a leader or a follower, and this is consolidated in the social interaction, point out DeRue and Ashford (2010). Posner (2009) suggests that the development occurs through the experiences that are triggered by internal forces, therefore, self-knowledge and self-reflection are essential elements in the construction and development of the identity of a leader or follower.

Experience is a privileged source of learning, however, it is not automatic. For the experience to become a space of learning, the learner must be aware of living and experiencing that moment. This is what those authors call *mindfulness* or a *state of being*, in which people keep their minds open to new information and ready to experiment a development process being aware of themselves (ASHFORD AND DERUE 2012).

Taking that into consideration, Goleman et. al (2012) state that the awareness of oneself is part of the domain of the emotional intelligence, which consists of being able to understand their own emotions and recognize their limitations. They also affirm that emotions can only be controlled when they are understood and that such self-control is fundamental in the relationship with the other, since it enables the individual to notice how their feelings affect their performance and the relationship with the group. Thus, in the process of building a leader's identity, the knowledge of the 'self' enables the knowledge of the 'other'.

The model proposed by Komives et al. (2005), reveals the development of the leader from self-awareness in the process of integration with the group, "[...] a relational and ethical process of people who together try to carry out positive changes" (KOMIVES et al., 2007, p. 74). The study points out six steps, starting from the initial identity of the awareness and the essential influences to development, up to the final identity of integration/synthesis and broadening of the leadership vision. Each step presents its own characteristics with moments of transition that provoke the abandonment of old practices and points out to a new style of leadership. The interpersonal relationships and the environment influences provoke self-evaluation of the role of a leader creating a new identity.

The influences considered developers (adults, peers, significant involvement and reflexive learning) form the base of the evolutionary process in the formation of leaders and very rarely are linear. The study by Komives et al. (2005) suggests a cyclic model, with organic movements, in which students go back to previous phases while they advance.

From studies that address the influence that leadership exercises over the organizational commitment of individuals in relation to the organization (HARTER et al., 2002), it is usually seen that the organizations focus on the leadership and the role of a leader as a way to find the desired optimism in

the organizational context. (LUTHANS; AVOLIO, 2003). One of the strategies followed by some organizations goes through the elaboration of new types of leaders, such as the authentic leadership, which stimulates the organizational commitment of individuals with the organization, Walumbwa et al., (2008), and the servant leadership, which influences the company's results, promoting the wellbeing of the followers by satisfying their needs (CHINIARA; BENTEIN, 2017).

Leadership requires involvement in different segments of the organization seeking common objectives. A leader oriented to promote common wellbeing, provokes positive changes and provides the workers with a supportive environment, working in well-defined directions, qualifying their teams and developing the organization, as pointed out by Morrison (2017). This kind of leadership is flexible and offers space for all members of the group to develop leadership activities (DERUE, 2017),

This interaction process is evidenced in the educational context, in which the intermediate leader works as a facilitator and promotes basic dimensions, taking part and sharing the decision making process in the several sectors of the organization (SENGE, 1999). The intermediate leaders live in a context of extreme complexity (BUSER; HARRIS, 2000), since they are leaders in some situations and followers in others (BRIGGS, 2004).

3 METHOD

This is a transversal and qualitative study with exploratory character. The qualitative research emphasizes the process, not only the results and according to Minayo (2001, p. 22), “[...] works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relations, processes, and phenomena [...]”. This approach also presents the possibility of exploring data in depth and what is important and meaningful to the interlocutors (HERTNEKEY, 2008).

The base for the collection and analysis of empirical material was the interpretive paradigm. Such paradigm allows the understanding that people create meanings for the world and the environment they are inserted in. Researchers, in turn, seek to understand the phenomena through the meanings attributed to them by the participants (DIETRICH; ROUPNEL, 2015).

Four schools belonging to the MSSpS congregation were analyzed. This is a German missionary congregation that started their education mission in Brazil in 1905. Nowadays, they have over five thousand students.

Due to the complexity of an institution such as the MSSpS, they need people with specific abilities and competences, who are able to deal with the everyday challenges. Leaders that develop their functions so that they can contribute to reach the highest working potential in the environment where they work (KOMIVES *et al.*, 2005). In this research, such abilities and competences are called attributes: (a) actor's attributes, (b) action attributes and (c) interaction attributes.

To answer the research question, data was collected from semi-structured interviews that enable

the investigation of complex themes that could be approached in depth, allowing the researcher to explore issues that arose during the interview. The study takes into consideration that the interview is a social communication process happening between two individuals and is considered the technique that allows the researcher to be inserted in the local space where the phenomenon occurs, which favours the understanding of the phenomenon under study (BONI, QUARESMA, 2005). To carry out the interviews, the researcher had the chance to remain in each institution for five days, on average.

To meet the ethical criteria of this research, all participants were informed about the objectives of the study, signed the Informed Consent Form (TCLE), and authorized the recording and transcription of the whole interviews. The research is registered in the *Plataforma Brasil* (Brazil Platform) meeting all the requirements for approval by the Research Ethics Committee.

Chart 1 – Research Systematization

Research problematization	How does the leader’s identity construction process occur in the MSSpS schools?
General aim	To understand the relationship between leaders and followers and its repercussion in the construction of the leader’s identity
Specific aims	To study the identity construction process and the development of leadership in the MSSpS schools.
	To clarify how aware the workers are of their own development as leaders.
	To present recommendations for the process of leadership development in the <i>Missionárias Servas do Espírito Santo</i> schools.
Participants	15 Leaders
Data Collection	
Categories	Script/Interviews
Leadership and Organizational Culture	How do you (coordinator) define and/or describe yourself as a leader?
	How do the culture and/or values and the MSSpS spirituality influence your identity as a leader or follower?
Personal and Leadership attributes	How do you (coordinator) see yourself as a leader? Do you like to be seen as a leader?
	Which attributes do you believe you have that make you a leader?
Self-perception as a leader	How does your relationship with your team influence your identity as a leader? What stories can you tell about your person, which involve your trajectory as a leader? How does the institution qualify and/or develop its leaders? Are you clear about your duties?
Challenges in the development of leadership	What are the greatest challenges noticed by you regarding the qualification and development of leaders in this institution?
	Which recommendations would you make to the institution regarding the development of leaders and their recruitment process?
Data analysis	Content analysis supported by NVivo

Source: The author (2019)

The script of the interviews is based on the studies by Hertneky (2008), who investigated self-identity of women leaders in teaching institutions. That research that was developed in faculties in the State of California, in the United States, concluded that the leader's self-identity is developed in a holistic way and also affirms that the processes that identify, select, educate and qualify leaders result in significant implications for the organizations. Some questions were included based on Komives et al. (2005) and DeRue and Ashford (2010), which contributed to the understanding of the objectives defined for the research. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed with the software Nvivo, which is a software solution created for computer aided analysis of qualitative data. This type of software is grouped under the name Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). This is a technology used for the structuration of information.

Documental research was carried out based on five central points: culture, values, commitment, MSSpS contribution in the education area, their mission, and the institution rules. This data was treated through Content Analysis as proposed by Richardson (2011), who emphasizes the importance of counting on theories to explain the information gathered along the interviews and treat them with strictness and accuracy.

The Content Analysis took into consideration the three phases put forward by Bardin (2000): **a) Pre-analysis:** definition of the theme and aims of the research, literature review, production of a script for the interviews and invitation or request of permission to the principals of the schools whose workers, who were section and/or project leaders would take part in the research, and finally, carrying out the interviews **b) Material Exploration:** interviews transcription and content organization into categories according to the interviewees' answers. Such categories were previously set by the researcher based on the literature surveyed in the first phase of this study; and **c) Reference interpretation:** analysis of the ideas identified in the categories previously indicated, in order to establish some relation between the reality and the literature referred to in this research.

4 RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Recurring results of the research are presented below, which can be understood as a pattern in the empirical field. These results were grouped in the following categories: perception of the attributes necessary to a leader (actor's attribute, action attributes, interaction attributes), organizational culture, awareness of their own trajectory, conceptions of leadership, challenges, synthesis of the leadership development process in the MSSpS schools and, finally, managerial recommendations.

4.1 PERCEPTIONS AND LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

4.1.1 Actor's attributes

Humbleness. The interlocutors' speech shows their belief that a leader is, or should be, mainly humble, authentic, responsible and a role model. Being a humble person also implies showing simplicity and modesty in their work. Participant E14 exemplifies: *"Every Project that I develop, I try to talk about with the principal, with the coordinator, and receive some feedback from the teachers, not to know whether it was good or bad, but rather to know what effect it had. Was it nice on the one hand, or could it have been better on the other. In the sense of accepting it and improving my action"*. In the MSSpS organization, it is possible to notice the concepts defended by Morgan (1996) and Schein (2009), [for presenting a humanistic view with traditional features and the power centralized in the nuns.

Responsibility. Schein (2010) highlights the leader as the one responsible for the integration of the several sectors of an organization. Responsibility is directly associated to their commitment to their work, with people and the institution. *"I think that, first, it is necessary to gain people's trust, after that you obtain the team's integration. Both from the teachers and students and their parents. Because from the moment they start to trust me, I can lead with more freedom and in a light way, the projects flow smoothly"* (E10).

Reliability. For an institution that adopts a holistic view (ROBBINS; JUDGE; SOBRAL, 2011) as a differential in the work place, reliability is one of the essential elements both in interpersonal relationships and in the decision making. The testimony given by E2, *"investing in truthful relationships is a slow process, but undoubtedly it is the basis to create alliances regardless of your position"*, confirms the point of view defended by Cabral (2018), based on the principle of recursive loop pointed out by Morin (2009) that leadership is a product and a producer of relations between actors, that is, reliability is a relational and recursive construction.

Vision and communication. These characteristics show the leader as the one who knows what they want, how they want it and how they communicate with their followers to obtain cooperation and support aiming at sustainable and innovative results. On this issue, E5 reports: *" (...) is a visionary... She sees things which are ahead of us. Then, it calls my attention when I see an intelligent and visionary person. I look at them and want to be with them. It is like a mirror [...]"*.

4.1.2 Action attributes

Regarding action attributes, the ones listed by the interviewees were: **proactivity, motivation and zeal for the institution values**. A leader must show proactivity that makes them act independently, taking the front position in the resolution of everyday situations. As regards autonomy, E5 affirms: *"I was surprised with the autonomy I gained. Because I notice that there is a kind of closed thing, a closed space. And I managed to conquer this autonomy [...]"* we, coordinators, we have the autonomy to organize and

execute our tasks, we have some authority over the means, teams, information, physical areas, resources, etc., we have autonomy to act and responsibility to deliver results of tasks and/or projects taken over”.

The autonomy referred to by E5 is directly related to the trust conquered along the years, as expressed by E4: *“If people don’t trust me anymore, I lose the autonomy that I conquered”*. Autonomy creates space for collective actions (KOMIVES et al., 2005), stimulates search for innovation, personal and professional growth, which contributes to the process of a leader’s identity construction with a desirable profile for the institution.

Also, the leader must work to motivate those who work around them, as reported by E15: *“Then I go to my superior leader, I talk to her. I have always received support and understanding, maybe that’s why I manage to go on”*. E10’s remarks complement it: *“[...] I think that leadership comes from the inside of a person, the leader manages to keep the unity of the group and the respect with motivation to achieve the aims”*.

A leader’s actions must show zeal for the institution values, being in accordance with their norms and beliefs. In addition, they must incentivize their reproduction as emphasized by E2: *“[...] I make my decisions according to the institution values, respecting the concept, the culture, and the market vision adopted by the institution”*.

4.1.3 Interaction attributes

Among the most cited words by the interlocutors, **work** and **team** stand out and tend to be related. Therefore, it becomes noticeable that for the interviewees team work is central when the identity construction process and leadership development are approached, as pointed out by Komives et al. (2005).

The way the MSSpS education institutions are led has been changing gradually and the schools that are growing and consolidating their brand are those where the traditional style of a saving, heroic and centralizing leader have slowly been substituted by a collective leadership exercising action and influence. This change is noticed in E3’s speech *“Not long ago, the power to make simple decisions in schools was totally in the hands of the nuns, now, gradually it started to be shared with us, lay people, I think we are going through a transition, which is highly significant for us workers”*.

In the schools where the leadership is collective and the teamwork is reinforced, the role of leaders and their followers becomes dynamic and less tense and the targets are achieved through relations of influence, alliances, commitment networks and responsibility with the institution.

Teamwork that mobilizes people to reach common objectives goes through the leadership relational process (KOMIVES et al., 2005). Leadership in its collective aspect, was a point mentioned more than once by the interviewees, and E15 emphasizes: *“Leader is that person that is at the forefront, but at the same time articulates and builds together, working side-by-side. [...] Leader is the one who articulates and builds in the collectiveness. You can be a leader in a horizontal line, side-by-side. I always*

tell my team: I am not in the front and I am not behind, we are side-by-side, with the same focus [...]”.

Also about interaction, the interviewees mirror their actions in the actions of leaders that are facilitators of the projects designed by the team, who are attentive to the organizational culture and due to that they are inclined to follow their leader’s positive habits and attitudes, from whom they seek safety, guidance and inspiration.

Leadership is an interactive process, which is (re)cognized and (re)affirmed mutually between leaders and followers and endorsed by the organizational context (DERUE; ASHFORD, 2010). Leaders teach and learn at the same time, thus, advancing in the construction of what they are like as leaders and how they constitute their abilities (BURNS, 1978). Leadership has, therefore, a collective property (DERUE; ASHFORD, 2010), which implies the ability to build teams, interact with several stakeholders, elaborate and carry out projects, achieve targets and promote wellbeing. The interviewees’ narratives also show that the relationship leader-follower in the MSSpS institutions is based on empathy, respect and honesty (CHINIARA; BENTEIN, 2017).

Therefore, having a good relationship with your team and presenting yourself as a mediator between their teams and the direction are necessary attributes of a leader as referred to by the interlocutors.

Chart 2 – Leadership attributes

Perception of the attributes necessary to a leader	Main findings
Actor’s attributes: What is a leader like?	Humble, responsible, role model, wise, has communication skills and loves people.
Action attributes: What does the leader do?	Shows proactivity, motivation and zeal for the institution values and obtains results.
Interaction attributes: How and with whom should the leader relate?	In team work, networks, and interpersonal alliances .

Source: The author (2019)

4.2 LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Moral and ethical values are fundamental for a person to occupy a position of leadership in the MSSpS organization. The interviews showed that those who perceive themselves as leaders tend to think and act according to the institution culture. E9 explains: *“Because we work in this institution for such a long time, we end up acquiring differentiated characteristics, that is, we tend to internalize characteristics and values that are typical of this environment. I notice this issue of the values disseminated by the nuns, they are present in my political thoughts, in the way I think the society”.*

Taking care of others, humanist education, involvement in social projects and a sense of justice were all emphasized as fundamental in the development of this institution leaders’ identity. This is supported by the objective of educating for life, focusing on Human-Christian values, based on the organizational culture to form ethical leaders committed to the institution mission, as presented by Dassoler (2017). Murad (2008) points out that organizations with a holistic culture are committed to entrepreneurial social values and attitudes. E15 comments: *“Very often we listen to people saying: Wow!*

How nice it is to work here with you! I try to live the principles and ethical values, responsibility and spirituality and I notice these values in the nuns' lives, for this reason I manage to pass the same values on to my group”.

The institution values, which are the heart of the organizational culture (SCHEIN, 2009), symbolically guide the practice of the individuals that interact in it. The interviewees' narratives enable the understanding that individuals are seen as leaders of a group when they integrate behaviors and attitudes that are accepted and valued by the organization. *“When I am not here people call me “Michele from Santana (school)”. I'm no longer Michele Santos, I'm the “Michele from Santana”, E8.* They are recognized and affirmed as leaders inasmuch as they identify with, respect and promote the interests and norms of the group and the organization. By incorporating them, they are endorsed as leaders and this implies greater influence and power of decision making.

In MSSpS institutions, these workers embrace the culture and values such as audacity, simplicity, modesty, humbleness and spirituality, in the way they were understood and lived by the founder Saint Arnold and his first followers LICHIOUS, (1925); The role of the founder and that of the first leaders' is considered a structuring element of the organizational culture.

The interviewees emphasize the main values of the institution, namely, respect and valorization of the human being, the charism, the importance of family, and general Christian values noticed in the statement: *“Every school is a company, right? Santana School is also a company, but Santana, in addition to being a company, takes care, is concerned with the qualification of their people” (E6).* E10 adds: *“Humanization is a highly valued thing; they talk a lot about it. We first respect the human being. That is one of the reasons why I did well, because there is my speech. Respecting the human being is a priority in our actions. Respecting differences is another important aspect. Here in Ponta Grossa, our school is considered as space that respects differences. This part of the respect and valorization of the human being and a desire to develop a better human being... We end up liking the institution and the people, getting involved and wishing to take part in this project that is significant for the society”.*

The relationship between the institution and religion was also mentioned in the interviews. Spirituality is inherent in the institution culture and part of its social character from their concern with issues related to the wellbeing of the mankind such as a healthier lifestyle, humanization in interpersonal interactions and the prioritization of peace (MURAD, 2008). The relation with spirituality is central for a person to be a real leader, as shown in E5's speech: *“The prayer issue, the environments... I feel that there is a protection here. It is different I don't know if this happens because my heart is here, because it was part of my childhood, but I listen to a lot of people saying the same”.*

Thus, the institution network incentivize the religious practice of their workers, signalling as leaders those that develop within the mission supported on the principles and attitudes preached by the Catholicism, as pointed out by Dassoler (2017).

Chart 3 – Organizational Culture

Leadership and organizational culture	Main findings
How the institution is organized and invest in their workers	Resolution of everyday conflicts, project development, academic excellence, attention to the workers' quality of life, good behaviour and social commitment.
Workers' relationship with the institution values	Respect for and valorization of the human being, charism, importance of the family, general Christian values.
Workers' relationship with the institution basic values	Christian principles.
Workers' relationship with their managers	Family relationships, which contribute to the development of a degree of meaning, trust and freedom between leaders and followers.

Source: The author (2019)

4.3 SELF-PERCEPTION AS A LEADER

The institution builds and develops leaders. However, these leaders present different conceptions of leadership. The interviewees' reports show three prevailing conceptions. The first is the authentic leadership, understood as transparent, honest and that acts according to the institution values (GARDNER et al., 2005; WALUMBWA et al., 2008). The second, the servant leadership, focuses on the purpose of serving people, it is seen as ethical, altruistic, prioritizing people and acting as a support link to their personal and professional development, promotes the followers' common good and wellbeing (CHINIARA, BENTEIN, 2017). While the authentic and the servant leaderships appeared in the interviewees' reports when they referred to their leaders, in this case the principals of their schools, when they talked about themselves, the interviewees were self-described as democratic leaders, the third conception. E8 comments: *"I'm seen as a democratic leader, because I listen to everyone's opinions. I don't adopt a top-down approach. I promote a lot of discussion. I like it"* E15 complements: *"In the past, in other theories and practices that we know, the leader was the boss. The one who told the others what to do. For me, leader is the one who articulates and builds up with the community. That's how I try to do my work with my teachers, that is, my team."*

It is possible to associate the empirical findings to the theoretical conceptions of the authentic leadership, when they emphasize their involvement with social activities and when the leader's behaviour is used to influence their followers to engage in behavior that is usually considered appropriate, setting an example, of doing what is right, as explained by E9: *"I always try to do the right things, thus, in a way, people want to follow me. For this reason, they see that I do things and imagine that I am more powerful than I really am, in a way this makes me feel as a leader."*

Identify yourself or feel as a leader is fundamental for the development of one's leadership. The more the individual sees themselves as a leader, the more self-confidence they build and the more they will seek experience to develop in this way. This suggests that people who see themselves as leaders think and act as leaders (DAY; HARRISON, 2007; DERUE; ASHFORD, 2010).

Regarding the servant leadership, a concern about serving and educating people according to the

institution criteria at all levels (physical, mental and spiritual) is noticed: *“After such a long time here! I realize this issue of values that are disseminated by the nuns, they are in my political thoughts, the way I think our society. We end up being influenced by these thoughts. This issue of donating oneself, not thinking only about yourself, putting yourself in another person’s shoes – those that do not have the same possibilities you do – I think that this issue of values disseminated by the nuns influences a lot” (E 9).*

Another aspect emphasized is that the interviewees that are in a leadership position see themselves as servants rather than masters. This is an interesting aspect for future research in this organization institutions. Would that attitude be strongly influenced by the charism of the organization that takes the word ‘servant’ in their name? The chart below shows the relation between the theory and the findings.

Chart 5 – Leadership conceptions

Leadership Conceptions	Main findings
Authentic: They are truthful, act consistently with their personal values and with transparency in relation to these values. They are genuine, reliable and moral. They seek to develop their teams and create a positive organizations environment.	Involvement and satisfaction with their work is positively associated to the authentic leadership.
Servant: They act so that the others are well-attended; their main focus are the workers. If the workers’ needs are well-attended, in the long run the objectives of the organization will be achieved. They promote personnel qualification: Continuous Development Program.	Serving people, showing understanding, empathy, commitment with their growth and the organization’s.

Source: The author (2019)

4.4 CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPMENT AS A LEADER

Challenge and development are linked. People that are challenged grow and contribute significantly to the development of organizations (DUTRA, 2016). Since they face these challenges, they contribute to issues related to responsibility, autonomy, among others. Problem solving provides the leader with abilities to accomplish greater tasks and gain experience dealing with distinct situations. Therefore, they contribute to the leader’s development.

Incentivizing the commitment of workers/leaders with the institution purpose and values was mentioned as a challenge: *“I think that the greatest challenge is to gain people’s commitment with the school’s culture and values” (E2).* E9 and E11 stated that knowing how to deal with people and recruiting the right people for the different positions is a challenge. Also, E15 pointed out gathering workers as a great challenge, since they have difficulties in updating and taking part in the qualification moments offered by the institution, once they work in more than one job.

Chart 6 – Challenges

Challenges	Main findings
Personal relationships: Working with people poses challenges regarding how to deal with different opinions, different needs and different aptitudes, etc.	Overcoming the resistance to new technologies and taking responsibilities that in the past were assigned to the nuns only.
Personnel qualification: Structuring a continuous development program.	Commitment of workers/leaders with the institution purpose and philosophy, culture and values. Learning how to deal with people. Recruitment of personnel.

Source: The author (2019)

4.5 SYNTHESIS OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN MSSP SCHOOLS AND MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Empirical evidence extracted from the interviews, confirmed theoretical elements, indicating the phases to be completed in the leader’s identity construction process. Komives et al. (2005) identified six phases in the process of a leader’s identity formation, a cyclic model, starting with the awareness and going through group experiences and commitment up to integration and synthesis when they recognize the leadership personal ability in several contexts and claims this identity. While DeRue and Ashford (2010), in a more recent approach, configured the process in three distinct phases: internalization, recognition and group confirmation, finally, collectiveness that consolidate a leader’s identity. The chart below presents this approximation and the theoretical-empirical synthesis:

Chart 7 : Synthesis of the leadership development process in MSSpS schools:

How does the process of leader’s identity construction occur in the schools run by the <i>Missionária das Servas do Espírito Santo</i> (MSSpS)		
1	Engagement	Enters the institution in other positions: monitor, teacher, secretary, etc.
2	Relational Recognition	Interacts with the work team to make friends and appropriate from the organizational culture regarding ethical-Christian values.
3	Informal leadership	Demonstrates leadership abilities in the relations with their peers, significant involvement and reflexive learning, forming the base for the identity development. Alignment with the institution values, developing leadership actions in the group shared leadership processes.
4	External Stimuli	Receives purposeful developing influence, inclusive, qualifying, ethical and process oriented. Stimuli received from the relationship between leaders and followers through experience and training. Faces the challenge to grow in situations of greater complexity to promote the positional leadership ability in a group.
5	Identity Consolidation	Self-awareness in the process of group integration (develops awareness of their identity through the relations with the group, promoting co-working. Internalizes the leader identity as part of their self, that is, accepts the fact that they are leaders).
6	Community Approval	Recognized and affirmed in the relations between leaders and followers, receives collective and/or institution approval and is placed as a positional leader.
7	Self-evaluation	Creates a new identity from the reflection upon their role as a leader, self-evaluation and seeks to adapt to the group through interpersonal relationships.

Source: The author (2019)

Taking this process into consideration, some recommendations are presented that might be relevant for the future of the MSSpS education units:

- a) Promoting collective administration, that is, the principals of the four schools, in addition to aligning organizational and political strategies of personnel management could work for some years in each school, creating an 'in rotation' system for the leaders. In such case, the institution would be adopting a strategy based on the conception of collective leadership (DERUE; ASHFORD, 2010; FAGUNDES; SEMINOTTI, 2009). All change causes some unbalance and the need for reorganization, for leaving the comfort zone to grow in other areas. When there is a change in the leadership profile, the school creates space to grow in other areas, broadening the scope of competences in the leadership network;
- b) Considering the leadership competences identified in the intermediate leaders' selection process;
- c) Defining clearly the competences of the intermediate leaders and setting a selective process that considers abilities such as personnel management and academic qualification;
- d) Inserting the founder's history, the charism and spirituality of the institution in the leadership development programs; and
- e) Creating a continuous development program to qualify and integrate workers, offering courses that contribute to the debate around the education network professional qualification, providing them with the development of abilities and competences of the current leadership and developing future leaders that will dedicate to promote, defend and apply the institution values, highlighted as the essential element for the development of leaders for this organization.

Considering the difficulty of gathering the personnel in activities that are not in their working hours, distance courses might become a solution that enable the individuals to take part whenever they are available and wherever they are, allowing the participants' remote access to asynchronous activities, using Information and Communication Technologies to promote the integration of the units.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research sought to understand how the leader's identity development occurs in MSSpS schools in the Southern Brazil Province, and how aware the workers are of their own development as leaders. From the perception of intermediate leaders, specific leadership characteristics were highlighted, mainly related to who they are, what they do and what kind of relationships they have and with whom. Confirming the point of view defended by Cabral (2018, p. 16) that "[...] leadership is processual, it is a product and also producer of the relationships established between the actors that, in the complexity of the organizational context, sometimes are leaders, other times followers".

A detailed examination of the analysis categories suggests that the workers that became leaders developed their identity through observation and interaction with more experienced leaders. The importance of a leadership aligned with the institution values was evident, and those include respect to the other, charism, valorization of the human being, in general, Christian values that are part of the

organizational culture. The interviewees' speech revealed the importance of the way the institution reinforces its values and incentivizes spirituality, perpetuating the founders' legacy.

The relationships between leaders and followers have significant implications in the development of leadership in the MSSpS schools, since interaction promotes participation, dialogue, knowledge of the other, shared responsibilities, creating a proper environment for effective growth. The administration of the schools is centralized in the nuns, however, there are signs that the management has become opening spaces for the participative leadership model, which reveals two different leadership conceptions within the institution: authentic leadership and servant leadership.

However, the work in the institution is not simple or easy to develop, since there are many challenges due to its complexity. Such challenges contribute to the leader's education and growth process, since they provide them with abilities to face several situations in the school routine. Among the challenges found, there are mainly those related to personnel management, that is, how to deal with different opinions, needs and aptitudes.

Also, the importance of developing influences was identified, as well as the experiences lived throughout their lives to build the leader's identity, which was confirmed in this study by both the literature and the empirical findings. The research showed that the institution leaders' identity is developed through knowing, doing and being.

The results of this study might contribute to improvements in relation to the education and development of leaders in the MSSpS schools. We recommend: the creation of workers' qualification and development programs, in which a strategic plan articulates the organizational culture and practice, strengthening the current leadership and developing future leaders with the profile desired by the institution; hiring and/or appointing new leaders; and also promoting greater engagement of leaders with the institution purpose, philosophy, culture and values.

The study reflects the specific reality of the MSSpS Congregation schools in the Southern Brazil Province. Therefore, the patterns identified in this empirical case might not be found in other institutions. However, it gives a broader view of the leader's development process, mainly regarding the dimension revealed by the data as relevant for the analysis.

One of the limitations of this study might be the fact that only intermediate leaders were interviewed, therefore, it does not address the perception of their teams or their managers.

For the construction of a more complex model that might advance in the answer to the research question, we suggest further research extending the analysis to other institutions, comparing findings, and involving greater diversity of participants. We would like to suggest that further studies are needed addressing leadership at higher levels, in this case, the principals of the units and including other education networks, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

REFERENCE

- Ashford, S. J.; DeRue, S. D. (2012). Developing as a leader: The power of mindful engagement. *Organizational Dynamics*, v. 41, p. 146-154. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.01.008
- Asforth, B. E.; Schinoff, B. S. (2016). Identity under construction: How individuals come to define themselves in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, v.3, p. 111-137. doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-041015-062322
- Bardin, L. (2000). *Análise de conteúdo*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Bergamini, C. (2004). Liderança: A administração do sentido. *Revista de Administração e Empresas*, v. 34, n. 3, p. 102-114. doi.org/10.1590/S0034-75901994000300009.
- Briggs, A. R. J. (2004). Middle managers in further education colleges: The new professional. *Journal of Educational Administration*, v. 42, n. 5, p. 586-600, 2004. doi.org/10.1108/09578230410554089
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Busher, H.; Harris, A. (2000). *Subject leadership and school improvement*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Cabral, P. M. F. (2018). *Liderança*. Ebook. São Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos.
- Chiniara, M.; Bentein, K. (2017). The servant leadership advantage: When perceiving low differentiation in leader-member relationship quality team cohesion, team task performance and service OCB. *The Leadership Quarterly*, v. 29, p. 333-345. doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2017.05.002
- Dassoler, O. B. (2017). Santo Arnaldo Janssen: Educador e missionário. Ponta Grossa: Gráfica Vila Velha.
- Day, D. V.; Harrison, M. M. A multilevel, identity-based. *Approach to Leadership Development*, v. 17, p. 360-373, 2007. doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2007.08.007.
- Debebe, G.; Reinert, K. A. (2012). Leading with our whole selves: A multiple identity approach to leadership development. In: Minille, M. L.; Ferguson, A. D. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Race-Ethnicity and Gender in Psychology*, p. 271-293. New York: Springer.
- DeRue, S. D.; Ashford, S. J. Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity construction in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*. v. 4, n. 35, p. 627-647. doi.org/10.5465/amr.35.4.zok627.
- Dietrich, M.; Rupnel, M. (2015). Articular as abordagens quantitativa e qualitativa. In: Paugam, S. A pesquisa sociológica, p. 171-182. Petrópolis, Vozes.
- Dutra, J. S. (2016). *Gestão de pessoas: Modelos, processos, tendências e perspectivas*. Rio de Janeiro: Atlas.
- Fagundes, P. C.; Seminotti, N. (2009). A dimensão coletiva da liderança. *Cadernos IHU Ideias (Unisinos)*, n. 120.
- Fagundes, P. M. (2007). *Desenvolvimento de competências coletivas de liderança e gestão: Uma compreensão sistêmico-complexa sobre o processo e organização grupal*. Dissertação (Doutorado em Psicologia) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande

do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS.

Gardner, W. L. *et al.* (2005). Can you see the real me? A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, v. 16, p. 343-372. doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.003.

Goleman, D. (2012). *Inteligência emocional: A teoria revolucionária que redefine o que é ser inteligente*. São Paulo: Objetiva.

Hertneky, R. (2008). *The Leadership Self-Identity of Women College Presidents*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>

Hoch, J. E. *et al.* (2018). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, v. 44, n. 2, p. 501-52. doi/10.1177/0149206316665461.

Hunter, J. C. (2006). *Como se tornar um líder servidor*. Rio de Janeiro: Sextante.

Hunter, J. C. (2004). *O monge e o executivo: Uma história sobre a essência da liderança*. Rio Janeiro: Sextante.

Komives, S. R. & Owen, J. E. & Longerbeam, S. D. & Mainella, F. C. & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a Leadership Identity: A Grounded Theory. *Journal of College Student Development* 46(6), 593-611. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved August 3, 2019, from Project MUSE database. Doi: 10.1353/csd.2005.0061.

Komives, S. R. & Owen, J. E. & Longerbeam, S. D. & Mainella, F. C. & Osteen, L. (2006). A Leadership identity development model: Applications from a Grounded Theory. *Journal of College Student Development*, v. 47, n. 4, p. 401-418. Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved August 3, 2019, from Project MUSE database. Doi: 10.1353/csd.2006.0048.

Kouzes, J. M.; Posner, B. Z. (2003). *O desafio da liderança*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier.

Kouzes, J. M.; Posner, B. Z. (2017). *O desafio da liderança: Como aperfeiçoar sua capacidade de liderar*. Rio de Janeiro: [s. n.].

Lichius, S. (1925). *Padre Arnaldo Janssen, sua Vida e Obra*. Juiz de Fora: Lar Católico.

Luthans, F.; Avolio, B. J. (2003). Authentic leadership: A positive development approach. In: Cameron, K. S.; Dutton, J. E.; Quinn, R. E. (Eds). *Positive Organizational Scholarship*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. p. 241-258.

Morin, E. (2003). *A necessidade de um pensamento complexo*. Rio de Janeiro: Garamond.

Morrison, A. R. (2017). Beyond the status quo – setting the agenda for effective change: The role of leader within an international school environment. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, v. 46, n. 3, p. 511-529. Doi: org/10.1177/1741143216682500.

Posner, B. Z. (2009). From inside out: Beyond teaching about leadership. *Journal of Leadership Education*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 1-10. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1135143>.

Richardson, R. J. (2011). *Pesquisa Social: Métodos e Técnicas*. São Paulo: Atlas.

Robbins, S. P.; Judge, T. A.; Sobral, F. (2011). *Comportamento organizacional*. 14. ed. São Paulo:

Pearson Education do Brasil.

Schein, E. H. (2009). *Cultura organizacional e liderança*. São Paulo: Atlas.

Walumnwa, F. O. *et al.* (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management*, v. 34, n. 1, p. 89-126.

White, J.; Barber, M. **Perspectives on school effectiveness and school improvement**. London: Institute of Education, 1997. doi.org/10.1177/0149206307308913.