The Impact of Leadership Behaviors and Communication Styles of Military Leaders on the Performance of Followers

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to analyze and relate the leadership behaviors and communication styles required of Infantry junior officers in their daily command tasks, in order to influence their subordinates to achieve extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction.

For this study, was used quantitative method and a survey was implemented comprising three questionnaires: one on leadership competences, one on communication styles, and one with three criterion factors (extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction). The survey was administered to a sample of 804 soldiers (30 Junior Officers, 81 Sergeants and 693 privates).

The analysis of the data revealed that subordinates perceive that their commanders (junior officers) practice task oriented leadership behaviors, particularly on "mission orientation" and "decision making". The behaviors exhibited by the officers strongly and positively relate with the assertive communication. Moreover, all leadership behaviors practiced by the officers are strongly associated to the criteria factors, with the exception of the leadership dimension "vision", which presents weaker correlations. The leader dimensions that junior officers can conduct, to promote satisfaction, are interpersonal "conflict management" and "participative leadership".

Keywords: Leadership behaviors, Communication style, Criteria factors, Military context, Infantry.

1. Leadership behaviors

Hersey and Blanchard (1986) define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group to achieve a goal in a given situation" (p. 86). On other hand, Çetin, Karabay and Efe (2012) consider that the "leadership is the concept more significant to influence the attitudes, behaviors, feelings and thoughts of the subordinates" (p. 227). Bergamini (1994) identifies two common aspects to define leadership, "in first, place they retain the common denominator that the leadership is linked to a group phenomenon, that involves two or more persons; in second place it's clear that this is a process of influence exercised intentionally by leaders over their (p. 93).

The first studies on leadership, would be defined by personality traits of leaders, means that leadership is the result of a combination of these, especially emphasizing the personal qualities, where the leader should possess certain special personality characteristics that would facilitate the performance of the leadership. Nevertheless, Stogdill (1948), to substantiate that "a person does not become a leader by virtue of possessing a certain combination of traits" (p. 232), as later confirm, has unequivocally demonstrated that other factors are involved in the leadership process (Cetin et al., 2012). Hamdi and Rajablu (2012) confirmed in a study research the effect of leadership style and communication in the institutional commitment. In this sense, the influence exerted by leaders is based on the perceptions and representations that individuals have on the personality of leaders and are in the origin of behavior.

However, in an organizational context, these settings can´t explain the true meaning of leadership, because the organizations are geared toward the fulfillment of goals, targets and assessments, and leaders are placed in key positions for the purpose of compliance (Madlock, 2008). In the Military Institution, the following goals and objectives involve the sacrifice of life, and the responsibility assigned to the leader cannot be reduced to

simple transmission of the purposes and compliance (Rouco, 2012). The military context adopts the definition of leadership as a "process of influence, beyond what would be possible, through the exclusive use of the authority vested, the human behavior towards fulfilment of the purposes, goals and objectives, designed and prescribed by the designated organizational leader " Vieira (2002) (p 11).

In this process of influence, communication is the primary responsibility to establish interpersonal relationships between the leader and the follower. Baum, Locke and Kirkpatrick (1988) argued that communication plays a major role in the transmission of the leader's vision. On the other hand, Towler and Dipboye (2001) complement this statement saying that enthusiasm and expressiveness are crucial in the involvement of his followers and the creation of a collective-action. Rouco (2006) has found, in a study conducted among high performance teams, that the enthusiasm shown by the leader, is the behaviour that influence the higher levels of the followers. Also, in the field of nonverbal communication, the example is the behavior that the leader can use to influence their followers effectively (Bass & Riggio (2006). Military leaders know that to lead their subordinates to extraordinary efforts must lead by example (nonverbal communication) in everything you require, as well as create an inspiring motivation through the power of words (verbal communication) and managing the emotions of others.

Research Question 1: Which prevalent leadership behaviors practiced by junior officers during his command action?

Research Question 2: Which leadership behaviors are associated to communication styles?

Communication styles
De Vries, Pieper-Bakker and Oostenveld (2010, p. 368) define a leader's communication style as a "distinctive set of interpersonal communicative behaviors geared toward the optimization of hierarchical relationships in order to reach certain group or individual goals". Barnlund (2008) said that communication is the activity of sharing information by exchanging written messages, images, signs and behaviors. For Çetin et al. (2012) the communication is the main pillar for the leader exercise their influence on followers affecting their satisfaction and performance. On the other hand, when analyzing the various models of leadership it appears that the competence, in interpersonal relationships, is always the communication.

Also for Rouco (2012), communication is a key factor that any leader must have for exponential their performance, just as there is a set of skills that helps to be a good communicator. In which the self-confidence is essential to be present in the leader so as to properly use their qualities, giving the feeling of security and presence (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). In addition, the self-control helps the leader to contain their negative actions to situations that cause stress. Nevertheless, the leader has to lead to a sense of reference values, beliefs and cultures, working as a standard to follow (Vieira, 2002).

In general, the communication models point to the following styles: assertive communication; aggressive communication; passive communication; and handler communication. The assertive communication style translates into an ability that allows an individual highlight their rights and legitimacy, respecting all people around him (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). In aggressive style leader seeks a position of superiority, easily connoted with authoritarianism (Castelfranchi, 2004). The passive communication style is denoted in fearful individuals seeking to merge in a particular environment and blocking permanent feelings when confronting problems (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). The communication style manipulator "is to imply that satisfy the rights and needs of others, but only do it for the satisfaction of our (...) we do it discreetly, implicitly, so as not to cause suspicion" (Gabriel, 1996, p. 4).

Research Question 3: What is the prevalent communication style practiced by junior officers during his command action?

Extraordinary effort, group effectiveness, satisfaction
Under the leadership approach used for this research and to measure the impact of leadership behaviors and styles of communication, the following factors / criteria used were: outstanding performances, group effectiveness, satisfaction (Bass, 1985; Hamdi & Rajablu, 2012; Rouco, 2012; Shadare, 2011). In this regard, the following paragraphs establish a relationship between the leadership, communication and the three criteria factors.

The effectiveness of this research is understood as "the achievement of the recognized goals of cooperative effort. The degree to which indicates the degree of effectiveness" (Barnard, 1985, p. 79). The efficiency is directly related to the effect and consequently is a dependent variable many others (Gibson, Ivancevich, Konopaske & Donnelly, 2006). Hamdi and Jarablu (2012) argue that efficacy in performance is liable to be checked in three levels, which are the collective level corresponding to the sum of the individual results achieved and, finally, the organizational level that is transposed to the sum of last two levels described.

In turn, the satisfaction of subordinates is understood according to the leader of leadership styles to better achieve the targets set. Pavitt (1999) argues that the communication allows the conquest of trust of followers who, in turn, increases the satisfaction of both. Castaneda and Nahavandi (1991) suggest that the subordinates, who perceive the behavior of their superiors that display orientation to interpersonal relationships and guidance for tasks, prove to be the most satisfied.

Finally, the extraordinary effort down with the leader's ability to motivate his followers to carry out, more than what is required of them. Bass (1985) defined the concept in terms of the impact of a leader, on the followers to trust and admire and respect their leader by making them more aware of the importance and value of the results, inducing them to transcend their individual interests the best interests of the team and enable the higher-order needs.

An experimental study conducted by Awamleh and Gardner (1999) showed that an enthusiastic delivery of the message has a much stronger effect than the message content itself. Çetin et al. (2012) found that interactive leadership styles and communication skills have a strong relationship with the satisfaction of subordinates in carrying out their tasks. Consequently, it is thought that the leadership oriented interpersonal relationships, charismatic leadership and transformational leadership are mediators of the relationship between communication styles and the satisfaction of subordinates, the group's effectiveness and the extraordinary effort (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). Sharbrough, Simmons and Cantrill (2006) found positive relationships between the use of motivational speech by the leader and the effectiveness and efforts of their subordinates. Hiamh et al. (2013) argued that the satisfaction of followers appears associated with a more friendly communication, while a more dominant communication is associated with better performance.

Research Question 4: Which leadership behaviors and communication styles are associated with extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction?
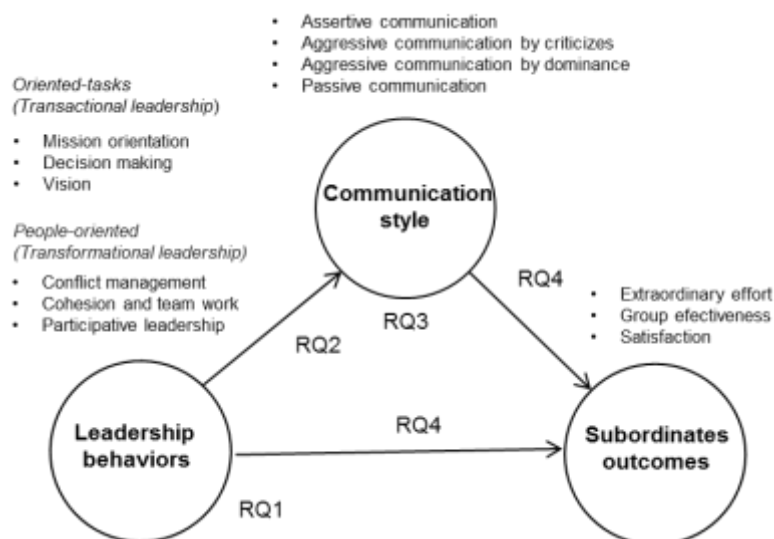

Figure 1: Conceptual model

3. Methods
3.1 Sample
The sample consists of 804 military personnel, who were divided into three categories: 30 junior (Second and First Lieutenant) officers, 81 sergeants and 693 privates. The 30 junior officers evaluated by his subordinates are platoon commanders from eight Infantry Regiments of Portuguese Army. 22 juniors officers (coming from

to the Portuguese Military Academy) belong to the Permanent Regime and eight Junior Officers belong to the Voluntary Regime. The sample has an age between 20 and 40 years old.

3.2 Measures
In this case study, the quantitative methods were employed , based on the inquiry, composed by three parts: social demographic data composed by seven items; Leadership Competences Questionnaire (LCQ) (Rouco, 2012) to measure leadership behaviors of the commander according to the perception of subordinates; Communication Styles Questionnaire (CSQ) (Sousa and Rouco, 2014) adapted from (Neves, Garrido and Simões, 2006) to measure communication style of the commander according subordinates´ perception; Criteria Factors Questionnaire (Rouco, 2012) adapted from (Avolio and Bass, 2004) measures the impact level of leadership behaviors. Ten-point Likert scales with a range of answers from "extremely inappropriate" (1) to "extremely appropriate" (10).

Leadership behaviors
Leadership Competences Questionnaire is a 48-item questionnaire that assesses six dimensions of leadership competences, three of which are associated to the oriented tasks and transactional leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004): mission orientation (thirteen-items), decision making (eight-items), and vision (six-items). And three dimensions are associated to the people-oriented and transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004): cohesion and team work (nine-items), conflict management (six-items), participative leadership (six-items). Thus, higher scores reflect stronger perceptions of commander´s leadership behaviors.

In order to ensure that the factors obtained are reliable, notably those with values close to 1, the "Alpha Cronbach" was used for reliable measuring: mission orientation (0.96), decision making (0.86), vision (0.95), cohesion and team work (0.96), conflict management (0.94); and participative leadership (0.95).

Communication styles
For this investigation are used communication style models from Sousa and Rouco (2012. Communication Styles Questionnaire with 27 items measures the level of impact in the following dimensions: assertive (11 items), aggressive by criticizes (6 items), aggressive by dominance (5 items) and passive (5 items).

The assertive communication style is reflected in an ability that allows an individual highlight your rights and legitimacy, respecting all people around them. Aggressive communication style is subdivided in aggressiveness by criticizes and on aggressiveness by dominance, and both seek to subjugate the other. The passive communication style is present in individuals afraid, looking to go unnoticed, and avoid the problems or conflicts.

For the communication style were obtained the following "*Alfa Cronbach*": assertive (0.91), aggressive by criticizes (0.88), aggressive by dominance (0.90) and passive (0.88).

Criteria factors
The questionnaire of the criteria factors with 12 items measures the level of impact of leadership behaviors and communication styles in the following factors: extraordinary effort (4 items), group effectiveness (4 items) and satisfaction (4 items).
The extraordinary effort is the ability to motivate followers, through an inspiring vision, values and ethical behavior, to accept the challenges and the achievements above performances have provided for. The group effectiveness is the ability to promote subordinates the ability of organization and motivation to perform tasks with standards of excellence. The satisfaction is the ability to satisfy the working group through the leadership methods used. For the criterion factors were obtained the following "Alfa Cronbach": extraordinary effort (0.95), group effectiveness (0.95) and satisfaction (0.94).

3.3 Procedures and technical Statistics
From the database, the dimensions were characterized by descriptive statistics, with regard to medium-sized (X_m), dispersion (S), coefficient of asymmetry (g1 - *Skewness)*, flatness coefficient (g2 – *Kurtosis)*. To verify if there are significant differences between the levels of impact (leadership behaviors and communication style) of each commander´s Platoon, the method used was the multiple comparisons of averages, post-hoc test – Tukey. Also, to check whether there are correlations between the dimensions in a study using the Pearson

correlation coefficient between the leadership behaviors, communication styles and factors criterion (extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction).

3.4 Results and discussion

According to the perception of subordinates, Table 1 shows that some of the Junior Officers have significantly different leadership behaviors from the others ($p < 0.05$). Although the identification of military leaders and their units are coded can be concluded that the Junior Officers (Leader 1 - Unit B, Leader 1 - Unit C, Leader 2 - Unit D, Leader 4 - Unit D, Leader 5 - Unit D) belonging to the operating Units exhibit behaviors oriented-task, such as: mission orientation; decision making; and vision. And even if these junior officers are exhibiting greater capacity for conflict management (Table 1) that some Junior Officers (Leader 1 - Unit B and Leader 1 - Unit C) can display high levels of leadership behaviors oriented-task and both are also people-oriented (Castaneda and Nahavandi, 1991), especially in the ability to involve subordinates in participatory leadership and conflict management, which somehow contradicts the recommendations (Avolio and Bass, 2004), i.e. the results fall more on the theories of situational leadership, where leaders adapt their behavior to the characteristics of followers (in this case the organizational culture). Framing the results in the organizational context, they suggest that the organizational culture of each Unit decisively influence the actions of their leaders with regard to their leadership behaviors. Taking into account the academic origin of different platoon commanders, in Table 1 it is concluded that the education and training is a fundamental pillar in the development of leadership behaviors in young officials, however it should be noted that participatory leadership is more related to personality traits (Bergamini, 1994) of each individual to face formal authority given to it in the organizational context, or as suggested (Cetin et al., 2012) may be influenced by organizational culture or situation.

Table 1: Multiple comparison of averages – Tukey (p < 0.05) for dimensions in leadership behaviors (n=774)

Dependent Variable (Leadership behaviors)	Platoon leaders		Tukey Test p-value (sig.)
Mission orientation	Leader 1 - Unit C	Leader 3 - Unit A	0,03
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 3 - Unit A	0.01
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 3 - Unit A	0.04
Decision making	Leader 1 - Unit C	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.03
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.01
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.00
		Leader 1 - Unit E	0.03
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.02
Vision	Leader 1 - Unit B	Leader 4 - Unit C	0.03
		Leader 4 - Unit D	0.02
		Leader 5 - Unit D	0.01
	Leader 4 - Unit C	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.03
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.02
	Leader 2 - Unit D	Leader 3 - Unit A	0.04
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 3 - Unit A	0.01
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.01
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.00
Conflict management	Leader 3 - Unit F	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.02
	Leader 3 - Unit A	Leader 4 - Unit D	0.04
		Leader 5 - Unit D	0.02
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.02
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.04
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.01
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.02

Dependent Variable (Leadership behaviors)	Platoon leaders		Tukey Test p-value (sig.)
Participative leadership	Leader 1 - Unit B	Leader 1 - Unit C	0.02
		Leader 4 - Unit D	0.01
	Leader 1 - Unit C	Leader 1 - Unit B	0.02
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.01
		Leader 3 - Unit A	0.01

 (*) The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 shows that some Junior Officers have significantly different communication styles from the others ($p < 0.05$). Military leaders belonging to the operational Units exhibit significantly different communication styles from the others, particularly as the assertive communication and Aggressive communication by criticizes, which allows us to state that the organizational culture is an influencer factor, although not an object of study in this investigation. Still, some military leaders Units, with less operational component, exhibit aggressive behaviors of communication by dominance and passive communication. Some military leaders (Leader 4 - Unit E; Leader 3 - Unit A) belonging to non-operating units exhibit a passive communication style.

Table 2: Multiple comparison of averages – Tukey ($p < 0.05$) for dimensions in communication (n=774)

Dependent Variable (Dimensions of communication)	Platoon leaders	
Assertive communication	Leader 3 - Unit F	Leader 4 - Unit F
	Leader 1 - Unit C	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 3 - Unit A
	Leader 2 - Unit C	Leader 4 - Unit F
	Leader 3 - Unit C	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E
	Leader 1 - Unit D	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 3 - Unit A
	Leader 2 - Unit D	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 3 - Unit A
	Leader 3 - Unit D	Leader 4 - Unit F
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 2 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit A; Leader 3 - Unit A
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit A; Leader 3 - Unit A
Aggressive communication by criticizes	Leader 3 - Unit C	Leader 1 - Unit F; Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 1 - Unit G
	Leader 1 - Unit D	Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 2 - Unit A; Leader 4 - Unit A; Leader 2 - Unit H; Leader 1 - Unit G
	Leader 2 - Unit D	Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 1 - Unit G
	Leader 3 - Unit D	Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 1 - Unit G
	Leader 4 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit F; Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 2 - Unit H; Leader 1 - Unit G
	Leader 5 - Unit D	Leader 1 - Unit F; Leader 2 - Unit F; Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit B; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 2 - Unit A; Leader 4 - Unit A; Leader 1 - Unit H; Leader 2 - Unit H; Leader 1 - Unit G
Aggressive communication by dominance	Leader 2 - Unit F	Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 4 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit E; Leader 2 - Unit E; Leader 1 - Unit A; Leader 1 - Unit G
Passive communication	Leader 4 - Unit E	Leader 3 - Unit F; Leader 1 - Unit A
	Leader 3 - Unit A	Leader 3 - Unit F

(*) The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 shows that the dimensions of leadership behaviors studied have a positive correlation with the three factors studied (extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction), as suggested (Bass, 1985). In general it can be concluded that the leadership behaviors that contribute most to the performance and satisfaction is the guidance for the mission, conflict management and participatory leadership. Towards, the correlations between leadership behaviors and communication styles can be seen that all behaviors are positive and strongly correlated with the assertive communication. The aggressive style of communication by dominance has correlations with: decision making and Vision.

The relationship between communication styles and the criteria factors it appears that assertive communication is positive and strong correlations with extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction, as suggested by (Çetin et al (2012;. Pavitt, 1999). Aggressive communication by dominance style is the one with the lowest correlation values or none.

Table 3: Pearson correlations between leadership behaviors, communication style and factors criteria (n=774)

Dimensões of study	Extraordinary effort	Effectiveness	Satisfaction	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
mission orientation	0,72**	0,77**	0,75**	0.72**	0.21**	0.06	0.08*
Decision making	0,71**	0,78**	0,73**	0.71**	0.25**	0.12**	0.09**
Vision	0,69**	0,75**	0,71**	0.70**	0.28**	0.14**	0.16**
Conflict management	0,71**	0,76**	0,75**	0.70**	0.18**	0.04	0.09**
Cohesion and team work	0,70**	0,75**	0,72**	0.68**	0.21**	0.07	0.10**
Participative leadership	0,72**	0,76**	0,74**	0.70**	0.20**	0.05	0.09**
Assertive communication (1)	0,74**	0,76**	0,76**				
Aggressive communication by criticizes (2)	0,27**	0,23**	0,19**				
Aggressive communication by dominance (3)	0,11**	0,07*	0,04				
Passive communication (4)	0,15**	0,08*	0,08*				

[*] Correlações significativas para ρ < 0,05.
[**] Correlações significativa para ρ < 0,01.

3.6 Conclusions

We can conclude from the descriptive analysis, not presented in this paper, that the leadership behaviors most valued by subordinates in the Infantry Junior Officers are oriented-task, as indicated, the guidance for the mission and the decision-making. The military leaders have significantly different leadership behaviors from each other and are influenced by organizational culture and training.

Regarding to communication styles evidenced by Infantry Junior Officers, the perceived style is "assertive". The military leaders have significantly different leadership behaviors from each other and are influenced by organizational culture and training. From the results of this research we conclude that the participative leadership and assertive communication style are more dependent on the personality traits of military leaders or situation, than the origin of their formation.

The leadership behaviors are positive and strongly correlated with the assertive communication and the criteria factors (extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction). From the relation between communication styles and the criteria factors can be seen that assertive communication is positive and strong correlations with extraordinary effort, effectiveness and satisfaction. Aggressive communication by dominance style is the one with the lowest correlation values or none.

4. Implications for theory and practice

From the theoretical point of view and if we can sum up the leadership as the ability to influence others, it is clear that verbal and nonverbal communication is the primary factor in this process. Is the way to operationalize these two skills in the relationship between the military leaders the same academic and followers in such a specific context as the military, where many influential variables are eliminated, it is

pertinent to present the conceptual model proposed in this study to expose the performance and satisfaction in the workplace. This research still looking to find out the relations between leadership behaviors and communication styles and outcome variables (extraordinary effort, group effectiveness and satisfaction).

This study offers potentially input for leadership training programs by showing this importance of leader's mission orientation, decision making, vision, conflict management, cohesion and team, participative leadership, and assertive communication to influence their subordinates to obtain high levels of performance and satisfaction.

5. Future research
For future researches it is suggested to replicate this model to other civil and military organisations in order to verify the existence of significant differences concerning the leadership behaviours and communication styles. Given that the model used in this research has only been used in military context, it would be pertinent to its use in the civil context and also the ability to compare the variables with other models.

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