LEADERSHIP: STYLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS OF MADEIRA ISLAND

Abstract
Leadership is a concept that has been the subject of very different interpretations and many definitions during the last century. The leader, in general, has been seen as someone who possesses innate or acquired characteristics, someone who adjusts to the circumstances and the context in which the organization is inserted, and someone who manages conflicts and exerts influence in ambiguous, complex and uncertain organizational environments. The style of leadership of a school principal influences the school culture, the teacher’s satisfaction and, indirectly, the academic results of the students. Furthermore, the diagnostic and analysis of the leadership styles can be important for the planning of staff development interventions. The teacher, while administrator/leader of a school, can assume different styles/behaviors of leadership in his/her organizational environment: transformational, transactional and "laisser-faire". The main "constructs" of leadership: transformational, transactional, and passive – form a new paradigm, denominated "full range theory" (Brass & Avolio, 2004), important for the understanding of the effects of leadership styles. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) of Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass (2004) was administered to 97 teachers of schools of the Island of Madeira in order to determine, analyze and compare the styles of leadership of the leaders of their schools. Preliminary results of this quantitative research study indicate that the majority of school principals practice transformational behaviors followed by transactional behaviors. Results of this study also indicate that the transformational leadership is more prevalent in the feminine gender of the principals. Further findings will be presented and discussed.

Introduction
Leadership is a concept that has had different interpretations and multiple definitions during the last century. The leader, in general, has been seen as someone who possesses definitive innate or acquired characteristics, someone who adjusts himself to the circumstances and the context where the organization is inserted and someone who manages conflicts and exerts influence in ambiguous, complex and uncertain environments.

The teacher while school manager/leader can assume different styles/behaviors in the leadership of its school organization: transformational, transactional and "laisser-faire". The main "constructs" of - transformational, transactional and passive leadership – form a new paradigm called full range theory (Brass and Avolio, 2004) for the understanding of the effect of the leadership style.

The understanding of the impact that some individuals have on their organizations has generated an increasing interest. Those individuals can be called charismatic leaders (Weber, 1968) or transformational leaders (Bass, 1985; 1990) being leaders who, through their personal vision and their energy, they inspire the followers and they have a significant impact in their organizations. In their research about the concept of leadership, Bernard Bass (1985) and Avolio (1999) compare two types of leadership behaviour: transactional and transformational. The transactional leaders determine what the subordinate needs to carry through its own objectives and the objectives of the organization. In contrast, the transformational leaders "motivate us to do more than we initially hoped for" (Bass 1985, p. 28) raising our feeling of importance and of the value of our tasks, "making us to exceed our personal interests on behalf of the group, of the organization or one ampler policy" (Bass, 1985, p. 29) and raising our level of needs for higher needs, as the self-realization.
This research study intends to determine how teachers perceive the leadership of their school organizations: transformational, transactional or "laisser-faire". The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (2004) was used to gather data through the determination/identification of the leadership styles as perceived by the teachers. The MLQ was applied to a sample of 97 schools in the Autonomous Region of the Madeira during January, February and March of 2008.

**Literature Review**

James MacGregor Burns (1978), was the first one to call attention for the concept of transformational leadership. He stated that the transactional and transformational leadership was based on "relationships" and "power".

In the decade of 1980, Bernard Bass widened the point of view of Burns and developed studies on leadership considering the conceptualization of two new styles of leadership: transactional and transformational. The transactional leadership happens in the clarification of the role and the requirements of the tasks of those who are led, as well as the attribution of rewards and punishments for the effective performance (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006). Thus, this type of leader leads and motivates those who are led through the exchange process or transaction (reward/performance). The transformational leadership not only incorporates an exchange in the intentions and resources of that involved in the relation leader-follower, but a rise of both – a change for better. The transformational leadership, becomes, in last analysis, moral because raises the level of behaviour of the human being and the moral aspiration of both, the leader and the led one, and thus it has an effect of transformation in both.

While Burns considers the practices of transformational and transactional leadership as the extreme opposites of one continuum (essentially more and less efficient forms of leadership), Bass offers a very different conception, a theory of leadership of two factors; forms of transactional and transformational leadership, in his point of view are built in one another (Avolio and Bass, 1998; Waldman, Bass and Yammarino, 1990). In the last decade, Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio (2004), presented leadership as a theory of full range. The authors of this theory had considered that the leadership behaviour varied throughout one continuum from the laisser-faire (the total failure in assuming responsibilities to lead) to the transactional leadership and to transformational leadership.

The transactional and transformational leaderships are, therefore, two models which complement each other: "the transformational leadership is constructed on top of transactional leadership – produces, in the led ones, levels of performance and effort that go beyond the ones achieved in the transactional approach" (Robbins, 2002, p. 319). Bass admits, however, that both styles can be efficient in distinct situations: "the transformational in periods of organizational foundation and change, and the transactional in periods of slow evolution and in steady environments" (Rego and Cunha, 2004, p. 235). The transformational leadership transforms the led ones in such a way that they start pursuing the objectives of the organization leaving their own interests for second plan.

Neither Burns neither Bass had studied leadership in schooling; they had based their studies in political leaders, officers of the Armed Forces or executives of companies. However, evidence has shown that there are similarities between the transformational leadership pertaining to school environment and to the business environment (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990). Kenneth Leithwood and his colleagues have had studied the transformational leadership in the schools. His model conceptualizes such leadership in seven dimensions: a) construction of a vision for the school; b) establishing objectives for the school; c) giving intellectual stimulation; d) offering individual support; e) shaping good practices and important organizational values; f) demonstrating high expectations of performance; g) creating a productive school culture, and, h) developing structures that facilitate participation in the decisions of the school (Leithwood, 1994).
In Portugal, a group of researchers at the Department of Sciences of Education (University of Aveiro) has studied the leadership phenomena in the school organizations. In a recent study (Castanheira and Costa, 2005) they had concluded that "the behaviours of leadership more frequently observed in the ninety five principals studied are a mixture of behaviours of transformational and transactional leadership" (p.150).

Transformational leadership changes the culture of the school and supports a high performance. Leithwood et al. (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, Jantzi and Fernandez, 1994) had developed one of the most complete models of transformational leadership in the educational area. According to the model, the transformational leadership is conditioned by the national and local culture, and, by the educational policies. In turn, affects the objectives and the culture of the school, which have direct ties with the commitments of the teachers with change and development. Results of studies done in the secondary Canadian schools show that the most important behaviours of transformational leadership create a vision, establish high expectations of performance, create consensus around the objectives of the group, and develop a climate intellectually stimulant.

The transactional leadership is based on the use of extrinsic motivation. In contrast, the transformational leaders "inspire confidence, develop the leadership capacity in others, show the auto-sacrifice and serve as moral agents, concentrating themselves and making the followers if they concentrate in objectives that exceed the needs most immediate of the work group" (Dumdu, Lowe & Avolio, 2002, p. 38). The transformational leaders can produce organisational change and significant results because this form of leadership stimulates higher levels of intrinsic motivation, confidence, commitment and allegiance of followers than the transactional leadership. The transactional leadership is a prerequisite essential to the efficient leadership and the best leaders learn to demonstrate the transactional leadership as well as the transformational leadership in different degrees. Thus, research has revealed that the transformational leadership leads to a superior performance when "increases" or adds to the transformational leadership (Antonakis and House, 2002).

On this kind of leadership, there is a clear intention of promoting the interests of the organisation surpassing one’s immediate personal interests. Furthermore, coexist a vision and objectives perfectly preset and to materialize them, the leader works with their subordinates (according to Bass, 1988), in the following plans of action: a) The motivation of the followers, so that they perform more than they have foreseen in the beginning; b) To awake their consciences either at the value of their results or at the best way to reach them. c) Involvement of all in benefit of the mission and/or vision of the organization. d) To extend the necessities of the individuals, raising their levels of trust.

Research studies have found that the transformational leaders tend to have personalities that are more extrovert, friendlier and more proactive than those who are not, and, the female leaders use more the transformational leadership than the male leaders (Judge and Bono;Eagly et al., 2000). According to Tichy and Devanna (1986) there is a number of characteristics possessed by transformational leaders: They are identified as change agents; they are courageous; they believe in the people; they are stimulated by personal values; they are perpetual learners; they have the ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty and are visionary.

Empirical studies show that the transformational leaders use techniques that awake and develop high levels of identification and internalization as well as better levels of performance (Tepper, 1993). Burns and Bass suggest that the transformational leaders are capable to stimulate, to change and to use the values, the beliefs and the needs of their followers in order to carry out the tasks. The leaders described by the followers as being transformational are more charismatic and intellectually more stimulants than those ones described as transactional leaders.
According to Bass (1990) and Bennis & Nanus (1985) there are four aptitudes used and perfected by the transformational leaders. In first place, the leader has a vision and is able to describe it. The vision can be an objective, a plan or a series of priorities. In second place, the leader is capable to communicate the accomplishment of the vision. In third place, the leader is capable to construct a trusting environment, fair and coherent, and his persistence exceeds barriers and problems. Finally, the transformational leader has positive self-esteem and strengthens his capacities in order to reach success.

Methodology

The MLQ (Brass & Avolio, 2004) was administered to 97 teachers of different schools in the Autonomous Region of Madeira in order to measure the behaviours of transformational, transactional and “laisser-faire” leadership, as well as, the results of these behaviours in those schools.

The gender of leadership of the 97 schools was the following: 24.8% – male and 75.2% - female. The type of school: Preschool: 9.3%; Basic: 46.4%; Basic and Secondary: 35%; Secondary: 9.3%. Those schools were located in the following districts: Funchal: 43.2%; Câmara de Lobos: 20.6%; Machico: 9.3%; Santa Cruz: 6.2%; Ribeira Brava: 5.2%; Santana: 5.2%; Calheta: 5.2%; Ponta do Sol: 4.1%; São Vicente: 1%.

The MLQ is based on the evaluation of the perceptions of the followers, using a set of forty five statements to which the followers/respondents attribute scores on a scale type likert: 0 = Never; 1 = Rarely; 3 = Many times; and 4 = Frequently. A lower classification in a specific item reflects a lesser exhibition of this behaviour on the part of the evaluated leader and not a greater or minor valuation of this behaviour on the part of the respondent/follower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Factors of Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence – Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence - Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspired motivation (Inspiration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized consideration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dimensions or categories of the transformational leadership:

Influence in the ideals ("charisma") – This first category represents the highest level of the transformational leadership, therefore the responsible one is perceived by others as a model to follow, existing a great admiration, respect and confidence relatively to his personality. A great identification can be observed among the members of the group and the leader, being described as a person with extraordinary capacities, very persistent and determined in his work. The ideals assumed are understood as an intention in making what it is better and more correct for all, lining the behaviour by ethical and moral standards.

Inspirational motivation – This second category represents the capacity of the leader in transmitting one meaning and a challenge to the tasks to be carried through, in order to motivate and to inspire the elements of the group. The team spirit, the enthusiasm and the optimism are characteristics of this dimension. Thus, who commands tends to be perceived as a stubborn person, with immense energy and capacity of initiative, evidencing a great confidence about the possibility of the group to have a better future.

Intellectual stimulation – In this third category, the leader search to stimulate others to be innovative and creative in their work, questioning the principles followed, reformulating the existing problems and giving new suggestions on the accomplishment of the tasks. Does not exist an environment of criticism and closeness to the new ideas, therefore the originality is an important value promoted by the leader, who reacts with naturalness to the sprouting of proposals different from the ones of his own.

Individual consideration – This category is related with the individual relationships inside the group, looking to verify the existence of a concern with the needs of performance, personal and professional, of the associates. The leader will be transformational if he is able to promote an environment where exist opportunities for the development of the others as well as will be capable to recognize and to accept the individual differences to the level of the desires and necessities of the people who are part of its team work. This acceptance of the individuality also implies the adoption of specific behaviours to the characteristics of each one, giving, for example, greater autonomy to those who evidence more knowledge and experience on the execution of the tasks or supplying more encouragement and directions to those who initiate one specific function. Therefore, the communication opened to all the elements of the group as well as the will in delegating tasks are aspects valued for whoever assumes the power.

The dimensions or categories of the transactional leadership

Contingent reinforcement – This category sees the action of leadership as being based in an exchange between something that the leader can offer about one specific behaviour assumed by others, not implying any transformation of ideals or values. The relation between both elapses from the definition of the tasks and of the objectives to be reached, existing the possibility to be attributed reinforcements and rewards if the performance levels have been realized. The leader must, on one hand, perceive which are the needs of the collaborators, so he will be able to adjust the positive consequences to what is valued, and, on the other hand, must try to create the best conditions for the reach of the standards that have been set.

Intervention in crisis ("management-by-exception") - This dimension means that the leader only acts when the things run badly or if they follow a different direction. The correction measures occur through a search attitude and anticipation of shunting lines, deceits or errors of the subordinate in the execution of the tasks (intervention in crisis - active) or, then, can be about a reserved position of the responsible one, that it only takes action when the problems effectively occur (intervention in crisis - passive).
The effects of these two practices are reflected in the low willingness of the employees in taking risks and innovate because they fear the reactions of who is in command. In terms of efficacy, this factor tends to present worse results than the contingent reinforcement and, clearly, than all the dimensions of the transformational leadership.

**The absence of the exercise of leadership**

"Laissez-faire" - This last dimension simply identifies the absence of the exercise of leadership, translated, in general, by inefficacy in the gotten results. This means that, in contrast of the transformational and transactional leadership, it is not possible here to find an environment of work with defined objectives, because the responsible one does not assume any plan of action and postpones taking important decisions, ignoring his responsibilities and authority. Thus, the style "laissez-faire" is simply the negation of the leadership.

The "excellent" profile of leadership is the one that is characterized by low frequencies of "laissez-faire", following a bigger use of transactional styles (increasing the intervention in crisis for the contingent reinforcement) and, finally, a demonstration of the transformational areas, which constitute the major actions.

The "deficient" profile is marked by an attitude in the inverse direction, or either, the leader is someone who practically does not assume his responsibilities and it does not seem to have any defined strategy, demonstrating few or any behaviours in the transformational dimensions (Avolio, 1999). Therefore, the most efficient leader is the one where predominates the transformational leadership, followed by behaviours of contingent reinforcement, of the intervention in crisis (active and, later, passive) and, in last place, the "laissez-faire" (Avolio & Bass, 1995).

This questionnaire was administered (after authorization granted by the authors) to a sample of ninety seven teachers of several levels of education and where teaching in diverse schools of the Autonomous Region of Madeira.

**Results**

The MLQ is a questionnaire which has one essential objective that is to measure the frequency with which the led ones observe behaviours of leadership in their leaders: behaviours of transformation, behaviours of transaction and behaviours "laisser-faire".

The forty five affirmations that compose the MLQ are grouped in twelve distinct areas: Five correspond to the transformational leadership: IC (Individual Consideration); IM (Inspirational Motivation); IS (Intellectual Stimulation); IIA (Idealized Influence Attitudes); e IIB (Idealized Influence Behaviours). Two correspond to the transactional leadership: CR (Contingent Reward = rewards for the reached objectives) and MBEA (Management by Exception Active). Two correspond to the leadership of the type "Laisser-Faire": MBEP (Management by Exception Passive) and "Laisser-Faire". Finally, a set of questions that are grouped in three areas – EFF (Effectiveness); Satis (Satisfaction) and Extraeff (Extra Effort) which are reported to the results of the leadership.

The results of the questionnaires were introduced in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 15.0) for statistical analysis.
It is presented the total average of the results on the table and graph that follow:

**Table 2: Average of answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Leadership</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformational</strong></td>
<td>IC (Individual Consideration)</td>
<td>2,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IM (Inspirational Motivation)</td>
<td>2,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS (Intelectual Stimulation)</td>
<td>2,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IIA (Idealized Influence Attitudes)</td>
<td>2,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IIB (Idealized Influence Behaviour)</td>
<td>2,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transactional</strong></td>
<td>CR (Contingent Reward)</td>
<td>2,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MBEA (Management by Exception Active)</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;Laisser-Faire&quot;</strong></td>
<td>MBEP (Management by Exception Passive)</td>
<td>1,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Lassair-Faire&quot;</td>
<td>0,920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1: Average of variables**

As we can see on table 1 and graph 1, the item that presents the highest average is the IM (Inspirational Motivation - 2,884), that refers to the behaviours as to state, to the led ones, the confidence (that the objectives to reach will be reached), to supply meaning to the work of the led ones and to place challenges, inspiring optimism and confidence in the future. On the other hand, the item with the lowest average frequency is the LF ("Laisser-Faire" – 0,92) which it is referred to the absence of the exercise of the leadership, translated in the inefficiency of the obtained results. We can observe that these extreme values are located in different ample categories: transformational and "Laisser-Faire". We can still observe that the item with the highest average of answers (that is, greater frequency of observed behaviour) is the transformational leadership has the highest frequency. In this way, the transformational leadership is demarcated of the transactional leadership and "Laisser-Faire", this one, clearly more distant. (Table 1).
Through these results, we can infer that the behaviours of transformational leadership are more frequently observed on the ninety seven principals who had been evaluated by the respondents. Thus, the behaviours related to the transformation paradigm were more observed. The transformational leaders are proactive: they look for optimizing the development of the individual and the organization. They convince the led ones to reach high levels of potential as well as high levels of moral and ethical standards. (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 96).

The type of leadership that was observed with the least frequency was the type "Laisser-Faire". Thus, behaviours such as avoiding to become involved in important matters and avoiding to take decisions, to delay the reply the urgent questions, to wait that the things run badly before acting, let the problems continue before taking any action, are behaviours less observed on the principals evaluated.

About the results of the leadership (graph 3).

Figure 3: Results of the Leadership
On this graph, we can observe that the led ones who answered to the questionnaire point out as the main result of the leadership in the schools where they teach, *the satisfaction* with the leadership, that is, behaviours such as using leadership methods that are satisfactory and to work with the others in a satisfactory way are more frequently observed (Avolio and Bass, 2004, p. 98). Thus, the item of this group of questions with inferior average is the one related with the *extra effort*, what can indicate that behaviours such as to stimulate the led one to make more than what is expected, to raise the desire to succeed and to increase the willingness to try harder are behaviours less frequently observed (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 98).

**Analysis of the Results and Conclusions**

This research study had as a primary objective to identify and to analyze the styles of leadership of the school leaders of the Autonomous Region of Madeira. Results indicated that the most observed behaviours in the principals of the schools that composed the sample are transformational ones. This fact indicates that the principals practice these behaviours. Motivate followers; speaking to them with enthusiasm concerning the future and the objectives to be reached; to express confidence in reaching the objectives; to look for alternative solutions to given problems; to consider different perspectives when approaching the problems; to deal with the followers as individuals and not only one more member of the group; to help the followers to develop their strong points. Behaviours associated with transactional leadership have also been observed: to clarify and to define expectations and to promote performances that allow one to reach the objectives; to give assistance to the subordinates, in exchange for the efforts in order to reach the desired levels; to explain clearly how each one will be rewarded if the objectives of performance will be reached; to specify the required standards of performance as well as what constitutes inefficacious performance; to correct mistakes as soon as they are detected.

On the leadership results, the respondents had observed as more frequent the behaviours that reveal the *satisfaction* following the behaviours of the *effectiveness* of the leader.

According to Leithwood (1992), the effects of the transformational leadership are clearly evident. Results of his study indicated that a) the practices of the transformational leadership have a great influence in the cooperation of the teachers; and, b) exists a significant relationship between the aspects of the transformational leadership and the change in the attitudes of the teachers related to the improvement of the school and to their educational practices.

The components of the transformational leadership model have been the topics more researched in the last decade. The results of the studies stand out the following implications of leadership: The best leaders are not only transformational, but also transactional. The transformational leadership not only influences the results at the individual level but has effects on the level of job satisfaction, the organizational commitment and performance. It also influences the dynamics of the group and on results at the group level. The employees in any organization can be trained to be transactional and transformational.
References


Leithwood, K. (February, 1992).“The move toward transformational leadership”. Educational Leadership 49, 5, 8-12.


