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**LEADERSHIP PATTERNS IN ECUADORIAN MANAGERS:
THE IMPACT OF GENDER AND EDUCATION**

**PATRONES DE LIDERAZGO EN GERENTES ECUATORIANOS:
EL IMPACTO DE GÉNERO Y EDUCACIÓN**

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Abstract

The study of leadership styles is advanced in developed countries; however, in developing countries such as Ecuador studies on this topic are scarce. This study aims to describe the leadership styles of managers of SMEs in Ecuador and the relation between the different styles. The demographic characteristics of the leaders are taken into consideration in order to establish if they have an impact on the pattern used.

Keywords

Business Management – Corporate Culture – Leadership

Resumen

Se ha avanzado mucho en el estudio de los estilos de liderazgo en los países desarrollados; sin embargo, en países en vías de desarrollo como el caso de Ecuador, investigaciones sobre este tema son escasas. El presente estudio tiene como objetivo describir los estilos de liderazgo de los administradores de pequeñas y medianas empresas de una región de Ecuador y la relación entre los diferentes estilos. Las características demográficas de los líderes se han tomado en cuenta para determinar si tienen un impacto en el patrón utilizado.

Palabras Claves

Administración de Empresas – Cultura Corporativa – Liderazgo

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Introduction

Business leaders start and implement changes in organizations, practice the role of an influencer, resulting of the compromise from the enthusiastic followers.¹ They achieve to line up the business' vision, according to the individual interests of every member of the organization, inspiring the ones who follow through example and motivation², and promote changes, with the aim of these being innovative. The style of leadership used by the companies' executives, allows understanding how these leaders share the vision, inspire commitment, and achieve trust and motivation from the followers and how they get the cooperation of their subordinates³.

There are three leadership styles that we explore in this article. First, the transformational leadership; which focus on rising up the motivation and performance of the followers to high standards of goal aiming. These leaders tend to build a personal and social identification among the subordinates and the mission and goals of the organization⁴. Second, the transactional leadership: This style assumes that the subordinates accept to accomplish their leader's dispositions in exchange of praise, rewards, and resources or to avoid being sanctioned. This style implies a close supervision to prevent the failure of achieve the goals, control of errors, and taking immediate corrective actions; the third style is the passive style or so called laissez-faire, where the leader waits until things happen to take action or even do nothing; these leaders avoid specifying agreements, but clarifying the expectations and providing goals and aims to be achieved by their teams⁵.

Leadership itself is a cultural phenomenon, how people lead is a product of their own philosophy and the result of their activities and customs⁶. In cultures like Ecuador, there are only scarce studies about leadership. Given the importance of this phenomenon in a country where SME are growing, the present study explores the leadership styles in Ecuador. Particularly in this study different demographic factors that can cause impact in the leadership style of the managers is analyzed. The objectives established are the following:

- 1.- Make a theoretical description of the leadership styles in the cultural environment of Ecuador.
- 2.- Analyze from an empirical approach the use of transformational, transactional and passive leadership styles in the same leader.
- 3.- Analyze demographic factors that can influence the frequency of each leadership style.

¹ Gary Yukl, "Managerial Leadership: A Review Oh Theory and Research," *Journal of Management* Vol: 15 num 2 (1989): 251-289.

² Iliana Gabriunas, "Competencias Para El Liderazgo Gerencial", *Liderazgo. Evolución y Conceptualización* (2004): 78-97.

³ Daniel Hermosilla; Alberto Amutio and Dario Páez, "Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology", *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* Vol: 32 num 3 (2016):135-43.

⁴ Bernard M. Bass; Bruce J. Avolio; Dong I. Jung and Yair Berson, "Predicting Unit Performance by Assessing Transformational and Transactional Leadership", *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol: 88 num 2 (2003): 207-18.

⁵ Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio, *Transformational Leadership Development: Manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (Edited by Consulting Psychologists Press, 1990).

⁶ Caroline Bown and Jeffrey McClellan, "Culturally Situated Leadership in the Ecuadorian Andes", *Journal of Leadership Studies* Vol: 11 num 3 (2017): 6-20.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership styles

Recent studies have shown that leaders who work committed with their team create a significant impact to their followers. This commitment is related to the performance and to reduce the intentions of turnover, creating an environment that eases the work, as well as managing relations with the employees.⁷ Managing flexible, dynamic and changing organizations allow managers to apply an ideal model of leadership in functions that are interpersonal, informative and decision making, that take in great energy and disposition inside companies⁸. The leader should focus in the interests of the members of the group including within itself human relations. As a result, it is possible to manage conflicts or create a team spirit. In many organizations, leaders tend to apply a basic model of leadership in pursuit of treating their followers collectively.⁹ However, it is not possible to define what type of leader one must be in an organization. There are multiples responsibilities and often specific characteristics in every organizational environment. It also depends on the perspective of the leader. Below we describe the three styles of leadership analyzed in this work.

The transformational leadership has been highlighted as very beneficial in recent leadership studies, nevertheless its effectiveness still remains under discussion according to the context¹⁰. This leadership style improves the performance of the followers; it takes them to think in ways they aren't used to, keeping always the moral standards that guide their actions, increasing their creativity and innovation.¹¹

Optimize individual consideration, since it boots the feeling of self-sacrifice of the leader under the perception of the followers¹². This style considers the importance of the role of emotions, values, positivity and creativity inside the company as it leads to

⁷ Daniela Gutermann; Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock; Diana Boer; Marise Born and Sven C. Voelpel, "How Leaders Affect Followers' Work Engagement and Performance: Integrating Leader-Member Exchange and Crossover Theory", *British Journal of Management* Vol: 28 num 2 (2017): 299-314.

⁸ Sandra Estrada, "Modelo de Liderazgo En Organizaciones Cambiantes", *Scientia Et Technica* XII: num 32 (2006): 295-300.

⁹ Peter-J Jost, "An Economic Theory of Leadership Styles", *Review of Managerial Science* Vol: 7 num 4 (2013): 365-91; Timothy A. Judge and Joyce E. Bono, "Five-Factor Model of Personality and Transformational Leadership", *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol: 85 num 5 (2000): 751-65; Kevin B. Lowe and K Galen, "Effectiveness Correlates of and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of the MLQ Literature", *Leadership Quarterly* Vol: 7 num 3 (1996): 385-425; Philip M. Podsakoff; Scott B Mackenzie and William Bommer, "Transformational Leader Behaviors and Substitutes for Leadership as Determinants of Employee Satisfaction, Commitment, Trust and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors", *Journal of Management* Vol: 22 num 2 (1996): 259-98.

¹⁰ Ghulam Mustafa and Rune Lines, "Influence of Leadership on Job Satisfaction", *Journal of Leadership Studies* Vol: 7 num 4 (2014): 23-39.

¹¹ Bernard M. Bass and Paul Steidlmeier, "Ethics, Character and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behavior", *Leadership Quarterly* Vol: 10 num 2 (1999): 181-217; Dong I. Jung; Chee Chow and Anne Wu, "The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Organizational Innovation: Hypotheses and Some Preliminary Findings", *The Leadership Quarterly* num 14 (2003): 525-44; Ronit Kark; Gilad Chen and Boas Shamir, "The Two Faces of Transformational Leadership : Empowerment and Dependency", *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol: 88 num 2 (2003): 246-55.

¹² Kara A. Arnold; Catherine Loughlin and Megan M. Walsh, "Transformational Leadership in an Extreme Context", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* Vol: 37 num 6 (2016): 774-88.

motivation of the employee with the mission and goals as well as to increase the identification with the organization.¹³ The transformational leadership at the same time is considered being essential to create effectiveness in work teams besides it helps to reduce conflicts between them.¹⁴ A transformational leader can lead teams in intercultural contexts. Studies shows that this style of leader is adapt cultural intelligence to his or her abilities and produce an impact on their teams.¹⁵

Leadership style are even more important in times of crisis; a transformational leader will adapt to circumstances and consult with his or her subordinates their opinions to take consent decisions, will think strategically, will be able to create a big picture of the problem and establish logics of cause and effect. However, this type of leader is not the most appropriate in cases of immediate decisions because it needs time to establish agreements.¹⁶

To sum up, the transformational leadership style inspires motivation to subordinates, since they work hand to hand to reach a better performance applying work team as the key of success. This type of leadership involves the individuals with their own needs and abilities without comparing themselves with the other members in order to improve their own attitudes and flairs. Transformational leaders generate great importance to team members because they create a collective vision emphasizing individual diversity.¹⁷

As for transactional leadership, the predominant perception is the management by exception active and the contain gent reward¹⁸. This leadership style defines that rewards are earn through merits, this allows individuals to stand up for their own abilities, which force to a segregation of the subordinates according to their achievements. Therefore, this style is based in individual objectives in contrast with the collectives. This reduces cooperation between work teams. Transactional leaders practice the scarcity principle in the organization with the purpose that during an evaluative process, subordinates can show their abilities competing with each other. Taking a financial approach, the leader must create incentives in order for the followers to act, according to the institutional interests, such as benefits, promotions and compensations to improve their development. These characteristics belong to a transactional leadership¹⁹. The essence of the

¹³ Phong Ba Le and Hui Lei, "How Transformational Leadership Supports Knowledge Sharing", *Chinese Management Studies* Vol: 11 num 3 (2017): 479-97.

¹⁴ Yahua Cai; Liangding Jia and Juexing Li, "Dual-Level Transformational Leadership and Team Information Elaboration: The Mediating Role of Relationship Conflict and Moderating Role of Middle Way Thinking", *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* Vol: 34 num 2 (2017): 399-421.

¹⁵ Jase R. Ramsey; Raina M. Rutti; Melanie P. Lorenz; Livia L. Barakat and Anderson S. Sant'anna, "Developing Global Transformational Leaders", *Journal of World Business* Vol: 52 num 4 (2017): 461-73.

¹⁶ Melissa R. Bowers; J. Reggie Hall and Mandyam M. Srinivasan, "Organizational Culture and Leadership Style: The Missing Combination for Selecting the Right Leader for Effective Crisis Management", *Business Horizons* Vol: 60 num 4 (2017): 551-63 y David V. Day, "Leadership Development: A Review in Context", *Leadership Quarterly* Vol: 11 num 4 (2001): 581-613.

¹⁷ Melvyn R. W. Hamstra; Nico W. Van Yperen; Barbara Wisse and Kai Sassenberg, "Transformational and Transactional Leadership and Followers' Achievement Goals", *Journal of Business and Psychology* Vol: 29 num 3 (2014): 413-25.

¹⁸ Bernard M. Bass; Bruce J. Avolio; Dong I. Jung and Yair Berson, "Predicting Unit Performance by Assessing Transformational and Transactional Leadership." *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol: 88: num 2 (2003): 207-18.

¹⁹ Christian Zehnder; Holger Herz and Jean Philippe Bonardi, "A Productive Clash of Cultures:

transactional leadership is to create relations between the leader and the subordinates with clear rules, specifying responsibilities, clarifying recognitions and rewards as well as penalties to achieve the expected performance, specifying expectations and negotiating contracts²⁰.

The transactional leader will focus on details and will follow the rules and protocols until reaching the aim. However, we will need to be cautious in emergent crisis because a transactional leader won't look for alternatives furthermore than the current regulations he has²¹.

Last, we describe the laissez-faire leadership style that is characterized as absent leadership²², given the avoidance of decisions, doubts in acting, lacking responsibilities, and without control and follows-up, making decisions late and resistant to express their views²³. Leaders using this style are described as introverted, passive and distant from their subordinates.²⁴ This leadership style tends to omit rewards and punishments, and depending on the point of view of the subordinates this leadership style can be seen as negligent or as a strategy of the leader for his employees to develop their creativity and common sense²⁵. Finally, research suggests that this style is counterproductive in the workplace since it affects job satisfaction²⁶.

Every leader must base their goals according to their subordinates with the aim of creating a precise vision of the organization and at the same time that directions of the organization are established²⁷. Currently, there's an existing debate to know which leadership style is better to be used in organizations: transformational and transactional leadership. However, recent research concludes that it is convenient that most of the leadership styles are used in order to meet the best results and better commitment for everyone involved. This way an empowerment and an effective desire of learning rise up²⁸.

Injecting Economics into Leadership Research", *Leadership Quarterly* Vol: 28 num 1 (2017): 65-85.

²⁰ John Antonakis; Bruce J. Avolio and Nagaraj Sivasubramaniam, "Context and Leadership: An Examination of the Nine-Factor Full-Range Leadership Theory Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire", *Leadership Quarterly* num 14 (2003).

²¹ Melissa R. Bowers; J. Reggie Hall and Mandyam M. Srinivasan, "Organizational Culture and Leadership Style: The Missing Combination for Selecting the Right Leader for Effective Crisis Management", *Business Horizons* Vol: 60 num 4 (2017): 551-63.

²² Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio, *Transformational Leadership Development...*

²³ Timothy R. Hinkin and Chester A. Schriesheim, "An Examination of 'Nonleadership': From Laissez-Faire Leadership to Leader Reward Omission and Punishment Omission", *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol: 93 num 6 (2008): 1234-48.

²⁴ Marco R. Furtner; Urs Baldegger and John F. Rauthmann, "Leading Yourself and Leading Others: Linking Self-Leadership to Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* Vol: 22 num 4 (2013): 436-49.

²⁵ Inju Yang, "Perceived Conflict Avoidance by Managers and Its Consequences on Subordinates' Attitudes", *Business Ethics* Vol: 24 num 3 (2015): 282-96.

²⁶ Anders Skogstad; Merethe Schanke Aasland; Morten Birkeland Nielsen; Jørn Hetland; Stig Berge Matthiesen and Ståle Einarsen, "The Relative Effects of Constructive, Laissez-Faire, and Tyrannical Leadership on Subordinate Job Satisfaction: Results from Two Prospective and Representative Studies", *Zeitschrift Fur Psychologie / Journal of Psychology* Vol: 222 num 4 (2014): 221-32.

²⁷ Monica Shu-Fen Wu, "Effects of Female Managers' Leadership on Teamwork and Organizational Performance in Catering Industry", *Acta Oeconomica* Vol: 65 num 2 (2015): 325-37.

²⁸ Neetha Veerappa Karadalkal, Nagalingappa Goud, and Princy Thomas.. "Impact of Leadership Role Perspective on Conflict Resolution Styles - a Study on Small and Medium Sized Entrepreneurs of Karnataka State in India", *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research* Vol: 5 num 1 (2015): 41-

Transformational and transactional styles are related and in some occasions are difficult to separate them because they are not mutually exclusive²⁹. Therefore, we consider that leaders in Ecuador will use transformational and transactional styles simultaneously.

Hypothesis 1. Leaders use different leadership styles simultaneously

Culture and leadership

According to House³⁰, culture are values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or shared manifests from significant events, as a result of common experiences of community members transmitted generation to generation. Societies develop patterns of behavior based in supposed values and symbols shared among them to tackle challenges and achieve common goals. Culture at the same time, creates an impact on the leader's behavior³¹. And it is because culture has dynamic characteristics that can lead workers to do their job with enthusiasm, with the influence of their leader, whom increase motivation and knowledge of the teams while improving the work environment³². In hierarchical cultures, social status means social power. The group who are socially superior have power and privileges. The socially inferior are forced to supply the social superiors and command their petitions. However, the ones who are at the top of the hierarchy have to look after the needs of the ones below them. There's no such obligation in equal societies, where social boundaries are easy to cross and the high social status could be of short duration.

According to Brett³³ culture is the unique character of a social group, including values and standards shared by the members of that group. Culture includes shared patterns of behavior, standards, values, attitudes, beliefs and it is an important factor to consider because it allows the leader to a proper managing of conflicts in the organization³⁴.

It is important in the global context that the leader can understand and operate effectively in different cultures, and the style shall adapt to the group working with. A society mainly hierarchical will require a leader with authoritarian characteristics meanwhile a society with clear standards and self-control processes will require a non-

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²⁹ Timothy A. Judge and Ronald F Piccolo, "Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Test of Their Relative Validity", *Journal of Applied Psychology* VI: 89 num 5 (2004): 755-68.

³⁰ Robert J. House; Paul J. Hanges; Mansour Javidan; Peter W. Dorfman and Vipin Gupta.. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (Edited by Inc SAGE Publications, 2004).

³¹ Caroline Bown and Jeffrey McClellan, "Culturally Situated Leadership in the Ecuadorian Andes", *Journal of Leadership Studies* Vol: 11 num 3 (2017): 6-20.

³² Ulla Santti; Tuomo Eskelinen; Mervi Rajahonka; Kaija Villman and Ari Happonen, "Effects of Business Model Development Projects on Organizational Culture : A Multiple Case Study of SMEs", *Technology Innovation Management Review* Vol: 7 num 8 (2017): 15-26.

³³ Jeanne M.Brett, "Culture and Negotiation", *International Journal of Psychology* Vol: 35 num 2 (2000), 97-104.

³⁴ Carsten De Dreu and Michele Gelfand, "Culture and Deception in Business Negotiations: A Multilevel Analysis", *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* Vol: 1 num 1 (2001): 73-90.

coercive leader³⁵. Recently a study by Meyer³⁶ indicates that what might be an appropriate behavior or simply common sense in a cultural context could mean simultaneously otherwise to another particular culture or organizational context. These differences affect how people work together, mutual understanding, the interpretation of the situational environment and the interactivity between people. Thus, culture influences in choosing the style, because in some cases being transformational can be misunderstood by the followers as an example of weakness from the leader³⁷.

The culture impacts the leadership style, and under the actions of the leader the employees perceive what really matters to the company, their values and how effective is the leader motivating and trying to get the best of everyone³⁸. An effective leadership is integrated and defined for each level of the organization, which aims to build a community that works harmonically, united, structuring activities to involve people and resources effectively. The leader should manage plans and programs in a disciplined way, in an effort to improve the social impact, meanwhile assuring the economic sustainability desired³⁹.

Leadership in Ecuador

Ecuador is a country located at the northeast of South America, bordered by Colombia and Peru, has 16.4 million people⁴⁰ with a multiethnic and pluricultural society. Culturally Hofstede's study places Ecuador in the 78th place with high distance of power. According to this, the culture in this country accepts that inequalities are part of the daily life. Because this distance of power is accepted, it is expected that the most used style would be the transactional. In societies where there's a considerable power distance, subordinates tend not to question their leaders and wait until they serve them as guidance, accepting that the power is not shared equally⁴¹. According to the study Globe, Ecuador scores 5.6 is power distance, being 1 very low and 7 very high.

In Ecuador, studies about leadership are very limited. The only research found indicates that leaders are mostly transactional or passive-avoidant as a second option, leaving in last place the transformational leadership. According to the arguments described, the following hypothesis is presented:

³⁵ Juliana Mansur; Filipe Sobral and Rafael Goldszmidt, "Shades of Paternalistic Leadership across Cultures", *Journal of World Business* Vol: 52 num 5 (2017): 702-13.

³⁶ Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map (USA: Edited by Public Affairs, 2014)*.

³⁷ Paolo Suarez, "Estudio Del Liderazgo En Ecuador a Partir de La Validación Del Cuestionario Multifactorial de Liderazgo", (Tesis Maestria, Escuela Politécnica Nacional, 2017).

³⁸ Kesha K. Coker; Richard L. Flight and Kelly N. Valle, "Social Entrepreneurship: The Role of National Leadership Culture", *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* Vol: 19 num 2 (2017): 125-39.

³⁹ Jim Gibbons and James K. Hazy, "How the Leadership Culture at Goodwill Industries Creates and Distributes Value in Communities", *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* Vol: 27 num 3 (2017): 299-316.

⁴⁰ INEC, "Población 2017" (<http://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/estadisticas/>.2018).

⁴¹ Patricia Elgoibar; Lourdes Munduate; Francisco J. Medina and Martin C Euwema, "Why Are Industrial Relations in Spain Competitive? Trust in Management, Union Support and Conflict Behaviour in Worker Representatives", *Revista Internacional de Organizaciones* num 9 (2012): 145-68.

Hypothesis 2. Leaders of Ecuadorian SMEs use mostly a transactional leadership style

Leadership styles and gender

Different studies have concluded that leadership has no significant differences between men and women, education, dedication or professional preparation⁴². Eagly⁴³ considers that in occasions it is difficult to exert leadership, especially in communities where there are huge differences in gender, social classes, education and ethnics. Thus, conclusions that previous research found are divergent. Some studies concluded that in SMEs, gender is not a relevant factor in the use of leadership style, and both genders tend to show themselves as transactional style managers, and both can present characteristics of an “ideal leader”. It is also said that the leadership style is adapted by women depending the managerial position they are in. If the position is normally occupied by women then a transformational style is adopted. If the position is generally occupied by men, a transactional style is adopted, adapting to the context⁴⁴. Although other researches concludes that female leaders use different styles when it comes to planning and establishing goals, showing more openness and involving the subordinates⁴⁵.

Studies which have found gender differences highlight that organizations lead by women tend to present more effective results comparing to men leaders, benefiting financially the organization, besides being more philanthropic and generating real processes of social responsibility⁴⁶. In addition, they create more labor satisfaction on the employees and motivation to work, wellbeing and health. According to this, many authors affirm that the difference between leadership styles and gender in an organization is a reality. Women tend to show more a transformational leadership style research. Research also concludes that women lead organizations in a more sustainable way, focused in the development of a culture of trust, optimism and respect inside an organization and with a great interest in the wellbeing of their employees⁴⁷. Companies lead by men use new distribution channels through new technologies and establish contact networks while simultaneously take drastic decisions to reduce costs and fire staff; meanwhile companies lead by women, strengthen their relation with clients and add value while keeping their work teams with social benefits as much as possible, while having a direct correlation with productivity at the same time⁴⁸.

⁴² María del Mar Alonso-Almeida and Kerstin Bremser, “Does Gender Specific Decision Making Exist?”, *EuroMed Journal of Business* Vol: 10 num 1 (2015): 47-65.

⁴³ Alice H. Eagly, “Achieving Relational Authenticity in Leadership: Does Gender Matter?”, *The Leadership Quarterly* num 16 (2005): 459-74.

⁴⁴ María del Mar Alonso-Almeida; Jordi Perramon and Llorenç Bagur-Femenias, “Leadership Styles and Corporate Social Responsibility Management: Analysis from a Gender Perspective”, *Business Ethics: A European Review* Vol: 26 num 2 (2017): 147-61.

⁴⁵ James Sebastian and Jeong-mi Moon, “Gender Differences in Participatory Leadership: An Examination of Principals. Time Spent Working with Others”, *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership* Vol: 12 num 8 (2018).

⁴⁶ Alina S. Hernandez Bark; Jordi Escartín; Sebastian C. Schuh and Rolf van Dick, “Who Leads More and Why? A Mediation Model from Gender to Leadership Role Occupancy”, *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol: 139 num 3 (2016): 473-83.

⁴⁷ Vassiliki Bamiatzi; Sally Jones; Siwan Mitchelmore and Konstantinos Nikolopoulos, “The Role of Competencies in Shaping the Leadership Style of Female Entrepreneurs: The Case of North West of England, Yorkshire, and North Wales”, *Journal of Small Business Management* Vol: 53 num 3 (2015): 627-44.

⁴⁸ Nesslerin Shaya, and Rawan Abu Khait, “Feminizing Leadership in the Middle East”, *Gender in*

Women tend to be more transformational because of the support and consideration they show to others, gathering these elements with the aim of building relations and empathy in contrast with more aggressive characteristics and hierarchical associations used by men⁴⁹. When gender roles and leadership styles are related, the transformational leadership style is associated to superior levels of performance and competitiveness and includes the concern of people from their levels of “individual consideration”. This leadership style is associated directly with features and roles stereotypically feminine, alleging that women tend to use transformational leadership in greater extent than men.⁵⁰

In addition, recent research indicated that women have better qualities in the variables of idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individual consideration.⁵¹

Hypothesis 3. Women leaders tend to use the transformational leadership style more than men leaders

Leadership styles and level of education

In the 21th century, organizations require that leaders manage and at the same time transform organizations into an entity of high performance in the competitive market⁵². A factor that bears considerably in decision making or even on how executives manage organizations is the level of education. Recent research show that knowledge and leadership are related according to the quality of the teaching received and the results of the studies achieved, affecting positively in the improvement of the leader’s behaviors⁵³. Leaders who present an intrinsic growing in their level of education use the intellectual stimulation component to reconsider problems and to deal with old situations in new ways⁵⁴. This intellectual stimulation means that the capacity to challenge the status quo of the employees and at the same time to develop creative and innovative solutions to problems. As a result, employees do extra efforts to solve problems and forecast ideas that improve teamwork and achievement of the organizational goals⁵⁵.

Hypothesis 4. The level of education of the leader is positively related to the use of transformational style

Leadership styles in service companies

Companies need strong leaders to obtain a competitive advantage with each other. Studies have found that transformational leadership is positively correlated with the

Management: An International Journal Vol: 32 num 8 (2017): 590-608.

⁴⁹ Meghna Sabharwal; Helise Levine and Maria D’Agostino, “Gender Differences in the Leadership Styles of MPA Directors”, Journal of Public Affairs Education Vol: 3 num 23 (2017): 869-84.

⁵⁰ L. Gartzia, “Nuevos Modelos de Gestion: De Pensar En Masculino a Pensar En Andrógino”, Boletín de Estudios Económicos num 203 (2011): 299-314.

⁵¹ Jason Martin, “Transformational and Transactional Leadership: An Exploration of Gender, Experience, and Institution Type”, Portal: Libraries and the Academy Vol: 15 num 2 (2015): 331-51.

⁵² Olayide Abosede Aina, “Effect of Leadership Style on Organizational Commitment” (2016).

⁵³ Antonio Bolívar Botía, “Educational Leadership and Its Role in Improvement: A Current Review of Its Possibilities and Limitations”, Psicoperspectivas Vol: 9 num 2 (2010): 9-33.

⁵⁴ Sonja Sperber and Christian Linder, “The Impact of Top Management Teams on Firm Innovativeness: A Configurational Analysis of Demographic Characteristics, Leadership Style and Team Power Distribution”, Review of Managerial Science Vol: 12 num 1 (2018): 285-316.

⁵⁵ B. M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, Transformational Leadership...

effectiveness of the organization, specially having a great impact on service companies. At this point, leaders provide a more charismatic environment allowing an inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation⁵⁶. This style provides more effectiveness and satisfaction for its followers. For service companies it was found that transformational leadership strength the sense of belonging of the employees and satisfies their needs and finally, improves the employees' productivity⁵⁷.

Consequentially, in the service sectors leaders and employees are in more direct contact with clients and they need to promote empathy, manage emotions and relations. In that, the use of transformational leadership is shown as the most adequate⁵⁸. On the other hand, in industrial or production companies, the leader tends to be more technical, expert in solving specific issues, communicates with transparency the tasks and procedures, and is oriented to the results; characteristics conceived in the transactional leadership style⁵⁹.

Hypothesis 5. Leaders from the service sector tend to use more a transformational leadership style than leaders in the production sector

Method

Sampling and procedure

The sampling was conforming by (N=296) leaders of small and medium companies from Ecuador. The sample consisted of 37% women and 63% men. All leaders were over 18 years old at the moment of answering the survey. The data collection was carried out between September and December 2017.

Instrument

Leadership styles. To measure the leadership style, the research team used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire – MLQ⁶⁰ in its Spanish version⁶¹. The questionnaire is composed by 36 items, aimed to identify the use of the three leadership styles: transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant. An example of an item for

⁵⁶ Chia Yuan Hsu and Wen Yu Chen, "Subordinates' Perception of Managers' Transformational Leadership Style and Satisfaction: A Comparison of Electronic Manufacturing Companies in Mainland China and Taiwan", *International Journal of Human Resource Management* Vol: 22 num 15 (2011): 3097-108.

⁵⁷ Oladimeji Jamiu Odetunde, "Influence of Transformational and Transactional Leaderships, and Leaders' Sex on Organisational Conflict Management Behaviour", *Gender & Behaviour* Vol: 11 num 1 (2013): 5323-35.

⁵⁸ Yina Socarrás; José Sánchez and Marlenis Ucrós, "Competencias y Exito Gerencial En Empresas de Servicios Públicos, Municipios de Riohacha Y Maicao, Guajira, Colombia", *Sotavento MBA* num 27 (2016): 132-41.

⁵⁹ Bernd Friedrich Voigt; Ksenia Mänz and Uta Wilkens, "What Leadership Pattern Can Be Observed in IPS2 Work Systems When Compared with Production and Service?", *Procedia CIRP* num 16 (2014): 277-82.

⁶⁰ Bruce J. Avolio and Bernard M. Bass, "Re-Examining the Components of Transformational and Transactional Leadership Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Suggestions for Modification Arose When A", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* num 72 (1995): 441-62.

⁶¹ Richard A. Rodriguez; Mark T. Green; Yu Sun and Bárbara Baggerly-Hinojosa, "Authentic Leadership and Transformational Leadership: An Incremental Approach", *Journal of Leadership Studies* Vol: 11 num 1 (2017): 20-5.

transformational leadership is: “I make others feel good to be around me”. An item example for transactional leadership is: “I am satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards”. An example of a passive-avoidant leadership style item is: “I am content to let others continue working in the same way always”. The scale was measured using a Likert style from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The scale shows a good reliability with a Cronbach alpha of 0.88 in the whole scale⁶².

Demographic variables. Gender, level of education and the sector are included in the survey.

Results

Data was analyzed using SPSS 21 Edition.

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Men	186	63
Women	110	37
Level of Education		
Primary	3	1
High School	167	23
Tertiary Degree	186	63
Postgraduate	40	13
Type of Enrollment		
Owner Manager	118	40
Family Manager	43	14
Hired Manager	135	46
Company's age		
1 to 5 years	62	21
5 to 10 years	104	35
Over 10 years	130	44
Organization's activity		
Services		
Production	277	94
	19	6
Numbers of employees		
1 to 5	115	39
6 to 30	132	44
31 to 100	29	10
Over 100	20	7

Table 1
Distribution of the sample

Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample. The three styles present similar averages. Table 2 shows the correlation between the variables of the study. Both transactional and transformational styles are significantly correlated. A cluster analysis was carried out in order to analyze the first hypothesis.

⁶² Darren George and Paul Mallery, “SPSS for Windows Step by Step: Answers to Selected Exercises”, A Simple Guide and Reference num 63 (2003).

The cluster analysis identified 5 patterns of leadership styles, when taking into consideration the combinations of the 3 styles. The first pattern is formed by leaders who present mostly a transformational leadership style and to a smaller extent the transactional and passive-avoidant styles. The group is composed by 82 leaders (27.7% of the total). The second pattern is formed by leaders who use mostly the transactional leadership style and to smaller extent the transformational and passive-avoidant style respectively. The group is composed 94 leaders (31.8% of the total). The third pattern is formed by leaders who use mostly the passive avoidant leadership and to a smaller extent the transformational and transactional leadership. The group is composed by 68 leaders (23% of the total). The fourth pattern is formed by leaders who have the same weight between the transformational and transactional leadership and who use to a smaller extent the passive avoidant style. This group is composed by 14 leaders (4.7% of the total). And lastly the fifth group is composed by leaders who use the three leadership styles equally. The group is composed by 38 leaders (12.8% of the total). Leaders of Ecuadorian SMEs do not use a unique leadership style but a mix of styles. Hypothesis 1 is supported.

	TRF	TRS	LF	G	LE	A
TRF	1	,695**	,412**	,118*	-,161**	-,044
TRS		1	,513**	,064	-,156**	-,122*
LF			1	,112	-,130*	-,110
G				1	-,033	-,142*
LE					1	,082
A						1

Note. TRF = transformational; TRS = transactional; LF = laissez faire; G = gender; LE = level of education; A = activity.

Table 2
Correlation analysis

Patterns	Frequency	Percentage
1. Leader mainly transformational	82	27,7
2. Leader mainly transactional	94	31,8
3. Leader mainly passive	68	23,0
4. Leader with equal transformational and transactional	14	4,7
5. Leader with equal in three styles	38	12,8
Total	296	100,0

Table 3
Cluster analysis

This analysis also shows that most leaders (31.8%) use the pattern with higher transactional style. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Table 4 shows that male leaders use mostly the pattern with higher level of transactional leadership style (36% of the total). While female leaders use mostly the pattern with higher level of transformational style (28% of the total). Chi-squared analysis ($\chi^2 = 0.218$) confirms a significant difference between gender and the pattern. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Clusters	1	2	3	4	5	N
Male	27%	36%	22%	4%	1%	186
Female	28%	25%	25%	6%	6%	110
N	82	94	68	14	38	296

Note. 1= leader mainly transformational; 2 = leader mainly transactional; 3 = leader mainly laissez faire; 4 = leader with equal balance transformational and transactional; 5 = leader with equal balance in three styles.

Table 4
Gender and Leadership styles

Table 5 shows the pattern leaders use according to the level of education. The pattern of leadership style with a predominant use of laissez faire style is the one with greater influence on leaders with secondary education (30% of total). Leaders who have a third level of education use mostly the pattern with higher level of transactional style (35% of the total). Leaders, who have obtained a postgraduate level, use mostly the pattern with higher level of transformational style (35% of the total). Chi-squared analysis ($\chi^2 = 0.360$) confirm a significant difference between the level of education and the pattern. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Clusters	1	2	3	4	5	N
P	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%	3
S	25%	25%	30%	6%	13%	67
T	27%	35%	21%	4%	12%	186
P/G	35%	30%	20%	3%	13%	40
N	82	94	68	14	38	296

Note. 1= leader mainly transformational; 2 = leader mainly transactional; 3 = leader mainly laissez faire; 4 = leader with equal balance transformational y transactional; 5 = leader with equal balance in three styles; P = primary; S = secondary; T= third level; P/G = postgrad

Table 5
Level of education and leadership styles

Table 6 shows that the pattern of transactional leadership style seems to be the preferred pattern for leaders in the services sector (67% of the total). In the production sector the same results is obtained. This shows that leaders use a pattern with high level of transactional style in both sectors. Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Clusters	1	2	3	4	5	N
Services	55%	67%	47%	11%	21%	277
Production	47%	32%	0%	0%	21%	19
N	82	94	68	14	38	296

Note. 1= leader mainly transformational; 2 = leader mainly transactional; 3 = leader mainly leader with equal balance transformational and transactional; 5 = leader with equal balance 3 styles.

Table 6
Sector and leadership style

Discussion

This study shows that leaders in Ecuador use a pattern that includes different leadership styles, instead of a unique style. Five patterns of leadership styles were found from the sample object of study: a) leaders using mostly the transformational leadership style with fewer features of transactional and laissez faire; b) leaders using mostly the transactional leadership style with less features of transformational and laissez faire; c) leaders using mostly the laissez faire leadership style and fewer features of transformational and transactional; d) leaders with equal shares of transactional and transformational leadership style and fewer features of laissez faire; and lastly e) leaders with equal shares of the three styles.

This result supports the line of research followed by Karadakil and colleagues. In their study, they concluded that all leadership styles must be used to obtain better results in the organization and improve the commitment of the subordinates. Besides, results of the present research confirm previous studies that indicated that in Ecuador most of the leaders use the transactional leadership style. However, this is integrated into a pattern including also other styles. Regarding gender differences in leadership styles, this study supports that indeed differences exist, following the conclusion of previous research. Results shows that women leaders use mostly a pattern with higher level of transformational leadership style in contrast with men who use mostly a pattern with higher level of transactional leadership style. Finally, the results obtained show that in Ecuador the higher the level of education, the more the leaders tend to use mainly a transformational style. Thus, concluding that gender and education have an impact of the leadership pattern.

Theoretical and practical implications

This study provides information about the leadership styles used by Ecuadorian leaders. It reveals that even if the most preferred style is the transactional, leaders in Ecuador use a mix of styles. This result contributes to the leadership literature by showing that indeed leaders do not follow a default style. This needs to be taken into account when giving leadership training. In that, future research can focus on understandings which are the circumstances that impact a leader decision to use one or another style. In this study we also show that gender and education have an impact on this decision.

At practical level, it is important for leaders to know and practice a leadership pattern that suits the organization, encouraging the productivity and the harmony towards their followers. Another practical contribution for organizations and for the selection process is to understand that the level of education of the leaders impacts the style used.

Limitations and future research

A first limitation of the study is that only SME were taken into account and results can change for big organizations. Future studies can analyze if these clusters also appear in other type of organizations. A second limitation is that the data are self-reported. Self-reports appear as a key tool in organizational research, and although it presents advantages it also contains disadvantages. A main disadvantage is related to the social desirability biases. In this study, leaders were maybe not aware of the style they actually use and may have ended up reporting responses which present the person in a favorable light. Future research should also analyze the leadership style perceived by the followers. This study is being executed by the same authors.

Conclusion

This study analyses the leadership patterns used by leaders in Ecuador. In particular, it is highlighted that leaders don't use one style but a pattern of styles. This is considered to be relevant as it indicates that leaders are capable of using different styles and do that naturally. This study also concludes that gender and educational level have an impact on the preferred pattern. Leadership training programs can benefit from these results by understanding that leaders use patterns of styles and no single styles, which can improve their efficacy.

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