











ORIGINAL

## Leadership styles: a study in Latin America, the United States and Europe

### Estilos de liderazgo: un estudio en Latinoamérica, Estados Unidos y Europa

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** leadership styles vary in organizations due to multiple factors, such as policies or organizational culture. Today's globalized world and post-pandemic times require a leader capable of integrating people and motivating them to achieve objectives.

**Objective:** the aim of this study was to analyze leadership styles in organizations in Latin America, the United States and Europe.

**Method:** a sample of eighty-one leaders were administered a questionnaire composed of twenty-one items, in order to evaluate the leadership style with the Blake and Mouton test, in order to identify whether leaders are people-oriented or task-oriented.

**Results:** once the test was applied to the leaders of the study sample, it was found that 1,23 % are social leaders, 4,94 % are authoritarian leaders and 93,83 % are team leaders.

**Conclusions:** today's society demands an integrative leadership style that helps transform the work team. Research on leadership identifies multiple factors that can lead to the selection of a leadership style. In this regard, the results obtained revealed that the team leadership style is the one most used by leaders.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles; Outsider Leader; Authoritarian Leader; Team Leadership; Social Leader; Organizational Management.

#### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** los estilos de liderazgo varían en las organizaciones debido a múltiples factores, tales como las políticas o la cultura organizacional. El mundo globalizado actual y los tiempos postpandemia, requieren de un líder capaz de integrar a las personas y motivarlas al logro de los objetivos.

**Objetivo:** el trabajo tuvo por objetivo analizar los estilos de liderazgo en organizaciones de Latinoamérica, Estados Unidos y Europa.

**Método:** a una muestra de ochenta y un líderes se les aplicó un cuestionario integrado por veintiún ítems, a fin de evaluar el estilo de liderazgo con el test de Blake and Mouton, de cara a identificar si los líderes se orientan hacia las personas o hacia las tareas.

**Resultado:** una vez aplicado el test a los líderes de la muestra de estudio, se comprobó que 1,23 % son líderes sociales, 4,94 % son líderes autoritarios y 93,83 % son líderes de equipo.

**Conclusiones:** la sociedad actual demanda de un estilo de liderazgo integrador que ayude a transformar el equipo de trabajo. Las investigaciones realizadas sobre liderazgo, identifican múltiples factores que pueden llevar a seleccionar algún estilo de liderazgo, al respecto, los resultados obtenidos, revelaron que el estilo de liderazgo en equipo, es el más usado por los líderes.

**Palabras clave:** Estilos de Liderazgo; Líder Ajeno; Líder Autoritario; Liderazgo de Equipo; Líder Social; Gestión Organizacional.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is related to an individual's attitudes towards influencing others.<sup>(1,2)</sup> Leadership styles employed in organizations vary and depend on various variables such as organizational culture or internal policies.<sup>(3,4)</sup> It is worth noting that currently, after the pandemic, leaders have shifted towards team leadership in order to influence people towards achieving objectives. The study of leadership and its styles has been addressed in various research studies over time, where leadership has been associated with various factors, making it clear that leadership style influences the achievement of positive outcomes.<sup>(5,6,7)</sup> Leadership, more than a relationship between a boss and subordinates, involves working with the team's social network structure to influence its members and achieve better performance.<sup>(8,9,10)</sup>

Leaders today have faced various challenges in order to strengthen the participation of individuals regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, education, or economic situation. There is evidence of a shift in thinking towards integrating the entire team of collaborators to work together towards a common goal and in support of organizational success.<sup>(11,12)</sup> Globalization has made the leader a crucial component of organizations since there are societal expectations regarding the visibility of diversity.<sup>(13)</sup> Therefore, leader stereotypes and leadership styles can significantly influence how a workgroup is managed in order to achieve effective leadership.<sup>(14,15)</sup>

Despite the efforts of some organizations to promote inclusive leaders, others prefer task-oriented leaders, which ultimately affects the support that should be provided to individuals in the performance of their duties and their involvement in processes.<sup>(16)</sup> However, sidelining individuals restricts their development opportunities and affects the organizational climate.<sup>(17,18)</sup> Skills such as communication and conflict resolution demand a creative, persuasive, empathetic, and assertive leader with the ability to motivate people to perform at work beyond their expectations. In this regard, the objective of this study was to analyze leadership styles in organizations in Latin America, the United States, and Europe.

## METHODS

The study is quantitative in nature as it revealed values that allow us to understand the type of leadership and identify the trend of leadership styles in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. The study was conducted in public and private organizations in the countries of interest during the years 2022 and 2023. Given the magnitude and diversity of organizations, as well as the available time for the study, a non-probabilistic intentional sampling method was chosen<sup>(19)</sup> for convenience and accessibility to information.<sup>(20)</sup> The sample consisted of 81 companies (table 1).

A questionnaire consisting of twenty-one items was designed and administered to leaders in the selected organizations. The instrument was validated by experts, and a reliability test was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0,98. The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform reliability tests and analyze the obtained data.

To analyze leadership styles, the Blake and Mouton Leadership Grid test was selected, which allowed for identifying whether leaders are people-oriented or task-oriented.<sup>(21)</sup> The Leadership Grid test consists of eighteen statements on a Likert scale: never (0), sometimes (1, 2, and 3), and always (4 and 5),<sup>(22)</sup> to determine if the leader is indifferent (shows no concern for people or tasks), autocratic (task-oriented), supportive (people-oriented), or team-oriented (both people and task-oriented).<sup>(23)</sup> The Blake and Mouton Leadership Grid test involves three steps: obtaining scores for the variables, totaling the scores for variables related to the people dimension (V1, V4, V6, V9, V10, V12, V14, V16, and V17), and the task dimension (V2, V3, V5, V7, V8, V11, V13, V15, and V18) (24), and finally, multiplying the total score for each dimension by 0,02.<sup>(25)</sup>

## RESULTS

After administering the test to the leaders in the study sample, it was found that 1,23 % are people-oriented leaders, 4,94 % are task-oriented leaders, and 93,83 % are team-oriented leaders (table 2). As shown in table 2, the vast majority of leaders in their management consider both people and tasks in achieving objectives, while only four cases in the study sample are task-oriented leaders, neglecting the interest in people and focusing more on tasks. Additionally, there is one isolated case of a people-oriented leader who shows more interest in people but lacks interest in tasks.

Table 1. Study sample		
Country	N	%
Germany	1	1,23
Argentina	1	1,23
Brazil	11	13,58
Chile	1	1,23
Colombia	46	56,79
Costa Rica	4	4,94
Spain	1	1,23
United States	3	3,70
Mexico	7	8,64
Venezuela	6	7,41
Total	81	100,00

Table 2. Leadership styles						
Surveyed	People dimension	Task dimension	People factor	Task factor	Leadership style	Feature
E4	24	33	4,80	6,60	Authoritarian	Task-focused
E55	23	30	4,60	6,00		
E70	24	27	4,80	5,40		
E72	19	26	3,80	5,20		
E1	34	31	6,80	6,20	Of equipment	Focused on people and tasks
E10	34	33	6,80	6,60		
E11	40	40	8,00	8,00		
E12	38	39	7,60	7,80		
E13	38	31	7,60	6,20		
E14	31	35	6,20	7,00		
E15	30	33	6,00	6,60		
E16	28	32	5,60	6,40		
E17	34	32	6,80	6,40		
E18	34	33	6,80	6,60		
E19	33	33	6,60	6,60		
E2	29	36	5,80	7,20		
E20	36	39	7,20	7,80		
E21	30	32	6,00	6,40		
E22	39	38	7,80	7,60		
E23	32	38	6,40	7,60		
E24	40	43	8,00	8,60		
E25	35	43	7,00	8,60		
E26	33	37	6,60	7,40		
E27	28	28	5,60	5,60		
E28	36	35	7,20	7,00		
E29	38	39	7,60	7,80		
E3	36	39	7,20	7,80		
E30	32	32	6,40	6,40		
E31	34	39	6,80	7,80		
E32	32	34	6,40	6,80		

E33	37	42	7,40	8,40
E34	39	40	7,80	8,00
E35	32	33	6,40	6,60
E36	31	30	6,20	6,00
E37	32	38	6,40	7,60
E38	36	42	7,20	8,40
E39	27	33	5,40	6,60
E40	39	38	7,80	7,60
E41	34	29	6,80	5,80
E42	32	32	6,40	6,40
E43	29	29	5,80	5,80
E44	31	39	6,20	7,80
E45	33	37	6,60	7,40
E46	38	39	7,60	7,80
E47	25	29	5,00	5,80
E48	32	31	6,40	6,20
E49	36	37	7,20	7,40
E5	32	34	6,40	6,80
E50	33	36	6,60	7,20
E51	30	33	6,00	6,60
E52	33	33	6,60	6,60
E53	31	35	6,20	7,00
E54	33	39	6,60	7,80
E56	26	32	5,20	6,40
E57	35	36	7,00	7,20
E58	33	40	6,60	8,00
E59	33	36	6,60	7,20
E6	32	34	6,40	6,80
E60	33	33	6,60	6,60
E61	32	40	6,40	8,00
E62	35	37	7,00	7,40
E64	30	35	6,00	7,00
E65	28	33	5,60	6,60
E66	29	33	5,80	6,60
E67	38	44	7,60	8,80
E68	37	37	7,40	7,40
E69	33	41	6,60	8,20
E7	30	35	6,00	7,00
E71	33	37	6,60	7,40
E73	35	38	7,00	7,60
E74	28	32	5,60	6,40
E75	40	44	8,00	8,80
E76	37	42	7,40	8,40
E77	33	38	6,60	7,60
E78	39	42	7,80	8,40
E79	40	42	8,00	8,40
E8	33	38	6,60	7,60
E80	27	29	5,40	5,80

E81	38	38	7,60	7,60		
E9	36	40	7,20	8,00		
E63	29	24	5,80	4,80	Social	People-focused

## DISCUSSION

As seen in figure 1, according to the results, after the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders in the countries under study have shifted towards teamwork. This undoubtedly fosters the commitment of employees in achieving objectives and promotes group thinking to optimize resources and increase productivity. Communication has played a vital role in the relationship with employees, as it has clarified doubts and encouraged people to fulfill their assigned tasks. Therefore, maintaining open communication allows for listening to different perspectives and identifying task-related obstacles. It is worth noting that any team member may take on the role of a leader at some point, based on their professional experience, synergy, trust, and empathy with colleagues. Hence, organizations promote collaboration among employees to strengthen relationships and develop their skills.

In current times, the team leader is key to task allocation and development, where cooperation with employees is essential for completing tasks within the designated time frame. Taking people into account expands horizons in terms of perspectives and viewpoints and positively influences motivation and the common management of processes. Therefore, team leaders ensure that individuals take responsibility for their assigned tasks and have confidence in their abilities, thus establishing equitable teams that streamline the decision-making process.

However, despite having a small sample of leaders from Europe and the United States, the results demonstrated the presence of both authoritarian and people-oriented leaders. For many years, the presence of authoritarian leaders has been common; however, times have changed this leadership style, characterized by exercising control to achieve objectives without involving people in process development. Some leaders may argue that authoritarian leadership reduces errors and achieves higher team productivity, but there is a risk of demotivating individuals and deteriorating the work environment.

On the other hand, there is only one case of people-oriented leadership, where the leader focuses on individuals and humbly assists the team in accomplishing tasks, always considering the general well-being and transformational impact achieved through teamwork. However, this type of leadership poses ambitious challenges, such as adjustments to work or personal benefits, which could create difficulties for organizations.

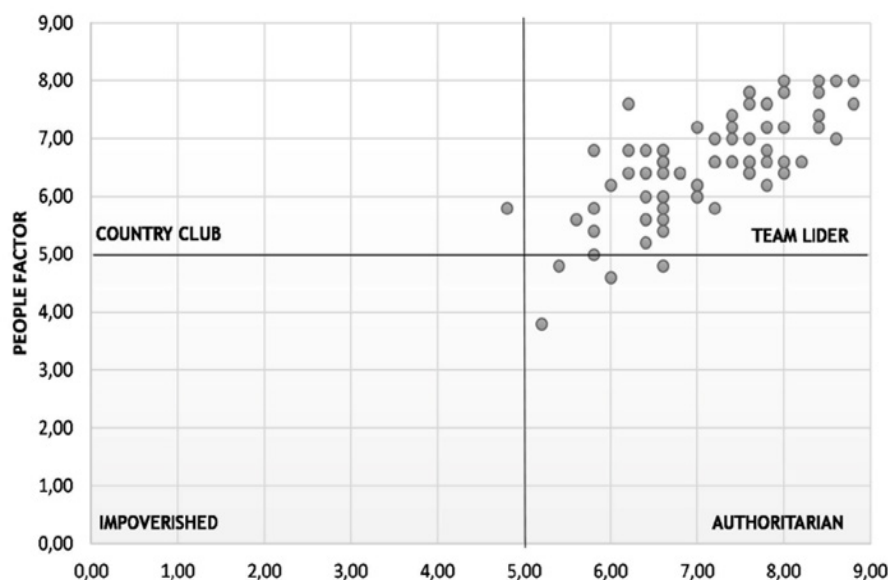


Figure 1. Leadership Styles

## CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary society demands an inclusive leadership style that helps transform the work team. Research on leadership identifies multiple factors that may lead to the selection of a particular style. In this regard, the obtained results revealed that team-oriented leadership is the most commonly used by leaders. The organizational context is highly complex, especially in the globalized and technological world in which organizations are immersed. The aftermath of the pandemic has left its mark on individuals, causing anxiety or uncertainty in their connection with the organization. This calls for leaders who are capable of managing crises and creating a

work environment that encourages positive relationships and the achievement of objectives.

It is the employees themselves who demand a leader with competencies for teamwork, in order to positively influence the organizational climate and performance. Aspects such as happiness, compassion, understanding, and charisma contribute to creating the conditions for building social awareness and fostering a collaborative and group-oriented work environment. However, this does not mean that leaders cannot choose other leadership styles, such as authoritarian or people-oriented, at certain times. The choice of style will depend on organizational policies and objectives.

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