

# Perceptions about Leadership and Normalization of Unhealthy Workspaces

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**Abstract:- This article presents the results of a research project carried out from an interdisciplinary approach. The origin of workplace violence is analysed from the leading role as false leadership, based on perceptions about leadership and the work environment. A sample of 148 employees was analysed and the findings reflect on the one hand, a high percentage of people who recognize the qualities that good leadership should possess; but, on the other hand, a fluctuating percentage of 30% that normalize bad practices in leadership considering agreeing with them. The recognition of leadership arises as a response to uncertainty, the need for support, the search for collective goals; But, in the current era, due to the same social dynamics, bad practices and corruption, the leading role from the local to the media is undoubtedly the treasure sought by the false leaders and they are the ones led placed in a situation of greater vulnerability.**

**Keywords—** *Perception, Leadership, Unhealthy Workspaces.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about leadership, we build images of people who know how to organize, who can lead, we compare them with bosses; but seldom do we recognize exactly the characteristics of a leader and his functions. When building a concept, the most common are (Dirks, 2006):

1. People to get others to do what you want. They relate them to power.
2. People capable of motivating people. They relate them to persuasion.
3. People who bring a vision. They view the vision as a solitary creation of the leader.
4. People who are process facilitators. They are related to participatory and motivational capacity. They make it easy for people to empower and train people and make their own ideas.

These various ways of defining a leader make them arise from the very conception of want to surround him. In this way, we find genuine leaders as well as false leaders. The latter commonly develop through authoritarian spaces, ways of growing individually from the work of others, or spaces where the false leader feeds on the groups to which

he belongs, uses them, and does not guide them to any objective. more than their own.

Therefore, leadership carries with it risks of disappointment, breach of trust and even violence. In this regard (Burke et al, 2007) tells us that traditional leadership models refer to both the qualities of a leader, that is, to vision, strength, and commitment, as well as the situational character of leadership.

Now, there are several characteristics that shape a leader and strengthen him for his proper work, among them are the ability to communicate and to achieve the effectiveness of his communication the leader must be informed, know his rights and obligations, be clear and empathetic. Within the traditional leadership models, qualities such as vision, commitment, and strength are identified. Hence, the most widespread models are the managerial grid (Blake et al, 1991) and situational leadership (Santa-Bárbara and Rodríguez, 2010).

The elements that we will find as part of genuine leadership are initiative, inquiry, conviction, conflict resolution, decision-making, and criticism.

One way to classify the types of leadership is by analysing the characteristics of their followers and we can find the following (Dirks, 2006):

1. Leadership through participation. Capable but unwilling or insecure followers.
2. Through persuasion. Little capable, willing, and motivated followers.
3. By delegation. When those led are capable, willing, and motivated.
4. By instruction and command. Little capable, unwilling, and insecure followers.

For its part, we find types of leadership by analysing the way in which it performs its service as a leader:

- a. Facilitator leader. Help his followers to seek and find their goals, path or meaning.
- b. Situational leader. Consider that situations are what make leaders emerge.
- c. Structural leader. Analyse the organizational environment and its capacities to develop leadership strategies.
- d. Social leader. Sensitive, accessible and empowers people.

- e. Political leader. Conscious, sensitive, facilitator of synergies that help the growth of your group.
- f. Symbolic leader. Using symbols and stories, he transmits faith and loyalty among his followers.

On the other hand, and what calls us to write this document, is to talk about what we consider as false leadership, that is, the way in which leaders adopt the concept for themselves, to use their leaders, without working in the confidence of his followers, but in the dupe. They also do not have the skills or characteristics mentioned above and, therefore, do not belong to any type of leader that is enlisted. Generally, they are charismatic people and / or with a great capacity for conviction who occupy a position in which they manage to manipulate, force, even violate, to obtain achievements at their convenience.

In this regard, Dirks and Skarlicki (2004) mention that trust in the leader is very important, even more so in current times when there are a good number of challenges and adversities that require leaders, committed, honourable and above all, sensitive to the need. to resolve conflicts. But trust is a complex concept since people relate it to different variables, both organizational and personal (Gillespie and Mann, 2004; Dirks, 2006), the latter leaving us in an immense space of subjectivities; For this reason, Burke, and collaborators (2007) as well as Dirks and Ferrín (2002), emphasize that the behaviour of a leader is essential when it comes to fair procedures and objective decision-making.

For the reasons described above, it is important to know what people define as a leader and their perceptions. The perceptions that people may have about leadership mark behaviours as leaders or as led, and in both roles, they impact social dynamics.

Now, specifically in the workplace, competitiveness and its forms of expression are a determining factor (Pérez, 2010), the climate can be healthy and based on companionship, or else, unhealthy, and based on the expression of false leadership most of the time totally negative.

For its part, the concept of leader entered our language as an adaptation of the English word leader, in the context of industrial development. With the strength and influence of the English and North American culture, the word ended up being adopted by companies and movements. For this reason, the term leader carries the idea of a team, a company, a group. Hence the affinity with boss, competition, ranking leadership.

This conjunction of concepts and their origins lead us to find different perceptions regarding these social roles and to conceptualize the leader in different ways. Here the interest of analyzing the relationship between false leadership and its consequences in workspaces, emphasizing the differences and perceptual concordances between genders, age groups or type of institution in which it works.

This document presents the results of a study that reviewed the perceptions of leadership in economically active people, employed in various institutions.

## II. METHODS

The methodology used in this study was exploratory, non-experimental, and field-based. The study was conducted from Chiapas, Mexico. The data were obtained through a questionnaire applied to a random sample with finiteness in its size according to the time established for its survey (4 weeks in web circulation).

The instrument was a questionnaire (Likert scale) of perception about leadership. Reliability was determined; using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of internal consistency, as a validation process that consists of measuring the structural validity of the items in their classification area. This coefficient adopts values between 0 and 1, the most reliable being those that reach values higher than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1967). Thus, for the present study, 0.75 was obtained, thus observing the recommended median for ordinal scales.

## III. DISCUSSION

The average age of the study sample was 33.19 years, which indicates the participation of the young population, with a median of 36 (min 18- max 70). The participation of women was 55%, men 45%. Regarding the place of residence, 87% of diverse populations of Chiapas, the rest of other states of the centre the Republic.

Regarding the type of institution or company where they work, 26% in autonomous institutions; 31% government, state and federal institutions; 41% private companies and the rest corresponds to people who work in civil organizations.

Next, we will review and discuss by block different expressions in which the interviewees stated that they agree or disagree with them:

1. "A leader cannot put himself in the place of others; so, it makes decisions from what it considers convenient "

Expression with which only 57% of the interviewees disagree, which leaves us with a high percentage of people who agree with this expression (43%). This is indicating to us that in the experience they carry with them, a leader can make decisions without evaluating the reality of the group he is leading. Each member of a group or team that pursues a common goal contributes to its operational process, each member is important, each contribution, each shared thought. Likewise, a team without a leader can easily lose its way, confuse its objectives, or remain immobile before reaching agreements. In this regard, Pérez (2013) mentions that leadership, with its complexities, has required several theorists who contribute their own understanding in this regard, such is the case of Villanueva and Villanueva (2008), who define it as the ability to influence the members

of a group getting them to help them achieve objectives accepted by the group.

So, among the qualities that a leader needs to strengthen is that sensitivity to analyse the context of the group and the nature of its members, that is, "putting oneself in the place of others."

2. "The leader recognizes everyone's work, so successes are understood as belonging to the group":

100% of the interviewees agree with this expression. Even though in the previous statement the results show the permissiveness of the leader being able to make decisions alone, what is obtained as a result is appropriated to the group.

3. "A good leader does not care about the future of others, but what it takes to succeed": 13% agree with this expression and 17% doubt their answer; This leaves us with 30% of people who may consider it correct that a leader does not take them into account, or that they, when taking the role of leaders, do not take the group into account. However, there is 70% who disagree with this statement.

Among the dynamics that make the activities of a leader and the strength of the group visible, is the formation of work teams, which generate a positive synergy and enrich the results for the team, which would not be if we disaggregate the individuals (Pérez, 2013, Chopra, 2011).

4. "The leader must delegate responsibilities to others and, later, coordinate the work": 70% agree; but the percentage that disagrees is high, (30%), without a doubt this is a statement that tells us how complex the construction of the leadership concept becomes when it is equated with empowerment of a group and the performance of the tasks of the group and for the group, without delegating responsibilities.

5. "A true leader looks for a way to solve problems, even before they appear": 84% agree with the expression, the rest doubt it, they do not fully agree, these results reflect that it is not yet from Once the culture of planning is recognized, activities are carried out without established routes and in the presence of problems there is no response scheme.

Any organization that seeks clear objectives requires good planning, that is, it needs to determine the work routes, decision-making, policies, and relationships that support it, specific procedures and times, and this makes it a feat that will obtain expected results. (Taylor, 1991, Sánchez, 2003). Therefore, delegating activities, anticipating strengths, opportunities and threats are required elements for good leadership.

6. "For the leader, salaries or working conditions do not matter, he only makes sure that the team achieves its goals": 41% disagree with the statement; but 35% agree and the rest (24%) do not completely disagree, which leaves us with 59% who do not recognize their rights to be considered in the search for corresponding employment benefits.

7. "A good leader says what he thinks taking care of the ways in which he expresses himself so as not to hurt susceptibilities": 77% of the interviewees agree with this expression; 23% do not agree with this, we continue with this percentage of the interviewed population that is placed in the plane where the leader moves away from the group and does not conduct himself for mutual benefit and respect, the same as in the following expression. "A leader lets each one solves their problems, the leader fulfilling only what he or she has to do" where 74% do not agree with this expression; but 26% do not completely agree.

Also, when looking for confirmation of the above, we can find the following:

A) They recognize that they have had good leaders before and now 75%; but the remaining percentage, 25%, consider that they have not had good leaders.

B) Only 30% perceive that there are harmonious and respectful conditions in the current workplace, while 68% consider that this is not always the case and 2% consider that there have never been these conditions in their workplace.

Among the activities that a leader coordinates, they are identified as having a human profile, the leader must motivate, guide, build people. Their job is to ensure that the team develops its strengths, achieving plural results (Villanueva and Villanueva, 2008).

Therefore, it is paradoxical that they consider having good leaders, but their workspaces are perceived as lacking in harmonious conditions and respect. However, in countries with little development we have naturalized precarious working conditions, disorganization and even violence, because of the lack of genuine leadership and of valuing-respecting coordinated teamwork to achieve the development of each one of its members.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Traditionally, a leader has been considered as a heroic character to some extent, he is even magnified and the context in which he may be developing is ignored.

In the present study it was identified that +/- 30% of the participants did not identify elements of good leadership practices, considering within them: considering that a leader cannot put himself in the place of others; So it makes decisions from what it considers convenient; A good leader does not care about the future of others, but what it takes to succeed; the leader should not delegate responsibilities to others and subsequently coordinate the work; For the leader, salaries and working conditions do not matter, he only ensures that the team achieves its goals; a good leader says what he thinks without taking care of the ways in which he expresses himself so as not to hurt susceptibilities.

70% of those interviewed do not perceive a harmonious work environment, however, in the same proportion, paradoxically, they agree with good leadership practices. This is how we can affirm that even with clear knowledge of the characteristics that a healthy leadership should have, they naturalize a workspace that lacks harmony and respect.

The foregoing leads us to express that, in the face of bad leadership practices, as well as the normalization of unhealthy workspaces in terms of inter-electoral relations, they leave us in vulnerable spaces for events of workplace violence. We understand this statement when quoting Bourdieu (2001, 2002, 2005) when he mentions that the occupational hazard responds to the hierarchical structure that configures a group and feeds on organizational practices and habitus crystallized in relational structures.

Likewise, Leymann (1996) affirms that, if there is a conflictive work environment, the responsibility falls, in the first instance, on the management or leadership, because the conflict is due to a specific situation, as well as if it is due to a lack group consensus.

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