



A typology of assertive leaders: building the land map

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Abstract

The main objective of the present work is the elaboration of a typology of assertive leaders among young Brazilian students. For this, a quantitative research was carried out with the application of 200 questionnaires and the results were analyzed through the clusters analysis technique. Four groups were identified and labeled according to their main characteristics: Breeze, Stone, Fire and Water. The cluster "Breeze" presents meekness and patience as its main characteristics. However, the "Stone" cluster is characterized by determination. The "Fire" cluster represents self-confidence and independence, but without forgetting humility. Finally, the "Water" cluster represents the group that values friendship and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships through non-attrition. Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that respondents presented an average level of assertive leadership. Thus, it is necessary to use pertinent levels of assertiveness in each situation in order to obtain better interpersonal relationships in the workplace, as well as leaders with better behaviors.

Keywords: Leadership. Assertiveness. Behavior. Cluster. Types of Leadership.

Introduction

The leader plays a key role in the organization's performance and effectiveness, both in terms of teamwork and in task organization, problem solving, conflict reduction, and decision making.

It is important for the leader to be able to observe, to know how to listen and to give and receive feedback so that the necessary changes are made, contributing to a better work environment and, consequently, bringing better results. According to

Andersen and Sun (2017), many approaches to leadership have been published in the literature to fill little-studied spaces and to understand relatively new phenomena, or that go beyond the scope of the mainstream paradigm of transformational/transactional leadership. According to the authors, in a review of the specialized literature between 2000 and 2014, about 23% of all articles dealt with charismatic/transformational leadership. However, there is much room for developing innovative approaches and/or complementary and integrative approaches (Hussein, & Hassan, 2016, Andersen, & Sun, 2017). An important aspect of this new leadership is its more humane character as well as a certain psychological aptitude to understand and motivate its collaborators (Öner, 2012; Marques, 2015).

In this perspective, the present study analyzed the different types of behavior and how this interferes in the relationships. Studies indicate that assertive behavior seems to be one of the most appropriate for the procedural treatment of leadership due to corporate trends as well as changes in labor characteristics (Scamell, & Stead, 1984). Although present in the classic studies of *Great Man* (Borgotta, Bales, & Couch, 1954), assertiveness resurfaces mainly through the assertive leadership studies proposed by Ames & Flynn (2007); Ames (2008, 2009). One factor that stands out in the face of other leadership theories seems to be the most emotional side of the emotional intelligence, social skills and transformations that society, including organizations, have been suffering from. Another benefit is the possibility of application in contextual and specific situations in order to allow the approximation between the specialized theoretical field and the practice, which in part responds to the recommendations of Gordon and Yukl (2004) for the development of more robust leadership theories.

A current reality of leadership theories is the approximation with the specialized field of strategy, especially those that favor the development of internal resources and capabilities of organizations. The strategy focuses mainly on sustainable competitive advantages, which are related to value creation (Barney, & Hesterly, 2006) in order to align the organization with values and *Zeitgeist* or the 'spirit of the age' (Wagner, 2014).

Broadly speaking, leadership can be defined as the way or the process of influencing employees' actions, as well as the choice of strategic objectives, the way to pursue those objectives and the interaction between the different levels of employees (Mascarenhas, 2013; Belias et al., 2015). For Burke et al. (2006), the functions of leadership involve the search and structuring of information; in the use of information for the construction of problem solving; the use of personal resources and the use of material and technological resources. In addition, the leader should serve as an example and be transparent, thus improving the performance of the organization (O'toole, & Bennis, 2009).

According to Anunciação and colleagues (2016, p.33), "[...] an organization is made up of people with a common purpose and, at the same time, different goals. [...]" Thus, it is necessary to develop an organizational strategy in order to face challenges and changes as well as contribute to individuals dealing with adversity and possible conflicts of interest.

Organizations are increasingly seeking leaders who contribute to outstanding performance; a key factor to increase competitiveness vis-a-vis other organizations

(Marques, 2015). For this reason, the leadership theme represents a type of training with high market demand and represents a central aspect of any institutional development program (Belias et al., 2015). In addition, different styles and leadership approaches can serve to improve the effectiveness of teams and organizations in different ways (Choi, Kim, & Chang, 2017).

In this way, for companies to achieve the desired results, it is necessary for the leader to be able to influence, enthuse and persuade people, as well as to plan major strategic decisions. In this context, assertive leadership, which is based on trust, conquest, delegation of tasks, and the power of influence, are inserted. With this, the main objective of this work is: **the identification and creation of a typology of assertive leaders in young Brazilian students**. This is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the construct of leadership and the led. Another expected benefit of this study is the possibility of future development of a school or leadership strand that is neither distant from young people, nor from the Latin, Brazilian culture.

Theory Review

Interpersonal Relations in the Work Environment

According to Burke et al. (2006), although there have been different approaches to leadership, it seems that there is a certain pattern in focusing aspects of results, or behavioral aspects of people. In addition, there seems to be a consensus that better behavioral aspects can improve individual performance and, consequently, team and organizational performance. Not only leadership counts on performance improvement, but also employees' own perception and attitude in the face of adversity (Hussein, & Hassan, 2016). A leader who cares about the growth of the employee himself becomes a person capable of positively influencing the job (Öner, 2012). Unlike the manager who seeks to harass and bully within the organizational environment (Ertureten, Celmacilar, & Aycan, 2013), or to act irresponsibly with society itself (Pless, & Maak, 2011).

Daily work routine and leadership have a lot of influence in the individual's behavior, depending on the situations experienced, it can result in good (a project) or bad emotions (such as arguing with colleagues, feelings of hurt, resentment, hatred, etc.). Since the work environment is one of the factors that influence and motivate productivity, it is important that organizations provide a pleasant, stimulating, rich and innovative work environment. In the observations of Hussein and Hassan (2016), the work environment as well as the external environment can influence the effectiveness of leadership. Thus, not only the bureaucratic or visionary side of the leader is important, but it also serves as a facilitator of collaborations (Marques, 2016). For example, Sharma (2015) regarding the main factors influencing stress in the Indian automotive industry, notes that the work environment and an authoritarian style of leadership are the main factors related to workers stress, furthermore, the authoritarian style of leadership can also provoke a higher stress load.

Complementarily, in the organizational environment, the behavior is often different than expected due to interaction with other people. According to Bom Sucesso (1997, p. 36):

The valorization of the human being, the concern with feelings and emotions, and with the quality of life are factors that make a difference. Work is how man, on the one hand, interacts and transforms the environment, ensuring survival, and on the other, establishes interpersonal relationships that theoretically serve to reinforce his identity and sense of contribution.

Everyone needs to work in harmony because each one has his own way of dealing with problems and feelings. The emotions and interactions differ in each sector, because each place has its own characteristics to conduct the work. Thus, certain leadership styles can affect, positively or negatively, the quality of life of the individual worker as well as the organizational system as a whole (Jodar-i-Solà et al., 2016).

According to Bom Sucesso (1997), it is important that in addition to self-knowledge, there is also the knowledge of the other, to understand how the person acts at work, which may hinder or facilitate relationships. The most observed difficulties highlighted by the author are: lack of personal goals, difficulty in prioritizing, difficulty in listening to others.

Knowing how to listen is a very important point, because it allows the understanding not only of the subject, but also of body language, the choice of words and showing respect for the speaker.

Therefore, the presence of a leader who can deal with different emotions, actions and opinions is necessary, besides being able to listen and leading the team to success (Öner, 2012). At the same time, Marques (2016) emphasizes the need for leaders to understand the human side of the worker, since in order to cope with complex and unstructured situations, leadership must be seen as a collaborative and not just a bureaucratic process. Within the aspects of leadership, assertiveness appears to be promising (Scamell, & Stead, 1984).

Assertive Leadership and Types of Behavior

Assertiveness is the characterization of how a person reacts in a situation where their position and interests are or may conflict with the position and interest of others (Ames, 2009).

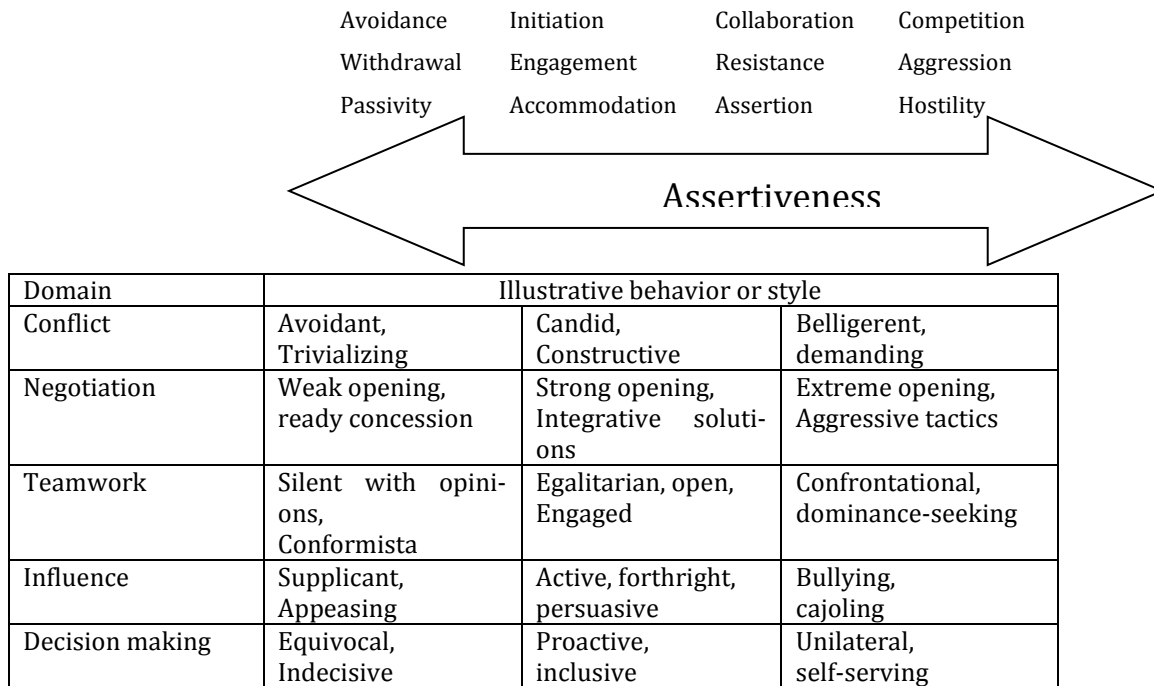
Interpersonal relationships help assertive leadership, since communication is efficient, constructive, and professional relationships are more successful.

Assertive leadership brings benefits to the team, because opinions can be expressed and there is a search for solutions that meet the interests of all. Employees receive periodic and constructive feedback on their performance. Nonetheless, the

company also gains from assertive leadership, as it contributes to increased productivity, accelerates problem solving, and reduces tension among employees.

For example, Ames (2009) shows us that the differences in the types of behavior can be associated with the increased perception of assertiveness (Figure 1).

Figure 1-Perceptions of interpersonal assertiveness (AMES, 2009)



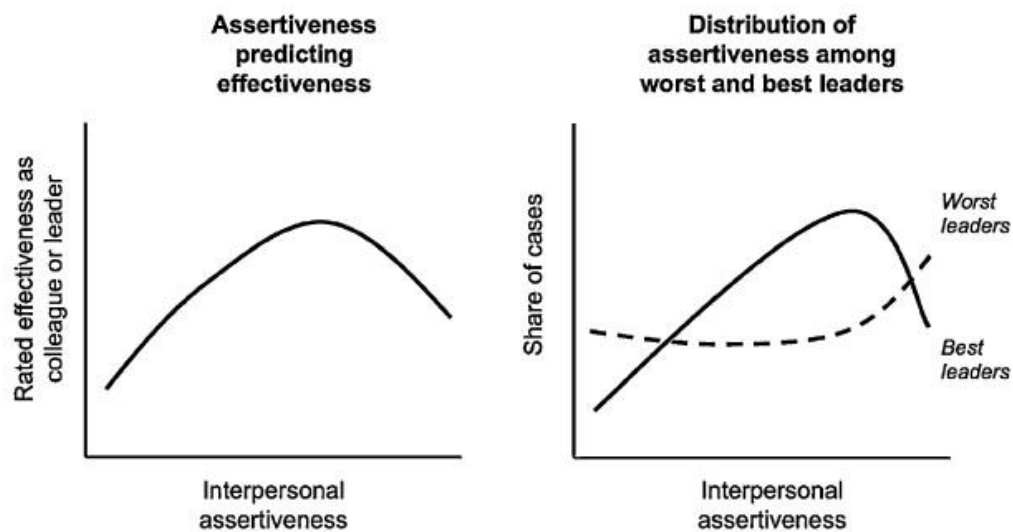
Source: Ames, 2009, p. 114.

In the Ames (2009) studies, assertiveness appeared in about half of the descriptions of failed leaders, while one quarter indicated a lower index and others indicated an excess of assertiveness. For the author, these results suggest that assertiveness usually plays an important role in the perception of leaders, whether they are victorious or not.

Research shows assertiveness as an organizational challenge and it can be an essential component of effective leadership and show itself to be one of the responsible factors when leadership fails (Ames 2008, 2009).

When relating assertiveness to the organization 's effectiveness, it is possible to demonstrate a certain graphical curvilinear relationship in the form of an inverted U. However, the distribution of the failed leaders is demonstrated in the form of a U (Figure 2 - Ames, 2009).

Figure 2 - Relationship between assertiveness and effectiveness (left) and distribution of faulty and effective leaders on the assertiveness curve (right).



Source: AMES, 2009, p. 116.

According to Ames (2009, p.116), "[...] compared to effective leaders, leaders who failed were considerably more likely to show high or extremely low levels of assertiveness. About 35% of failed leaders occupied one extreme or another, compared with 13% of effective leaders. [...]"

An excess of assertiveness, as well as the lack of it, are both linked to the perception of weakness related to the leader. Since assertive behaviors can be reactive, proactive, verbal, nonverbal, immediate, and / or protracted (Ames, & Flynn, 2007), some of these behaviors can be perceived as being negative. For example, an overly assertive leader may be hostile and offensive, and a leader who lacks assertiveness may have difficulties in situations that require initiative and conviction in the exercise of power. Being too assertive can also be perceived as micro-management and lack of empowerment for the worker.

In a creative and complementary way, Ames & Flynn (2007) compare assertiveness with the amount of salt in a sauce: if it is in excess, it can dominate the dish. If it is too little, it makes almost no difference. However, the right amount allows the flavors to balance. Thus, leaders need to be harmonically assertive.

Still, related to the curvilinear effect, extremely low or extremely high levels of assertiveness may have costs that are greater than the benefits.

Instrumental and social consequences present themselves in different ways for each level of assertiveness: leaders of high assertiveness were poorly evaluated for social efficiency, while leaders of low assertiveness were poorly assessed for instrumental efficiency.

According to Ames and Flynn (2007) and Ames (2008), a mean level of assertiveness can be understood as the most effective, since it allows balancing the issue of interpersonal relationships with the outcomes. In a way, this agrees with the clas-

studies of House (1971) and the instrumental and behavioral dimensions of leadership.

The studies by Ames and Flynn (2007) show us that optimal levels of assertiveness must be established to enable the leader to achieve his goals in relation to the tasks, while improving and preserving his relationships with people. However, this does not mean that moderate assertiveness is the ideal answer, but that leaders should have appropriate levels of assertiveness for each situation (Ames, & Flynn, 2007).

Still, in relation to the behavior, the individual can be influenced by the environment, the values, emotions and even by their beliefs, presenting different behaviors in certain situations. For this reason, Gillen (2001) presents a typology of possible behaviors for the leader (Table 1):

Table 1 - Types of behavior

Type of behavior	Body language	Actions
Passive - eager to avoid confrontation, even at the expense of himself - expects people to understand what he / she wants; very concerned about the opinion of others about him/her.	Minimal eye contact. Quiet, hesitant voice. Confused speech. Defensive attitude, shrunken posture. Fidgets and is restless.	Blames him or herself for everything. Hates the subject; avoids direct approach. Excessive justification; requests approval. Easily cedes. Generates sympathy; makes people feel guilty in asking for things.
Aggressive - eager to win, even at the expense of others, more concerned with one's own desires than with others.	Maximum eye contact. High voice; stern. Avoidant posture. Tightens his/her fingers and points.	Immediately blames others. Criticizes people, not their behavior. Interrupts frequently. Authoritarian. Uses sarcasm, criticism and scorn to win the issue. Requests seem like orders. The situation gets heated easily.
Passive / aggressive - presents mixed behavior, with elements of aggressiveness and passivity. Eager to settle issues without risking confrontation. Behavior often found in people who want to assert themselves without having the power to do so.	Minimal eye contact, but looks straight ahead more than to the ground. Laconic, sighs with impatience. Exasperated, uses expressions like 'I can't believe what I'm hearing.' Closed posture.	Gives indirect answers, makes sarcastic allusions, has an irritating sense of humor. Settles issues and conflicts indirectly.
Assertive - eager to defend his rights, but at the same time able to accept that other people also have theirs.	Enough visual contact to imply that he / she is being sincere. Moderate, neutral tone of voice. Moderate and safe posture. Body expression consistent with his/her words.	Listens a lot, tries to understand. Treats people with respect. Accepts agreements; solutions. Agrees to state or explain his/her intentions. Goes straight to the point, without being harsh. Insists on pursuing his/her goal.

Source: Gillen, 2001, pp. 14-15.

Thus, individuals who exhibit passive behavior demonstrate difficulty in facing interpersonal and personal confrontations, which can also be perceived by their body

language, as a defensive attitude, and by their actions, which may demonstrate emotional instability.

Individuals with aggressive behavior are only concerned with their own interests. They exhibit evasive body posture (escape) and use personal attacks to destabilize other people.

Individuals who exhibit passive/aggressive behavior are considered "on the fence", because depending on the need, they "attack" or "hide". They show impatience and a closed posture.

On the other hand, individuals with assertive behavior are sensible, considerate and seek to defend their rights, being able to accept the rights of others. They present body posture that conforms to their words and demonstrate security and sincerity.

According to Spiegler and Guevremont (1998), assertive behaviors can be characterized as verbal responses about feelings or opinions in a respectful way to the listener.

However, at times assertiveness can be confused with aggressiveness (Dutra, 2014). This is because people are not aware of the characteristics of assertive behavior, as well as its limits.

Assertiveness is not only related to responsibility for one's behavior and actions, but also to the level that is appropriate to each situation, ensuring a balance between one's own rights and the rights of others. However, this balance appears to be fragile and often assertiveness may be related to both the positive and negative sides of extroversion (Judge et al., 2009). In this case, extroversion is related to the ability to be sociable and with the tendency to experience positive and enjoyable experiences (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

There are also advantages and disadvantages in the use of each behavior according to the context (Dutra, 2014). At the same time, Alberti and Emmons (1978) note that assertive behavior is characterized by making the individual capable of acting according to one's interests, expressing sincere feelings without embarrassment, and exercising their own rights without denying others.

In this way, assertiveness is linked to the communication between individuals, since it is one of the processes by which the individual (sender) appropriately expresses his/her thoughts to the receiver, in addition to listening to the receiver and then responding to him/her in order to reach the objectives, maintaining and improving relationships with the receivers.

In addition to the previously mentioned characteristics, Caballo (1991) emphasizes that when the individual presents assertive behavior, this facilitates the solution of interpersonal problems, increases the sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem, enabling improvements in the quality of relationships.

Assertive Behaviors

As previously stated, it is important to emphasize that assertiveness does not concern what is right or wrong, but how leaders deal with problems, defend and expose their own opinions, clearly and directly. In addition, it may be intrinsically related to the extroversion-introversion dyad (Judge et al., 2009). Or yet, it may be

between the question of passivity and hostility (Santora, 2007). Passivity may serve as a sign of the leader's indifference to his or her collaborators, a weakness or lack of competence of leaders themselves.

Assertiveness varies with situations and with people. In the remarks of Santora (2007), it is necessary that the leader be flexible and know how to respect the context. No one is totally assertive in all circumstances and with all individuals (Dutra, 2014). Assertiveness can be observed in both verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication. For example, Ames (2009) shows us that differences in the types of behavior can be associated with the increased perception of assertiveness (Figure 1). For example, Table 2 and 3 represent verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication:

Table 2 - Content / Verbal Behavior

Use of sentences in the 1st person	The use of the "I" pronoun demonstrates responsibility for their actions, feelings and thoughts.
Empathy	Put oneself in someone else's shoes, trying to understand their feelings and emotions. It helps to build understanding for both individuals.
Clarity	Be direct, specific and brief. Do not be "dodgy" and say what you really want, in the most direct way possible. A clear response from the receptor is also expected. If it does not occur, replication is valid and, if necessary, examples.
Verbalization	It is important to mentalize the results to be achieved. This implies using an adequate set of words as well as seeking to encourage.

Source: Elaborated by the authors - adapted from Galassi and Galassi (1977)

The verbal aspect is complemented with the nonverbal posture of the communication, being important to pay attention in both sources of communication.

Table 3 - Nonverbal content / Behavior

Body Posture	Erect. Stable but relaxed (straight but not stiff).
Gestures	Firm and expressive gestures, but not excessive. Avoid crossing arms or placing a hand in front of the mouth.
Eye contact	Make direct eye contact. Avoid staring, with an offensive / invasive stare.
Facial expression	The facial expression is consistent with what is being said (e.g., smile if happy)
Voice	Fluent speech and compatible voice level. A safe speech and in a noticeable tone. When appropriate, there is the use of pauses, but without hesitations and uses of expressions like "Hm", "Hmm", etc. Tries to respond quickly and emphasize the content he/she wants.

Source: Elaborated by the authors - adapted from Galassi and Galassi (1977)

Another important issue highlighted by Galassi and Galassi (1977) is the feelings of law and justice perceived by an assertive person. Assertiveness is related to the person's freedom of exposure and extroversion, but in a fair and supportive environment. From the moment the individual has this perception, he/she is ready or

about to initiate the changes for self-development. With this in mind, we will describe in the next section the research design used in this work.

Methodology

Since the objective of the present study is to identify different assertive leadership subgroups of young Brazilian students, a quantitative research was carried out, as it allows detailed and theoretical deepening through multivariate statistical analysis.

This research has a descriptive character, since it seeks to detail already known aspects in the specialized literature. The descriptive process seeks to identify, record and analyze the factors related to what is being researched. Based on the characteristics and behaviors presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, a questionnaire was designed with the purpose of evaluating the profile of the respondents. Two hundred (200) valid questionnaires were obtained. The analysis will be done through cluster analysis. This kind of analysis has little frequency of application, but it yields substantial results, since it allows the identification of similar groups of respondents, allowing the creation of a leadership typology (Oshagbemi, & Ocholi, 2006).

The application of the questionnaire occurred through the Google Forms online platform, in a period of approximately three weeks in September 2016. In addition to the questions about the leadership profile, there were also three other aspects addressed: gender, age and current work position. The questions / affirmations were of the "closed" type, presenting a set of alternative answers to obtain the one that best represented the respondents' point of view. A 4-point Likert scale was used, where 1 indicates: Never / Totally different from me and 4 indicates: Always / Exactly as I am (2 and 3 are intermediate indicators).

The following are the questions used for the analysis of the leadership profile:

1. I do not lose my temper easily;
2. I hate confrontations and do everything I can to avoid them;
3. I avoid crossing my arms when talking to someone;
4. Patience is one of my virtues;
5. I try to solve problems directly, without blaming others;
6. To get what I want, or when I need to impose myself, I raise my voice and use offensive looks;
7. I rely on my ability to solve most situations involving confrontation with others;
8. My patience toward others is demonstrated through body language;
9. I can blame others easily and judge them by their behavior;
10. I believe that my feelings are as important as those of others and that I have the right to say when something makes me sad;
11. I say what I really want, clearly and "bluntly";
12. I remain calm even when dealing with offensive criticism;
13. I feel embarrassed when confronting someone about a particular problem;

14. When other people disagree with my opinion, I argue with them until they agree with me;
15. I feel easily constrained by sarcasm and criticism;
16. It is more important to achieve my goal than to win people's sympathy;
17. I feel comfortable talking to a group with a large number of people;
18. I give true opinions to those around me;
19. If someone asks me to do a task that I do not want to do, I will fill the request, but I will not do it as well as I could, on purpose;
20. For me, it is important to win the sympathy of people, even if I have to do things I would not normally do;
21. I have a hard time saying no to the requests people make me and when I say this I feel guilty;
22. When I need it, I feel comfortable asking for help;
23. I don't mind admitting my errors to others;
24. I use jokes and sarcasm when dealing with problems and / or other opinions.

Results

For a better understanding of the data, a cluster analysis was initially performed to find homogeneous groups of respondents within the sample. Cluster hierarchical analysis is used with the Ward method due to the possibility of forming more or less homogeneous clusters. Other methods such as centroid and nearest neighbor are used, but excessive asymmetry did not allow the formation of adequate clusters. Another point is the use of the square Euclidean Squared distance measure for the construction of clusters. According to Hair et al. (2009: 442): "this is the recommended distance" for the centroid and Ward clustering methods.

The range of 4 to 6 clusters was analyzed, being decided by the number of four due to dendrogram analysis. With this, cluster 1 presented 78 respondents; cluster 2 had 40 respondents, cluster 3 had 45 and cluster 4 had 37. Cluster 1 had the lowest mean at 24.7 years of age and cluster 2 had the highest percentage of women (75%). In turn, cluster 3 is the one with the highest percentage of respondents currently employed (71.1%), as well as the highest average age. Table 1 provides an overview of the clusters.

Table 1 - Demographic data of clusters

	N	Average age (years)	% of males	% of females	% of employed	% Not employed
Cluster 1	78	24.77	53.8	46.2	62.8	37.2
Cluster 2	40	25.22	25	75	60	40
Cluster 3	45	27.15	51.1	48.9	71.1	28.9
Cluster 4	37	27.10	51.4	48.6	67.6	32.4

Source: the authors

Regarding how clusters differed in the answers to the questions, Table 2 provides the mean for each of the questions.

Table 2 – Mean of responses according to the cluster

	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Q1	3.1667	.74584	2.5250	.67889	2.8667	.75679	2.8108	.90792
Q2	3.0128	.94654	2.7750	1.12061	2.9333	1.11600	2.7027	.84541
Q3	3.3333	.81650	2.4750	.90547	2.3111	.94922	3.1351	.97645
Q4	3.3077	.90177	2.2000	.91147	2.4667	.96766	2.6757	1.22597
Q5	3.1923	.83833	2.8750	.93883	3.6222	.64979	3.2432	.86299
Q6	1.3077	.49169	2.3500	.97534	1.4667	.66058	2.3243	.97337
Q7	3.1282	.85825	2.8500	.92126	3.5111	.78689	2.1892	.90792
Q8	2.7564	.85563	1.7500	.70711	2.8222	.83364	1.9730	.83288
Q9	1.7949	.81159	2.3750	.95239	1.5333	.75679	2.4324	.86732
Q10	2.5385	.97624	3.3250	.65584	3.2667	.86340	2.1081	1.04838
Q11	2.6154	.82542	2.8000	.85335	3.3333	.67420	2.2703	1.09668
Q12	3.2436	.74181	2.0500	.63851	2.8667	.78625	2.6486	1.11096
Q13	2.5897	.87440	2.4750	.87669	1.8444	.82450	3.3514	.58766
Q14	1.7949	.63161	2.1250	.68641	1.9556	.73718	2.0270	.76327
Q15	2.0385	.91796	2.6250	.83781	1.7111	.84267	3.0000	.91287
Q16	2.1026	.81527	2.5250	1.03744	2.6000	.88933	2.2973	.99624
Q17	2.6923	.95764	2.1750	1.08338	3.5111	.72683	1.4865	.90128
Q18	3.3205	.72959	3.5000	.67937	3.8889	.31782	3.2432	1.03831
Q19	1.4615	.65846	1.7500	.95407	1.3111	.55687	2.0000	1.08012
Q20	2.2436	.94231	2.0000	.98710	1.6444	.71209	2.8378	.83378
Q21	2.7692	.89621	2.4000	1.05733	1.8889	.98216	3.6216	.54525
Q22	3.2564	.74617	2.9750	.91952	3.7333	.53936	2.4865	.96095
Q23	3.3590	.75549	3.0250	.97369	3.6444	.64511	2.9189	1.18740
Q24	2.2692	1.01512	2.4000	1.00766	1.8667	.84208	3.0000	1.00000

Source: the authors

By analyzing the information in a broad way, it is possible to construct an initial typology of respondents in relation to assertive leadership, identifying four patterns of responses according to the averages of the questions. In this way, it is possible to suggest the following types:

- Cluster 1 - "Breeze" - meekness;
- Cluster 2 - "Stone" - determination;
- Cluster 3 - "Fire" - self-confidence and independence;
- Cluster 4 "Water" - friendliness;

Cluster 1 obtained the highest means for five questions, mainly involving patience and lull (questions 1, 4 and 12). So, it was labeled "Breeze," describing a leader who can stay calm in critical situations and / or give words of comfort in difficult times. Regarding the number of respondents who fall into this cluster, it is the most popular cluster of all with 78 members.

Unlike the previous cluster, cluster 2 was labeled "Stone" and determination, with the highest means for questions such as "To get what I want, or when I need to impose myself, I raise my voice and use offensive looks." It also obtained higher means in questions 10 and 14. It is a very determined type who believes he/she does not have to be popular, but to satisfy what he/she thinks is right. It's not the most popular cluster, however, it is not the least one either. 40 respondents fit into this group in total.

Cluster 3, the "Fire" cluster, represents leaders with self-confidence and independence. It is the group with the highest mean answers to 9 questions (5, 7, 8, 11, 16, 17, 18, 22 and 23), with questions involving elements of independence ("I try to solve problems without blaming others", "I trust my abilities", "I give true opinions") and cooperation ("I feel the urge to ask for help", "I don't mind admitting my mistakes"). In some points cluster 3 is similar to the previous group ("Stone"), but also distances itself from this due to the character of humility. In group 2 this characteristic does not seem to be so present.

Finally, cluster 4 represents "Water", the type that tries to create less friction with other people, using friendship and non-confrontation as strategies to maintain and develop relationships. Of all the clusters, this was the least popular, counting with only 37 members. If self-esteem and trust seem to be prevalent in the previous group, it seems to be the opposite in cluster 4. It is necessary to work on elements such as self-esteem and the possibility of saying "No" as a form of growth and respect.

Final Considerations

The figure of the leader has significant importance regarding the achievement of the objectives outlined, as well as in the organization of tasks, teamwork and in the success of the organization. Therefore, when it comes to leadership, it is necessary to study the different types of leaders and how this influence interpersonal relationships in the work environment. Among the vast specialized literature on leadership, this study was focused on assertive leadership because of the possibility of relating it to other theories and aspects of human behavior. The individual can be influenced by the environment, values, emotions and even by his beliefs, presenting different behaviors in certain situations. There are advantages and disadvantages in using each behavior. However, assertive behavior facilitates the solution of interpersonal problems, increases the sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem; enabling improvements in the quality of relationships.

However, both a lack of and over-assertiveness may be related to the perception of failed leaders (Ames, 2009). The results obtained through the application of the questionnaire indicate that the respondents, mostly university students, have a mean level of assertive leadership. Nonetheless, through cluster analysis it is possible to observe that not all respondents are the same and that we need to begin to scrutinize different types of assertive leaders and their characteristics as well as the route to their full development. Within the results, it is possible to distinguish four types of respondents, which were labeled according to their most prevalent characteristics: Breeze, Stone, Fire and Water. Each of the clusters present pros and cons, as

well as the possibility of growth, either by increasing certain characteristics, such as the self-confidence of the Water cluster, or by decreasing a characteristic as well. The egoism of the Stone cluster is an example of decrease. In this way, the analysis of clusters allows the creation of a typology to further deepen theorization about leadership in organizations (Oshagbemi, & Ocholi, 2006).

In conclusion, it is expected that the leaders develop their skills, knowing how to deal with the forces that involve the leadership, besides having a clear and open posture to what is proposed. Furthermore, there is a need for behavioral change to provide more assertive communication, recognizing their rights and the rights of others, receiving and giving feedback, taking responsibility and expressing themselves accurately. It is also essential to use levels of assertiveness pertinent to each situation, enabling better relationships in the work environment and in everyday relationships in a collaborative way (Marques, 2016).

Overall, the study presented some limitations, such as theoretical restrictions - the use of only one facet of leadership - and the use of multivariate cluster analysis statistics. Another limitation is the restriction for a young population rather than individuals who had more time in the labor market, as well as more professional and life experience.

Regarding future research, this study points to the need to research different audiences and sectors, as well as coaching for assertive leaders. More sophisticated tools with structural equations can be used to further investigate the relationship between leaders' assertive behavior and verbal/nonverbal modes of communication, as well as further detailing the characteristics of different types of assertive leaders.

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