

Balancing Task- and People-Oriented Leadership to Enhance Employee Motivation: Evidence from the Port of Leixões

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation within the organizational context of the Port of Leixões, one of the largest maritime ports in Portugal. In increasingly complex and competitive organizational environments, leadership plays a crucial role in fostering employee engagement, motivation, and performance. Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs as the theoretical framework, the research explores how different leadership styles relate to employees' motivational dimensions in a port authority setting. The study adopts a quantitative research design based on a structured questionnaire administered to employees of the Port of Leixões. A total of 111 valid responses were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and repeated-measures ANOVA with SPSS. The analysis evaluates the relationship between motivation dimensions and four leadership styles: task-oriented, people-oriented, participative, and autocratic leadership. The findings indicate that employees generally report moderate levels of motivation and perceive their leaders as playing an important role in fostering it. Self-esteem needs emerge as the most valued motivational dimension among respondents. Regarding leadership, task-oriented and people-oriented styles show the strongest associations with employee motivation, while autocratic leadership receives the lowest evaluation. Contrary to some expectations, task-oriented leadership does not negatively affect motivation. This study contributes to the leadership and organizational behaviour literature by providing empirical evidence from the port industry - an organizational context that remains relatively underexplored. The results highlight the relevance of balanced leadership approaches that combine attention to tasks and people in promoting employee motivation.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Employee motivation, Port industry, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Organizational behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The way leaders manage their teams and inspire employees is crucial for productivity, well-being in the workplace, and, consequently, motivated employees. To achieve this, leaders can adopt different leadership styles, including autocratic, democratic, and liberal (laissez-faire) (Silva & Reis, 2016; Goleman, 2017). A range of theories and approaches are evident in the context of leadership, such as: trait-based; behavioral; situational or contingent; as well as new approaches to leadership, namely: charismatic; transformational; and transactional (Rego, 1997; Conger, 1991; Burns, 2004; Bowditch & Buono, 2006; Carapeto & Fonseca, 2006; Barracho, 2012; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013; Schermerhorn, 2013; Robbins & Judge, 2013; Sun & Henderson, 2017; Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Ferreira et al., 2021; Abid et al., 2021).

Motivation is a crucial factor in ensuring individuals are engaged in their roles, contributing directly to achieving positive results (Teixeira, 2010; Verma & Verm, 2012; Robbins and Judge; 2015). Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Martinelli & Bartholomeu, 2007; Pinder; 2008; Lira & da Silva, 2015; Ribeiro et al., 2016; de Moraes Wyse, 2018). According to the literature, it is possible to identify several theories (e.g., Teixeira, 2013; Cunha et al., 2014; Chiavenato, 2010; Ferreira, 2021), namely Maslow's Theory (Maslow, 1954; Neves et al., 2011) (the basis of this empirical study).

Although the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation has been widely studied in management and organizational behaviour literature, most empirical research has focused on sectors such as manufacturing, services, healthcare, or education. Comparatively little attention has been given to the port and maritime industry, despite its strategic importance for international trade and the operational complexity that characterizes port organizations. Ports operate in highly demanding environments where coordination, safety, and efficiency are essential, making leadership practices particularly relevant for employee motivation and performance. In this context, empirical evidence on how leadership styles influence motivation in port organizations remains limited.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation in the organizational context of the Port of Leixões, using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a theoretical framework. Leadership is closely linked to employee motivation and organizational performance in the port industry. Effective leadership is described as the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish organizational goals and improve the organization (McNicholas & Piper, 2016 and Butt et al., 2023). The motivation and performance of employees are considered the main tools contributing to the long-term success of port organizations, with leadership and motivation being highly interrelated (Butt et al., 2023 and Beşikçi, 2019). Leadership skills are particularly significant for key positions such as a ship's master and chief engineer, where the leader must determine and implement the most suitable leadership style to ensure organizational success and motivate seafarers (Beşikçi, 2019).

The work is based on a quantitative approach relying on a questionnaire. From a population of 239 employees, 111 valid responses were obtained. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and statistical tests, with all tests showing a significance level of 0.05 and confidence intervals with a 95 per cent confidence level. The work examines leadership-motivation dynamics in one of Portugal's major ports, shedding light on an understudied organizational environment with high operational complexity.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework to examine how different leadership styles influence employees' motivational dimensions. The study offers an empirical contribution by providing evidence on the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation. Finally, it makes a contextual contribution by examining these relationships within the port industry, an organizational setting that remains relatively underexplored in management research. The results highlight the importance of combining task-oriented and people-oriented leadership styles to enhance employee motivation in complex operational environments such as port organizations

The article is structured as follows: after the introduction, a literature review is presented based on the concept of leadership and motivation. This is followed by a description of the research, including research questions and the conceptual model, data collection and analysis, and the sample description. The results are then presented and discussed, and finally, the conclusion is drawn.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership: concept, styles and theories

Leadership is an interactive and dynamic process of influence. The leader must be accepted by people to act in accordance with ethical and beneficial principles, for the organization and for themselves, to achieve the objectives and goals defined by organizations (Bass, 1985; Bryman, 2013; Robbins, 2013; Silva, 2016; Rego & Cunha, 2010; Burton et al., 2019; Rego & Cunha, 2019). In this line of thought, a good leader establishes, maintains, and promotes trust, optimism, and a spirit of sacrifice within the group (Rego & Cunha, 2010; Bryman, 2013).

There are different leadership styles, notably autocratic, democratic/participative, or liberal (*laissez-faire*) (Silva & Reis, 2016; Goleman, 2017). In the autocratic leadership style, power resides with the leader, who displays an authoritarian image, a formal posture, and a lack of relaxed, two-way communication with subordinates. In other words, the leader makes the decisions and does not accept employee participation, who feel nullified in the workplace (Lewin et al., 1939; Iqbal et al., 2021). The democratic leadership style - participative leadership style - shares leadership responsibility, involves subordinates in the decision-making process, discusses work, and divides tasks, and fosters trust (Maximiano, 2012). In this style, communication is an important factor in decision-making. The dialogue plays a key role between the leader and employees, demonstrating concern for everyone on the team (Khan et al., 2015). The liberal leader does not intervene in decision-making, functioning solely as a group member, granting employees considerable autonomy, and ignoring turbulent events. He believes that the turbulent events must follow their natural course and resolve themselves (Lewin et al., 1939). Therefore, they do not assume the true role of a leader, as their excessive permissiveness can lead to a lack of cohesion around established objectives (Silva & Reis, 2018).

This context has led to extensive research on leadership, highlighting a wide range of theories and approaches. Each perspective presents different attributes and characteristics of the leader, as well as distinct methodologies to be adopted.

Researchers at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan proposed two behavioral dimensions of leadership: one focused on interpersonal relations and another on tasks. The people-oriented dimension refers to leaders who show concern for the individual needs of subordinates and acceptance of differences within the group. In contrast, the task-oriented dimension is characterized by an emphasis on the efficient execution of tasks and the achievement of established goals (Robbins, 2010). In line with this perspective, Maximiano (2000) argues that the task-oriented leader tends to concentrate on the work carried out by the subordinate or group, prioritizing the fulfillment of deadlines, stressing the importance of attaining predefined objectives, and assigning specific tasks to particular individuals. The people-oriented leader, by contrast, directs attention to the employees or the group itself, emphasizing human relations and the development of collaborative capacities. This type of leader demonstrates genuine interest by listening and paying careful attention, maintains a friendly and supportive attitude, and provides ongoing support to employees.

Despite this diversity, leadership is commonly conceptualized through four main approaches: trait-based, behavioral, situational or contingent-based, and more contemporary approaches, including charismatic, transformational, and transactional leadership.

The trait approach dates back to the 1930s and 1940s and assumed that leaders were differentiated by their physical traits (weight or height), intellectual traits (self-confidence and adaptability), social traits (interpersonal relationships and cooperation), and personality traits (extroversion and conscientiousness) (Bowditch & Buono, 2006; Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Ferreira et al., 2021; Abid et al., 2021). Thus, according to trait theory, leadership is innate, intrinsic to the individual, and predisposes them to be capable and able to effectively perform leadership roles (Schermerhorn, 2013; Rego, 1997). The approach generates much criticism from researchers, as they consider the possibility that there were people who, despite not being born leaders, could become leaders with the proper preparation (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Barracho, 2012).

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, behavioral theory emerged, emphasizing everything a leader does and behaves. The observation of different types of behaviours adopted by the leader was the methodology used (Bergamini, 2009).

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, situational or contingency leadership theory emerged, introducing the idea that to achieve effectiveness, each context requires a specific type of leadership. Therefore, the theory demonstrates that leadership is not limited merely to the leader's characteristics and actions, but also to the profile of the subordinates within the organization, the type of tasks to be performed, and the context in which all members of the organization are inserted.

On the other hand, the original theory of charismatic leadership is based on follower perceptions. In this framework, the leader seeks to build trust among their employees to gain their followers' support for their ideas and convictions, transforming failures into learning opportunities (Conger, 1991). This scenario is based on interactions between the profile of leaders, leadership behaviour, follower characteristics, and the situation/environment within the organizational context. Therefore, it is described as a comprehensive theory.

Transformational leadership seeks to encourage critical thinking, a desire for change, instigate motivation among followers, and a high level of commitment to the organization. It defines a model of cooperation between leaders and followers in the pursuit of common goals for the success of the organization, prioritizing unconditional support for their team (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013; Carapeto & Fonseca, 2006; Sun & Henderson, 2017). Transactional leadership focuses on achieving results through rewards or punishments. Tasks are clearly defined by the leader, performed to obtain benefits, avoid retaliation, and imply an exchange relationship between leaders and followers (Burns, 2004; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Transactional leadership promotes contingency reinforcement and management by exception. Contingency reinforcement is related to the frequency with which the leader tells subordinates what to do. Management by exception refers to a leader who refrains from providing instructions and feedback to employees, ensuring that operations proceed as planned, intervening only if established rules are not strictly followed.

Motivation: concept, typology and theories

Motivation energizes and directs individuals' behaviour toward a purpose, and leaders must recognize their work, persistence, direction, and intensity (Teixeira, 2010; Verma & Verm, 2012; Robbins and Judge, 2015). Motivation shares four common elements: stimulation, action and effort, movement and persistence, and reward. The stimulation refers to the factors that trigger behavior. The action and the effort refer to the observed behaviour. The movement and the persistence are related to the prolongation of the observed behaviour over time. The reward translates into reinforcement of previous actions (Cunha et al., 2016).

The motivation can be driven by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors seek recognition and personal fulfillment. The extrinsic factors come from tangible rewards or the avoidance of some kind of punishment (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Martinelli & Bartholomeu, 2007; Pinder, 2008; Lira & da Silva, 2015; Ribeiro et al., 2016; de Moraes Wyse, 2018). According to the literature, several theories explain what influences people's behaviour in an organizational context. These theories are divided into two categories: process theories and content theories.

The process theories demonstrate that motivations change from person to person over time and include: Vroom's Expectancy Theory (e.g., Neves et al., 2011; Mações, 2017), Admas's Equity Theory (Cunha et al., 2014; Teixeira, 2013), and Locke and Lathan's Goal Wiring (e.g., Robbins, 2015). The content theories seek to explain the object of motivation and focus on each individual's internal factors and how these influence their behaviour. These theories include Herzberg's two-factor theory (e.g. Cunha et al., 2014; Chiavenato, 2010), McClelland's acquired needs (e.g. Teixeira, 2013; Ferreira, 2021) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The two-factor theory categorizes individual needs into two groups. Motivational factors, which are inherent or intrinsic to the work itself - such as personal achievement, recognition, and the nature of the work - lead to employee satisfaction; however, when these factors are deficient, they may result in dissatisfaction. Hygienic factors, in turn, are extrinsic to the work and include physical and environmental working conditions, salary, and relationships with colleagues, among others. These factors primarily influence dissatisfaction in the sense that their inadequacy generates dissatisfaction, whereas their adequacy tends to prevent dissatisfaction rather than create true satisfaction (Chiavenato, 2010; Cunha et al., 2014). According to Herzberg (1966), these two sets of factors operate independently: motivational factors generate satisfaction, but their absence does not necessarily generate dissatisfaction; rather, it leads to a lack of satisfaction. The same applies to hygienic factors, which may produce dissatisfaction when absent or inadequate, or merely a lack of dissatisfaction when present at acceptable levels. Herzberg further argued that motivational factors are those that truly motivate, and they may be likened to Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs, as they promote long-term satisfaction and increased productivity. Delegation of responsibilities, autonomy in performing work, and job enrichment are examples of mechanisms that may effectively encourage employees within an organization (Neves et al., 2011). Hygienic factors, in contrast, are associated with the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy (physiological, safety, and social needs) and are mainly capable of reducing dissatisfaction rather than fostering genuine motivation.

The acquired needs theory highlights need that are developed over time through lived experiences and interactions with the environment (Teixeira, 2013). Within this framework, individuals are understood to possess three primary motivational needs: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power (McClelland, 1961; Ferreira & Martinez, 2008). Needs for achievement reflect the desire to define and accomplish

challenging goals, to perform tasks better, and to exceed established standards of excellence (Teixeira, 2013). Needs for affiliation refer to the individual's desire to maintain friendly interpersonal relationships, avoid conflict, and build genuine friendships (Maximiano, 2012; Robbins, 2013). Power needs are associated with the desire to control, decide, influence, and assume responsibility for the performance of others. Individuals with a high need for power seek prestige and visibility (Ferreira & Martinez, 2008). Each exhibits these three needs in different degrees, and at particular points in time, one of them tends to prevail over the others (Teixeira, 2013).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory emerged in the 1950s (Maslow, 1954). While several motivational theories offer valuable insights, Maslow's theory provides a comprehensive and structured understanding of how human needs evolve, making it particularly suitable for analyzing motivational dynamics in organizational settings. Unlike Herzberg's two-factor theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators, or McClelland's acquired needs theory, which focuses on three dominant motivational drivers shaped by experience, Maslow's model captures the full progression of individual needs - from basic physiological requirements to higher-order psychological fulfillment. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory grouped needs into five levels according to their degree of importance: physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and personal fulfillment (Maslow, 1954). At the base of the pyramid are physiological needs, such as food, sleep, fatigue, and shelter. These are the needs that individuals seek to satisfy first, as they are related to their survival. At the second level are security needs, whether in terms of stability, salary, or protection from external dangers such as violence and natural disasters. Social needs, located at the third level, refer to fulfilling the sense of belonging, as human beings need to feel wanted and loved. The self-esteem needs are associated with an individual's self-appreciation, self-confidence, need for social approval, prestige, and consideration. When unmet, they generate feelings of weakness, low self-esteem, and discouragement, influencing the individual's productivity, as does the surrounding environment. The need for self-actualization and self-development impacts the exploration of one's full potential. These needs are located at the top of the pyramid and are the most complex to fully satisfy because the individual is constantly seeking growth and individual improvement. At this level, along with qualifications and competencies, they have a direct impact on motivational factors within an organization, enabling advancement within the pyramid (Chiavenato, 2010; de Moraes Wyse, 2018; Neves et al., 2011; Mações, 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research questions and conceptual model

The literature review showed that leadership can influence employee motivation (Cunha et al., 2016). Motivated employees demonstrate initiative and ambition to do excellent work and advance their careers through their own efforts, thus becoming successful professionals (Seixas, 2020). So, leadership and motivation are closely related, as different leadership practices lead to better or worse motivational responses from employees (Cunha et al., 2016; Latham, 2012).

This study focuses on one of the biggest ports in Portugal – the Port of Leixões. The Port is located in northern Portugal and is home to the logistics platform, freight rail terminals, cruise terminal, training centre, and support centre—all crucial to the sector in Portugal.

The main objective of this study is to analyze leadership and motivation within the organizational context of the Port of Leixões, drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow's theory was selected as the most suitable theoretical framework. The model considers all individuals' needs, from basic physiological to higher-order psychological fulfillment. This hierarchical structure aligns with the objectives of the present study, which seeks to understand how different leadership styles relate to employees' diverse motivational needs. By mapping questionnaire items across Maslow's levels, the study is able to systematically examine how leadership influences foundational needs such as safety and belonging, as well as higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualization.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) Identify the item with the highest and lowest average, based on the needs of self-esteem, social needs, safety, and self-actualization;
- 2) Identify the participants' degree of motivation and the importance they attribute to the leader for this motivation through the average value;
- 3) Identify the most relevant motivation dimension according to gender, age, educational qualifications, length of service, and hierarchical position;
- 4) Identify the item with the highest and lowest average of the current leader and effective leader, based on the task-oriented leadership style, people-oriented leadership style, participative leadership style, and autocratic leadership style;
- 5) Identify the most evident leadership style of the current leader and the effective leader according to gender, age, educational qualifications, length of service, and hierarchical position;
- 6) Compare the averages of the ten items with the highest average value of the effective leader with the current leader.

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: There is a positive correlation between people-oriented leadership and motivation.

H2: There is a positive correlation between participative leadership and motivation.

H3: An autocratic leadership style leads to low motivation.

H4: There is a significant relationship between task-oriented leadership and employee motivation.

Therefore, the following conceptual model was defined for the research – see **Figure 1**.

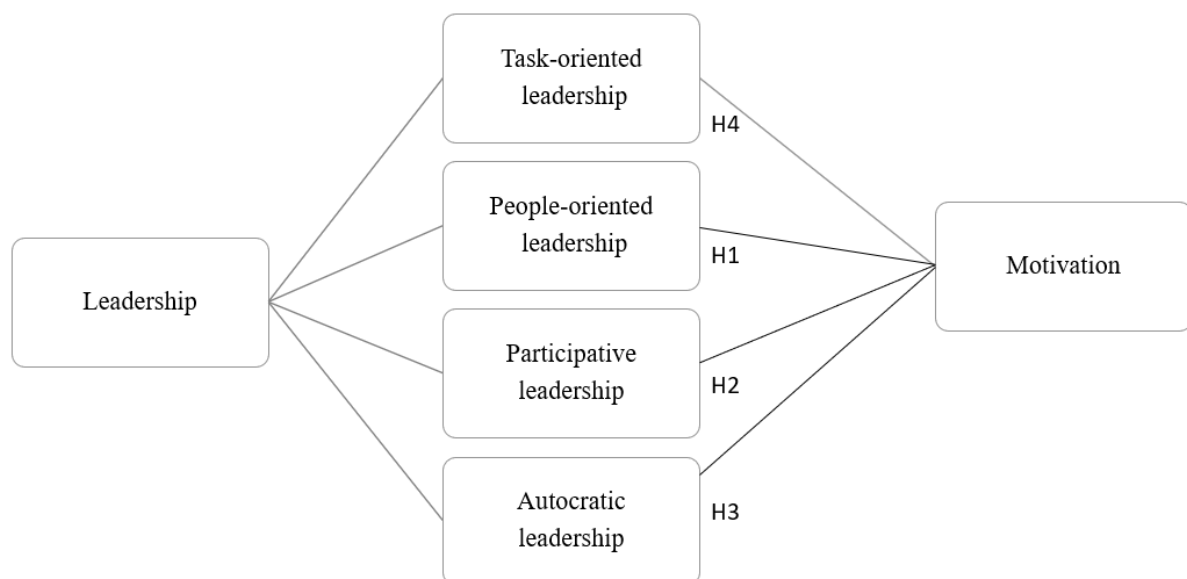


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Data collection and analysis

The study follows a quantitative method and data were collected through a validated questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 93 questions, structured in three parts: 1) motivation, 2) leadership and 3) sociodemographic data. The questions are closed-ended and a seven-point Likert scale was used, with one being "I do not agree" or "rarely agree" and seven being "I almost always agree" or "completely agree".

The matrix of employee motivation in an organizational context consists of 17 questions - see **Table 1**.

Table 1. Analysis matrix of employee motivation in an organizational context

Dimensions	Questionnaire Items	Authors
Self-Esteem Needs	1.2 Values the loyalty of those responsible for their employees.	Chiavenato (2010)
	1.6 Values, appreciation and recognition for work performed.	Maslow (1954)
	1.13 Values a work environment where trust and respect exist.	Neves et al. (2011)
Social Needs	1.8 You appreciate the feeling of being involved.	De Moraes Wyse (2018)
	1.9 You value adequate discipline.	Ferreira & Martinez (2008)
	1.10 You value being available to solve personal problems.	Maslow (1954)
	1.11 You value prestigious and high-status work.	Neves et al. (2011)
	1.12 It is important to you to have greater responsibility at work.	
Safety Needs	1.4 It is essential for you to have a secure job.	
	1.5 It is important for you to have good working conditions.	De Moraes Wyse (2018)
	1.7 It is important for you to have an interesting job.	Maslow (1954)
	1.14 It is important for you to have a good relationship with your coworkers.	Neves et al. (2011)
	1.15 It is important for you to have a good relationship with your superiors.	
Self-Actualization Needs		De Moraes Wyse (2018)
	1.1 It's important to you to have the opportunity to advance your career.	Fachada (2012)
	1.3 It's important to you that your salary is appropriate for your role.	Maslow (1954)
		Neves et al. (2011)
Relationship Between the Leader and Motivation	1.16 You feel motivated about your work.	Burton et al. (2019)
	1.17 Your leader plays an important role in your motivation.	Rego & Cunha (2010)
		Teixeira (2010)

Source: Authors

To assess the employees' perception about the characteristics and behaviours of their leader, and the characterization of their ideal leader (an effective leader), a matrix was constructed based on 68 questions - see **Table 2**.

Table 2. Leadership analysis matrix for the current and effective leader

Leadership Style	Questionnaire Items	Authors
Task-Oriented	2.1 Have self-confidence.	
	2.2 Have a vision.	
	2.3 Be an agent of change.	
	2.5 Delegate responsibilities to employees.	
	2.7 Define the organization's structure.	Cunha et al. (2016)
	2.8 Establish the organization's rules.	Maximiano (2000)
	2.9 Be a source of inspiration.	Robbins (2010)
	2.10 Motivate employees.	
	2.11 Provide specific guidance.	
	2.12 Define the objectives to be achieved.	
People-Oriented	2.13 Provide personalized attention to employees.	
	2.14 Concern for employee needs.	
	2.22 Maintain a trusting relationship with subordinates.	
	2.23 Maintain a respectful relationship with subordinates.	
	2.27 Resolve conflicts.	
	2.28 Encourage cooperation.	
	2.29 Be charismatic.	Cunha et al. (2016)
	2.30 Focus on production.	Robbins (2010)
	2.31 Focus on achieving established goals.	
	2.32 Recognize good employee performance.	
	2.33 Reward good employee performance.	
	2.34 Establish a formal relationship with employees.	

Participative	2.15 Tries to do what the majority wants.	Cunha et al. (2016) Lewin et al. (1939)
	2.16 Supports employees in carrying out their tasks.	
	2.17 Consults employees when making decisions.	
	2.18 Let employees make their own decisions.	
	2.19 Emphasizes interpersonal relationships.	
	2.20 Emphasizes the technical aspect of the work.	
	2.24 Involves employees in setting goals.	
	2.25 Involves employees in preparing decisions.	
Autocratic	2.26 Role of facilitator and communicator.	Iqbal (2021) Jesuino (2005) Lewin et al. (1939) Lewin et al. (1939)
	2.4 To be dominant.	
	2.6 To be in control and monitor.	
	2.21 Fully centralized decision-making.	

Source: Authors.

The questionnaire has been validated, and a pre-test was conducted. The questionnaire was administered to 21 people, and the pre-test Cronbach's alpha (α) was 0.990, indicating excellent internal consistency of the instrument - see **Table 3**.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics – Cronbach's Alpha of the pre-test

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
,990	85

Note: Table 3 presents Cronbach's alpha for the pre-test (85 items). Source: Authors.

The questionnaire was distributed via internal email in 2024 to the organization's employees. The consistency was analyzed after the responses, reinforcing the consistency with a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.972.

Data were processed using SPSS software, using descriptive statistics, the mean value (M), standard deviations, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. A repeated-measures ANOVA was performed to assess the mean differences in scores between the different domains of the same construct. When a significant effect was identified, post-hoc comparisons were performed with Bonferroni correction. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of 0.05, and confidence intervals were presented at a 95 per cent confidence level.

Sample Description

The study analyzes the employees at the Port of Leixões. Of the 239 employees, 111 valid responses were obtained. The sample consists mostly of men (51 per cent), between the ages of 36 and 50 (55 per cent), married or living in a civil partnership (71 per cent), with a bachelor's degree (43 per cent), worked at the organization for more than 10 years (66 per cent), with permanent employment contracts (75 per cent), and primarily hold senior technical positions (23 per cent) - see **Table 4**.

Table 4. Sample

Variable	Description	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	52	47
	Male	57	51
	Does not answer	2	2
Age Group	18 to 24 years old	1	1
	25 to 35 years old	9	8
	36 to 50 years old	61	55
	51 and older	37	33
	Does not answer	3	3
Marital Status	Single	16	14
	Married/Common-law partner	79	71
	Divorced	11	10
	Widowed	1	1
	Does not answer	4	4
Educational Qualifications	1st Cycle (4th year)	0	0
	2nd Cycle (6th year)	0	0
	3rd Cycle (9th year or equivalent)	2	2
	Secondary Education (12th year)	31	28
	Bachelor's Degree	48	43
	Degree	2	2
	Master's Degree	27	24
	PhD	1	1
Time in the Organization	No Answer	0	0
	Less than 5 years	20	18
	Between 5 and 10 years	14	13
	More than 10 years	73	66
Employment Type	Does not answer	4	4
	Indefinite-term contract	83	75
	Fixed-term employment contract	8	7
	Uncertain-term employment contract	13	12
	Service Provision Contract	0	0
	Temporary Employment Contract	0	0
Hierarchical Level	Public Interest Assignment Agreement	1	1
	Does not answer	6	6
	Technician Administrative	14	13
	Senior Technician	25	23
	Management	16	14
	Director	3	3
	Advisor	4	4
	President's Secretary	1	1
	Management Secretary	1	1
	Pilot	4	4
	Project Manager	1	1
	Driver	1	1
	IT Support Technician	1	1
	Operation Assistant	1	1
	Lawyer	1	1
	Sailor	2	2
	Offshore Engineer	1	1
	Auxiliary Technician	1	1
	Technician	4	4
	No Answer	30	27

Note: Table 4 presents the descriptive characteristics of the study sample, including demographic and professional. Values are reported as frequencies and percentages. Source: Authors.

RESULTS

Motivation

Motivation dimensions

According to the collected data, the item most valued by respondents is the loyalty of managers toward employees ($M=6,74$), inherent to the self-esteem dimension. The least valued is prestigious and high-status work ($M=5,12$), associated with the social needs dimension - see **Table 5**.

Table 5. Motivation Results

Motivation Dimension	Item	Mean
Self-Esteem Needs	You value the loyalty of your managers to your employees.	6,74
	You value appreciation and recognition for the work performed.	6,71
	You value a work environment where trust and respect exist.	6,71
Social Needs	You value the feeling of being involved in what you do.	6,65
	You value prestigious and high-status work.	5,12
Safety Needs	It's important to you to have good working conditions.	6,69
	It's important to you to have a good relationship with your superiors.	6,43
Self-Actualization Needs	It's important to you that your salary is appropriate for your role.	6,68
	It's important to you to have opportunities for career advancement.	6,55

Note: Table 5 presents the individual motivation items with the highest and lowest mean values, assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, and categorized according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Source: Authors.

Self-esteem needs are highly valued for both male and female respondents ($M=6,74$ and $M=6,68$) - see **Table 6**.

Table 6. Motivation dimension by gender

Gender		Self-esteem Needs	Social Needs	Safety Needs	Self-Actualization Needs
Male	Mean Score	6,7368	6,1544	6,4766	6,6140
	Standard Deviation	0,58329	0,77115	0,62981	0,79067
Female	Mean Score	6,6795	5,9833	6,5423	6,5962
	Standard Deviation	0,55213	0,87898	0,56476	0,67909

Note: Table 6 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the four motivation dimensions by gender, measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Respondents between 18- and 24-years old place greater importance on both self-esteem and self-actualization needs ($M=7,00$). Respondents between 25- and 35-years old place greater importance on security needs ($M=6,71$). Respondents between 36 and 50 years old and those over 51 place greater importance on self-esteem needs ($M=6,86$ and $M=6,45$) - see **Table 7**.

Table 7. Motivation dimension by age

Age		Self-esteem Needs	Social Needs	Safety Needs	Self-Actualization Needs
From 18 to 24 years old	Mean Score	7,0000	6,2000	6,4000	7,0000
	Standard Deviation ¹	--	--	--	--
From 25 to 35 years old	Mean Score	6,7037	6,3778	6,7111	6,8889
	Standard Deviation	0,38889	0,53333	0,43716	0,33333
From 36 to 50 years old	Mean Score	6,8579	6,2951	6,6918	6,7787
	Standard Deviation	0,38229	0,59650	0,50408	0,54409
From 51 years old	Mean Score	6,4505	5,6468	6,1667	6,2432
	Standard Deviation	0,75856	1,03874	0,64492	0,94738

Note: Table 7 presents the mean and standard deviation of the motivation dimensions by age categories, based on responses to items measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

¹ There is only one person in the 18–24 age group, which is insufficient to calculate the standard deviation.

According to **Table 8**, regardless of their qualifications, respondents attribute greater relevance to self-esteem needs (M=6,55 e M=6,79).

Table 8. Motivation dimension by educational qualifications

Educational qualifications		Self-esteem Needs	Social Needs	Safety Needs	Self-Actualization Needs
Non-Higher Education	Mean Score	6,5455	5,9697	6,3697	6,4848
	Standard Deviation	0,73038	0,96840	0,75187	0,91417
Higher Education	Mean Score	6,7863	6,1248	6,5791	6,6667
	Standard Deviation	0,46205	0,75475	0,50923	0,63791

Note: Table 8 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for each motivation dimension, comparing respondents with and without higher education, using items rated on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Regarding service time, respondents who have worked in the organization for less than 5 years attribute greater relevance to self-actualization needs (M=6,70). Between 5 and 10 years and for more than 10 years, they value needs self-esteem (M= 6,69 e M=6,72) - see **Table 9**.

Table 9. Motivation dimension by service time

Service time		Self-esteem Needs	Social Needs	Safety Needs	Self-Actualization Needs
Less than 5 years old	Mean Score	6,6667	6,3900	6,6500	6,7000
	Standard Deviation	0,59235	0,70030	0,57629	0,65695
From 5 to 10 years old	Mean Score	6,6905	6,1000	6,4000	6,5357
	Standard Deviation	0,49725	0,46904	0,71897	0,77122
More than 10 years old	Mean Score	6,7169	5,9881	6,4900	6,5890
	Standard Deviation	0,58445	0,89990	0,58686	0,76532

Note: Table 9 presents the mean and standard deviation of motivation dimensions according to respondents' tenure in the organization, based on items measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Regardless of respondents' hierarchical position, self-esteem needs are the most valued. It should be noted that administrative staff also place a high value on security needs (M=6,26) - see **Table 10**.

Table 10. Motivation dimension by hierarchical position

Hierarchical position		Self-esteem Needs	Social Needs	Safety Needs	Self-Actualization Needs
Administrative Technician	Mean Score	6,2619	5,5143	6,2571	6,1786
	Standard Deviation	0,90750	1,12787	0,69914	1,18658
Senior Technician	Mean Score	6,7200	6,1293	6,5440	6,6800
	Standard Deviation	0,55008	0,79293	0,59587	0,59301
Management	Mean Score	6,8750	6,2125	6,6250	6,8125
	Standard Deviation	0,26874	0,57721	0,35684	0,35940
Other	Mean Score	6,7600	6,2520	6,5907	6,5800
	Standard Deviation	0,55711	0,64879	0,61505	0,78634

Note: Table 10 presents mean and standard deviations of motivation dimensions across different hierarchical positions, based on items measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Level of motivation

The data show that respondents, on average, perceive their leader as highly important for their motivation (M=5,43) and feel motivated in their work (M=5,34); however, the overall level of motivation is not particularly high - see **Table 11**.

Table 11. Level of employee motivation

Questionnaire items.	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Do you feel motivated about your work?	5,34	1,516
Your manager plays an important role in your motivation.	5,43	1,727

Note: Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics for two global indicators of motivation ("feeling motivated" and "leader's role in motivation"), assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

From the perspective of gender, male respondents feel more motivated than female respondents - see **Table 12**

Table 12. Level of employee motivation according to gender

Gender	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Male	5,46	1,662
Female	5,25	1,341

Note: Table 12 presents the mean and standard deviation of overall motivation levels by gender, based on items rated on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Table 13 shows that respondents in administrative technician positions demonstrate lower levels of motivation, while participants in management positions demonstrate higher levels.

Table 13. Level of Employee Motivation by Hierarchical Position

Hierarchical Position	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Administrative Technician	4,79	1,626
Senior Technician	5,17	1,274
Management	5,88	1,258
Other	5,52	1,636

Note: Table 13 presents the mean and standard deviation of motivation levels across organizational positions, with responses measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Leadership

Leadership style

Respondents value, both in current and effective leaders, the ability to show a relationship of respect with subordinates ($M=5,44$), is associated with a leadership style oriented toward people. On the other hand, behaviour in which decision-making is totally centralized in the leader ($M=3,83$) is articulated with an autocratic leadership, also, both in the current and effective leaders - see **Table 14**.

Table 14. Current and effective leaders according to leadership styles

Leadership Style	Item		Average	
	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Task-Oriented	Have self-confidence.	Motivate employees.	5,34	6,48
	To be a source of inspiration.	Define an organizational structure.	4,67	5,57
People-Oriented	Respectful relationships with subordinates.	Maintain respectful relationships with subordinates.	5,44	6,52
	Maintain a formal relationship with employees.	Maintain a formal relationship with employees.	4,22	4,44
Participative	Support employees in carrying out their tasks.	Assume a facilitating and communicative role.	5,14	6,32
	Consult employees when making decisions.	Let employees make their own decisions.	4,69	5,46
Autocratic	Have a dominant attitude.	Maintain a dominant stance.	4,74	4,56
	Make decisions entirely focused on them.	Ensure employee-centered decision-making.	3,83	3,13

Note: Table 14 presents the mean and standard deviation of leadership items describing the current and effective leader, grouped into the four leadership styles, assessed with a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Male respondents identified the current leader as people-oriented ($M=4,95$) and the female as task-oriented ($M=4,98$). In the case of the effective leader, male and female respondents identified it as a task-oriented leader ($M=6,24$ and $M=5,89$), with the female result being very close to the people-oriented leadership style. ($M=5,84$) - see [Table 15](#).

Table 15. Leadership style by gender

Gender		Task-oriented		People-oriented		Participative		Autocratic	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Male	Mean Score	4,9183	6,2466	4,9508	6,1429	4,8429	5,9714	4,2865	4,0952
	Standard Deviation	1,70726	0,62619	1,72558	0,66380	1,63945	0,72342	1,47255	1,67056
Female	Mean Score	4,9824	5,8912	4,9769	5,8483	4,8665	5,6654	4,1506	3,8013
	Standard Deviation	1,41852	1,30156	1,40865	1,26956	1,45432	1,37332	1,15812	1,57078

Note: Table 15 presents mean scores and standard deviations for each leadership style for the current and effective leader, disaggregated by gender, using a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

Regarding the current leader, respondents aged 18 to 24 identify with the participatory leadership style ($M=6,71$), aged 25 to 35 and over 51 identify with the task-oriented style ($5,48$; $4,59$), and aged 36 to 50 identify with the people-oriented style ($M=5,15$). Compared to the effective leader, there are a few differences in perceptions between younger and older respondents regarding leadership style. It should be noted that respondents over 51 associate the effective leader with a people-oriented ($M=5,66$) and task-oriented ($M=5,65$) leadership style, while the remaining participants associate the task-oriented leadership style - see [Table 16](#).

Table 16. Leadership style by age

Age		Task-oriented		People-oriented		Participative		Autocratic	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
From 18 to 24 years old	Mean Score	6,4000	6,3000	6,2500	6,0000	6,7143	6,1111	4,0000	2,3333
	Standard Deviation ¹	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
From 25 to 35 years old	Mean Score	5,4750	6,1086	5,3889	5,9722	5,3025	6,0988	4,0370	4,1111
	Standard Deviation	1,88845	1,60930	1,90941	1,64201	1,76888	1,57277	1,70330	1,64148
From 36 to 50 years old	Mean Score	5,0820	6,3183	5,1471	6,2251	4,9278	6,0232	4,4399	4,4000
	Standard Deviation	1,47043	0,83818	1,44572	0,81617	1,50311	0,96158	1,30030	1,51179
From 51 years old	Mean Score	4,5852	5,6507	4,4796	5,6561	4,5334	5,4189	4,0360	3,1892
	Standard Deviation	1,62574	1,02571	1,68333	1,04253	1,59980	1,09874	1,30947	1,45835

Note: Table 16 presents the mean and standard deviation of the four leadership style dimensions for the current and effective leader, compared across age groups, based on seven-point Likert scale responses. Source: Authors.

¹ There is only one person in the 18–24 age group, which is insufficient to calculate the standard deviation.

For respondents who did not attend higher education, the current leader is task-oriented ($M=5,32$). For those who attended higher education, the leadership style is people-oriented ($M=4,83$). Both respondents, with and without higher education, liked the effective leader to be task-oriented - see [Table 17](#).

Table 17. Leadership style by educational qualifications

Educational qualifications		Task-oriented		People-oriented		Participative		Autocratic	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Non-Higher Education	Mean Score	5,3202	5,9939	5,1818	5,9496	4,9888	5,7297	4,3131	4,3535
	Standard Deviation	1,56915	1,22013	1,65798	1,15928	1,59722	1,28022	1,53193	1,85206
Higher Education	Mean Score	4,7662	6,1098	4,8300	6,0372	4,7425	5,8865	4,2543	3,7532
	Standard Deviation	1,53849	0,91383	1,53790	0,93309	1,54705	5,7297	1,30094	4,3535

Note: Table 17 presents the mean and standard deviation of the four leadership style dimensions for the current and effective leader, grouped by educational qualifications based on seven-point Likert scale responses. Source: Authors.

For respondents with less than 5 years of service, the current leader's leadership style is task-oriented (M=5,06), those with 5 to 10 years of service are people-oriented (M=5,17), and those with more than 10 years of service it is between task-oriented (M=4,87) and people-oriented (M=4,88). Regarding the effective leader, respondents between 5 and 10 years of service prefer a task-oriented leader (M=6,0), and those with less than 5 years of service prefer a people-oriented leader (M=6,02) - see **Table 18**.

Table 18. Leadership style by time of service

Time of Service		Task-oriented		People-oriented		Participative		Autocratic	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Less than 5 years old	Average	5,0638	5,9462	4,9848	6,0207	4,9496	5,8246	4,0500	4,1228
	Deviation Error	1,48995	1,12472	1,55576	1,15929	1,48573	1,16847	1,26711	1,45810
From 5 to 10 years old	Average	5,1429	6,0143	5,1786	5,8405	4,8333	5,6389	4,0952	4,0476
	Deviation Error	1,73104	1,34041	1,59789	1,26907	1,66624	1,38585	1,20134	1,45507
More than 10 years old	Average	4,8775	6,1106	4,8804	6,0469	4,7793	5,8646	4,3699	3,9224
	Deviation Error	1,58271	0,94293	1,62426	0,93293	1,58232	1,03933	1,39173	1,70468

Note: Table 18 presents the mean and standard deviation of the four leadership style dimensions for the current and effective leader, grouped by time of service category, based on seven-point Likert scale responses. Source: Authors.

For administrative technicians, managers, and others, the current leader is identified as task-oriented (M=5,34, M=4,93, and M=4,90). In contrast, senior technicians report being people-oriented (M=5,07). Regarding the effective leader, participants in the administrative technician position idealize a people-oriented leader. Senior technicians, managers, and others prefer task-oriented leadership - see **Table 19**.

Table 19. Leadership style by hierarchical level

Hierarchical level		Task-oriented		People-oriented		Participative		Autocratic	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Administrative Technician	Average	5,3429	5,5000	5,0000	5,6310	4,7778	5,4048	4,2619	3,7857
	Deviation Error	1,00362	1,53823	1,46322	1,49883	1,50087	1,61051	1,46281	1,99832
Senior Technician	Average	4,9310	6,0538	5,0736	5,9840	5,0111	5,9283	4,2333	3,4667
	Deviation Error	1,13728	1,08629	1,07064	1,06849	1,17501	1,10600	1,13039	1,32288
Management	Average	4,9333	6,2042	4,9118	6,1965	4,8542	5,8958	4,6042	4,1458

	Deviation Error	0,97570	0,53692	1,16017	0,46684	1,13146	0,67338	1,30082	1,46043
Other	Average	4,9072	6,3750	4,8633	6,2367	4,6869	5,9593	4,0933	4,3194
	Deviation Error	2,01389	0,58403	1,94973	0,68955	1,81289	0,91611	1,35919	1,64912

Note: Table 19 presents the mean and standard deviation of the four leadership style dimensions for the current and effective leader, across hierarchical levels, based on seven-point Likert scale responses. Source: Authors.

Current and effective leadership using repeated measures ANOVA and mean

Regarding the current leader, the repeated measures ANOVA test shows the highest scores in three leadership styles: task-oriented, people-oriented, and participative, with no significant differences between them (see Table 20). The autocratic style has a significantly lower score (see Table 21). Regarding the effective leader, according to Table 21, the highest score is for the task-oriented leadership style, but it is not significantly different from the score for the people-oriented leadership style, as shown in Table 20. The participative leadership style comes in second, and the autocratic style comes in last - see Table 21.

Table 20. Current leader using Repeated Measures ANOVA

Comparisons by Pairwise Method											
(I) Leader	(J) Leader	Mean Score Difference (I-J)		Standard Test Statistic		p-value. ^b		95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b			
		Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Task-Oriented Leadership	People	-0,004	0,064	0,066	0,042	1	0,771	-0,181	-0,048	0,174	0,177
	Participative	0,115	,236*	0,077	0,059	0,834	<,001	-0,092	0,076	0,323	0,395
	Autocratic	,659*	2,142*	0,153	0,133	<,001	<,001	0,247	1,785	1,071	2,498
People-Oriented Leadership	Participative	0,119	,171*	0,05	0,052	0,113	0,009	-0,015	0,031	0,253	0,312
	Autocratic	,663*	2,078*	0,16	0,134	<,001	<,001	0,232	1,717	1,094	2,438
Participative Leadership	Autocratic	,544*	1,906*	0,166	0,139	0,009	<,001	0,097	1,531	0,991	2,281

Note: Table 20 presents the repeated-measures ANOVA results comparing respondents' mean scores for the current leader across the four leadership styles, based on seven-point Likert scale items. Source: Authors.

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 21. Current Leader Estimate

Current Leader	Marginal Mean		Standard Test Statistics		95% Confidence Interval			
					Lower limit		Upper limit	
	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Task-Oriented Leadership	4,931	6,075	0,148	0,096	4,637	5,884	5,225	6,266
People-Oriented Leadership	4,935	6,011	0,15	0,096	4,638	5,822	5,231	6,2
Participative Leadership	4,816	5,839	0,148	0,104	4,523	5,634	5,109	6,045
Autocratic Leadership	4,272	3,933	0,13	0,154	4,015	3,627	4,529	4,239

Note: Table 21 presents the estimated marginal means, standard errors, and confidence intervals for the current and effective leader across the four leadership styles, based on responses to items measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Source: Authors.

The analysis of the average data for the ten items with the highest mean values between the current leader and the effective leader reveals that the characteristics respondents value most in either leader are predominantly included in the people-oriented leadership style. The most valued characteristic is having respectful relationships with subordinates. Respondents indicated that this characteristic is exhibited by the current leader and should be maintained by a future leader, the effective leader, but in a more expressive manner. Regarding the other nine characteristics, respondents indicated that they would like the effective leader to demonstrate them more in their behaviour, particularly in motivating employees - see Table 22.

Table 22. Current leader and effective leader based on average data

Oriented Leadership Style	Item	Mean Score	
		Current Leader	Effective Leader
Task-Oriented	2.2 Having a vision	5,34	6,33
	2.10 Motivating employees	4,77	6,48
	2.12 Defining objectives	5,05	6,28
People-Oriented	2.22 Building trust with subordinates	5,19	6,31
	2.23 Building respect with subordinates	5,44	6,52
	2.27 Resolving conflicts	5,04	6,51
	2.28 Encouraging cooperation	5,18	6,43
	2.32 Recognizing good employee performance	4,98	6,42
	2.33 Rewarding good employee performance	4,47	6,30
Participative	2.26 Facilitating and communicating	4,84	6,32

Note: Table 22 presents the mean scores of the ten items with the highest values for both the current and effective leader, grouped by leadership style, using seven-point Likert scale responses. Source: Authors.

Hypothesis results

Regarding the correlation between motivation dimensions and leadership style, the highest correlation for both the current and effective leaders is in task-oriented leadership. The lowest correlation for the current leader is in participatory leadership, and for the effective leader, it is in autocratic leadership. Thus, both H1 (There is a positive correlation between people-oriented leadership and motivation) and H2 (There is a positive correlation between participatory leadership and motivation) are confirmed. H3 (Autocratic leadership style leads to low motivation) and H4 (Task-oriented leadership style leads to low motivation) are not confirmed - see **Table 23**.

Table 23. Pearson Correlation between motivation and leadership style

Leadership Type	Correlation Type	Motivation Current Leader	Motivation Effective Leader
Task-oriented Leadership	Pearson Correlation	,344**	,448**
People-oriented Leadership	Pearson Correlation	,315**	,401**
Participative Leadership	Pearson Correlation	,276**	,424**
Autocratic Leadership	Pearson Correlation	,304**	,354**

Note: Table 23 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between motivation and leadership styles for the current and effective leader. Significant correlations are indicated in the table. Source: Authors.

** most significant correlation / *least significant correlation

According to the data, there are significant correlations between social motivations, safety, and task-oriented, people-oriented, and autocratic leadership in the current leader, with the higher the autocratic leadership score, the higher the social motivation score. Regarding the effective leader, except for the autocratic leadership, there is a significant positive correlation between leadership style and each of the motivation dimensions in the effective leader, with task-oriented leadership standing out. In the social motivation dimension, the highest correlation is observed in the autocratic leadership - see **Table 24**.

Table 24. Pearson correlation between motivation dimensions and leadership style

Motivation Dimensions	Task-oriented Leadership		People-oriented Leadership		Participative Leadership		Autocratic Leadership	
	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Self-Esteem Motivation	0,055	,487**	0,115	,465**	0,061	,434**	0,099	0,144
Social Motivation	,255**	,345**	,169*	,292**	0,143	,334**	,345**	,456**
Safety Motivation	,206*	,355**	,160*	,320**	0,108	,340**	,270**	,184*
Self-Actualization Motivation	0,035	,400**	-0,028	,326**	-0,052	,357**	0,14	0,122

Note: Table 24 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between motivation dimensions and leadership styles for the current and effective leader, based on seven-point Likert scale data. Source: Authors.

** most significant correlation / *least significant correlation

The following are the results after performing the partial correlation of motivation dimensions and leadership style, controlling for the effect of sociodemographic variables (gender, age, educational qualifications, length of service, type of employment relationship, and hierarchical position).

Contrary to the general data, regarding the current leader, H1 (There is a positive correlation between people-oriented leadership and motivation) is not confirmed, as there is no significant correlation with any of the motivation dimensions. On the other hand, the hypothesis regarding the effective leader is confirmed, as there is a positive correlation with all motivation dimensions, with a particular emphasis on self-esteem motivations - see **Table 25**.

Table 25. Partial correlation of motivation dimensions and leadership style

Motivation Dimensions	Task-oriented Leadership		People-oriented Leadership		Participative Leadership		Autocratic Leadership	
	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader	Current Leader	Effective Leader
Self-Esteem Motivation	0,061	,400**	0,078	,416**	0,038	,346**	0,064	0,055
Social Motivation	,211*	,244**	0,097	,205*	0,093	,249**	,317**	,371**
Safety Motivation	,188*	,257**	0,107	,236*	0,078	,240**	,224*	0,061
Self-Actualization Motivation	-0,016	,301**	-0,131	,231*	-0,124	,264**	0,103	0,004

Note: Table 25 presents the results of the hypothesis tests examining associations between leadership styles and employee motivation, using data derived from seven-point Likert scale items. Source: Authors. Table 25 presents the partial correlations between motivation dimensions and leadership styles for the current and effective leader. Source: Authors.

** most significant correlation / * least significant correlation

DISCUSSION

The data show a greater impact on managers' loyalty toward employees, corresponding to self-esteem needs, while attributing less importance to prestigious and status-based work - social needs for which they lack motivational contexts. In this line, it is pertinent to note that the results from male and female respondents attribute greater importance to self-esteem needs, with similar behaviours observed regardless of position and educational qualifications. In other words, they feel motivated when leaders demonstrate loyalty to employees, appreciation and recognition for their work, and the existence of an environment of trust and respect, which a literature review has shown to be variables that generate motivation (Maslow, 1954; Mações, 2017; Neves et al., 2011).

Interestingly, academic skills did not influence the satisfaction of respondents' needs, which does not corroborate the findings that the higher the academic skills, the higher one climbs on Maslow's pyramid of needs (e.g., Neves et al., 2011). However, the results highlight the desire for career progression and salary relative to the role (de Moraes Wyse, 2018; Mações, 2017; Neves et al., 2011), suggesting that some basic needs have not yet been met. This need may include the appreciation of safe work, good working conditions valued by employees between 25 and 35 years old, but also employees who have worked for less than five years showing a need to feel self-fulfilled and those who have been working for more than five years expressing a need for self-esteem, needs that must be satisfied to create motivation in employees (Maslow, 1954; Mações, 2017; Neves et al., 2011).

Expanding the discussion to the role of the leader in motivation, employees at the Port of Leixões generally agree that the leader plays an important role in their motivation and demonstrates that they motivate them, with males being more motivated than females. Participants in administrative technician positions are less motivated than senior technicians, managers, and others; in contrast to respondents in management positions, who report being more motivated. Current leaders appear to need to focus their efforts on motivating employees who do not hold senior positions within the organization to ensure more effective and efficient performance. They may choose to demonstrate the necessary ability to foster trust, optimism, and a spirit of sacrifice for the group (Burton et al., 2019; Rego & Cunha, 2010). In this context, it's important to consider that employees report that the current leader adopts task- and people-oriented styles, and they like them because they also want the effective leader to adopt them, rejecting an autocratic leadership style (Iqbal et al., 2021; Lewin et al., 1939). However, the data suggest that the leader may be paying more attention to the task-oriented style than to people-oriented ones, creating a greater focus on results and creating less motivating environments for females and more for men, because men report that

the leader has a people-oriented leadership style, reflecting the existence of human relationships and the development of collaborative skills (e.g., Maximiano, 2012).

It's important to note that there is a positive correlation between each leadership type and motivation for both leaders. Regarding the current leader, there is no significant correlation between self-esteem and self-actualization motivations and the different leadership typologies. Significant correlations exist between social and safety motivations and task-oriented, people-oriented, and autocratic leadership. These results suggest that respondents feel their social and safety needs are met when the leader adopts a task-oriented, people-oriented, or autocratic leadership style; and that the greater the autocratic leadership style, the more participants' social motivations are satisfied. These results are believed to provide evidence of the need to create an environment that values adequate discipline, availability to solve personal problems, appreciation of prestigious and high-status work, and greater responsibility at work (Maslow, 1954; Mações, 2017; Neves et al., 2011). In the effective leader, in all leadership styles except for the autocratic style, there is a significant positive correlation between the leadership style and each of the dimensions of motivation, with task-oriented leadership standing out. In the social motivation dimension, the highest correlation is observed in autocratic leadership, and the same is true for the current leader. Participants feel their social needs are met when leadership is focused solely on the company, neglecting employees (Lewin et al., 1939; Iqbal et al., 2021), demonstrating that leaders need to create environments where employees feel more comfortable and disciplined under leadership. These results highlight an environment that may express some uncertainty regarding how the organizational context is being led.

CONCLUSION

Leadership and motivation are two essential topics for the success of organizations. Proper leadership can contribute to greater motivation, making it important to identify and analyze leadership and motivation strategies for employees (e.g. Rego & Cunha, 2010; Teixeira, 2010; Verma & Verm, 2012; Robbins, 2013; Robbins and Judge, 2015; Silva, 2016; Burton et al., 2019; Rego & Cunha, 2019). Therefore, this study opted for quantitative research, with data collected through a questionnaire survey. The purpose was to answer the following research question: What is the role of leaders in motivating employees at the Port of Leixões?

Data shows that, in general, respondents attribute greater impact to self-esteem needs, valuing leaders' loyalty to them, appreciation and recognition for their work, and a work environment where trust and respect exist. On the other hand, they do not place as much importance on social needs. Employees with less than five years of service in the organization are more interested in self-actualization needs. Employees aged 25 to 35 value safe, interesting work, good working conditions, and good relationships with colleagues and superiors, corresponding to security needs.

Regarding the leader's role in motivation, respondents agreed that their leader plays an important role in their motivation, although they did not feel fully motivated. It can also be concluded that perceptions of leadership style vary among participants, with women tending to see the current leader as task-oriented and men as people-oriented. Generally, the most prevalent characteristics of the current leader are the ability to delegate responsibilities, a respectful and trusting relationship with subordinates, a focus on achieving established goals, self-confidence, and encouragement of cooperation. In other words, the current leader's leadership style is characterized by a style that can be both task-oriented and people-oriented. However, the data reveal the need for current leaders to adopt an autocratic leadership style to satisfy their social and security needs. Regarding effective leaders, the results reinforce the idea that if a new leader were to be chosen, they would want them to continue leading with a task-oriented and people-oriented style, as they attribute greater importance to characteristics such as motivating employees, recognizing good performance, respectful relationships with subordinates, encouraging cooperation, having a strategic vision, and conflict resolution skills.

In this line of thought, the results allow us to conclude that leaders influence employee motivation and that combining a people-oriented and task-oriented leadership style improves leadership quality; in other words, leaders should adopt a hybrid leadership style.

This study contributes to the literature on leadership and organizational behaviour by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation in the port industry, a context that remains relatively underexplored in management research. By applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs to

examine employees' motivational dimensions, the study offers a structured framework for understanding how different leadership practices relate to distinct motivational needs within complex operational environments such as port organizations. Furthermore, the study contributes to the development of the literature on leadership and motivation by showing how leadership practices influence employee motivation in the organizational context of a port authority. The findings suggest that motivated employees benefit from leaders who are able to balance the achievement of organizational tasks with attention to employees' needs. In this sense, the results reinforce the importance of combining task-oriented and people-oriented leadership behaviours, highlighting the relevance of a hybrid leadership approach to foster employee motivation and support the achievement of organizational objectives.

The limitations of the study include limited employee participation. For future research, we suggest extending the study to other Portuguese ports and conducting interviews with employees in leadership roles to demonstrate their understanding of the field of study.

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