

Identification of Leadership Competences in the Different Organizational Levels: Military Context

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Abstract: To analyse the exercise of the leadership function, from team level to strategic level, a direct influence is noticed on its members, as well as an indirect effect on behaviours and performances derived from the internal and external environment of the organisation. On this perspective, leaders affect all functioning aspects of an organisation. To identify the behaviours associated to leadership that lead to superior performances at the different hierarchic levels through the individuals that have “command” functions, a profile of behaviours may be found which may serve as a structural pillar to serve as reference for the standards required in the Portuguese Army. Leadership for the Officers of the Portuguese Army is characterized by guidance for the missions, ethics, example, decision making, planning, vision, cohesion, team work, conflict management and participative leadership and commitment, in order to achieve superior performances. Decision making and assertive communication are the competences that require highest levels of proficiency for higher organizational levels.

Key words: education; competences; leadership; officers; military context

JEL code: J24

1. Different Roles of Command, Management and Leadership

If we consider the concepts of command, management and leadership, we easily find differences in each definition. According to the military status of the Portuguese Armed Forces, command is the authority granted by the law and regulations to an individual, in order to enable him to direct, control and coordinate military forces to accomplish their functions. After a review of the different settings on the classical management, we can state that is the process of increasing activity efficiency by way of working with and through others (Fisher, 2006; Havard, Rorive & Sobczak, 2009). Finally, Leadership is the process of influencing, beyond the authority invested, human behavior aiming at the accomplishment of the objectives that surpass the expectable or required by the function (Rouco, 2012). Analyzing the three definitions, we may notice that, in terms of command and management, individuals possess formal authority and informal authority in what concerns leadership. In the three definitions, we notice that they have in common the accomplishment of organizational objectives and maintenance of power. In this sense, to identify a profile of competences associated to leadership and meet the theme of this work, it is necessary to distinguish the role commander, manager and leader.

Question research 1: Commanders, managers, leaders have different roles in the organization?

1.1 Commander and Manager

The terms command and management are strictly related (MOD-UK, 2005). In the military context, the term command has a legal and constitutional status and involves the final responsibility of the Armed Forces (IESM, 2005).

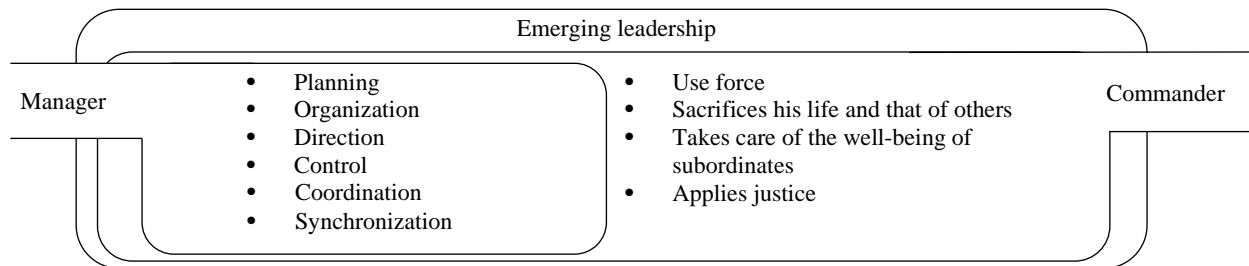


Figure 1 Differences between Commander and Manager

Both, commander and manager perform the functions shown in Figure 1. The difference between them is the fact that a commander, in opposition to the manager, has the authority to use the force and sacrifice his life and of others to accomplish the vital objectives of the nation. Still, commander has the responsibility to take care of the well-being of his subordinates and apply justice according to the regulations of military discipline.

Figure 1 shows that commander and manager may be described as a set of associated functions such as planning, organization, direction, control, coordination and synchronization (Gibson & Ivancevich, 2000, p. 7). On the other hand, the commander also has the function of assuring justice (through regulations internal to the military institution) and taking care of the well-being of his subordinates, like food, uniform and accommodation. For the exercise of command and management functions, leaders are selected from a framework of leadership competences according to the patterns of reference of each organization.

1.2 Manager and Leader

Concerning management and leadership, Bass and Avolio (2004), Kotter (1988), Mintzberg (1973) state that these functions are distinct processes. These authors do not assume that the roles of manager and leader have to be performed by different people. That is to say, the same individual in different situations must have the capacity to perform one of the roles.

Mintzberg (1973), in the studies carried out with executives, developed a list of the ten most common roles among managers. These roles are also related to leadership. Based on revision of literature, we may point out some differences between manager and leader, according to Table 1.

To Donnelly et al. (2000, p. 74) “leadership is an essential function in any type of organization”, in which the leader has a positive influence on followers’ behavior, motivating them to the performance of a task, trying to meet their needs. Also to Gibson et al. (2006, p. 313), “manager exercises functions of planning, organization and control but necessarily the function of leadership”. That is to say, leadership function only exists when interpersonal relations between the manager and the cooperator are established and the former is only consider to be the leader when his informal authority is recognized by the followers and therefore they obey his orders.

1.3 Commander, Manager and Leader

According to MOD-UK (2005, p. 115), the three main components of command are decision making, leadership and control, which are connected. That is to say, command and management possess elements of leadership, decision making and control. Command is based on leadership complemented by other skills such as professional knowledge, integrity and example based on values and organizational patterns. According to

ND-Canada (2005), the exercise of command and management functions are limited by legal authority delegated on a commander or manager and only exercised inside the chain of command or hierarchy. On the other hand, leadership may be exercised by any person, regardless their position in the organization.

Table 1 Differences between Manager and Leader

Manager	Leader
Makes planning and budgets	Creates vision and strategies
Based on structure	Focuses on horizon (long term)
Organizes and is supported by technical staff	Creates a culture and shares values
Creates guidelines and controls	Helps others to develop
Creates limits	Minimize limits
Based on power position	Based on personal power
Acts as “boss” or “supervisor”	Acts as “coach”, facilitator and employee
Emotionally distant	Acts emotionally (heart)
Speaks	Listens (Empathy)
Resigned	Reluctant (courage)
His introspection is based on the organization	Self-introspection (integrity)
Implements leader’s vision, makes changes with leaders, keeps and manages the infrastructures of the organization	Articulation organizational vision, introduces change in the organization, promotes inspirations and agreements with the stressing and turbulent aspects exterior to the organization.
Focuses on tasks, through functions of planning, organization and control.	Focuses on interpersonal relations.
On planning, defines objectives in detail and the plans to be achieved.	Defines directions, develops a vision and the necessary strategies to achieve results.
Supported by a technical team, organizes the structures to enable cooperators to achieve the required results.	Innovates and permit followers to achieve results freely, ensuring that they meet a shared vision.
Predictable with plans, organization and controls through consistent behaviors.	Unpredictable.
Controls, monitoring results according to the plans previously defined and corrects when necessary.	Motivates and inspires cooperators to materialize vision through creativity.
Knows what to do.	Knows what is necessary to do.
Focuses on small things, avoids risks, maintains and imitates.	Focuses on long term visions, take risks, innovates and is original.
Maintains stability.	Crates change.

Source: Adapted from Bennis and Nanus (1985); House and Aditya (1997); Kotter (1990, 1996)

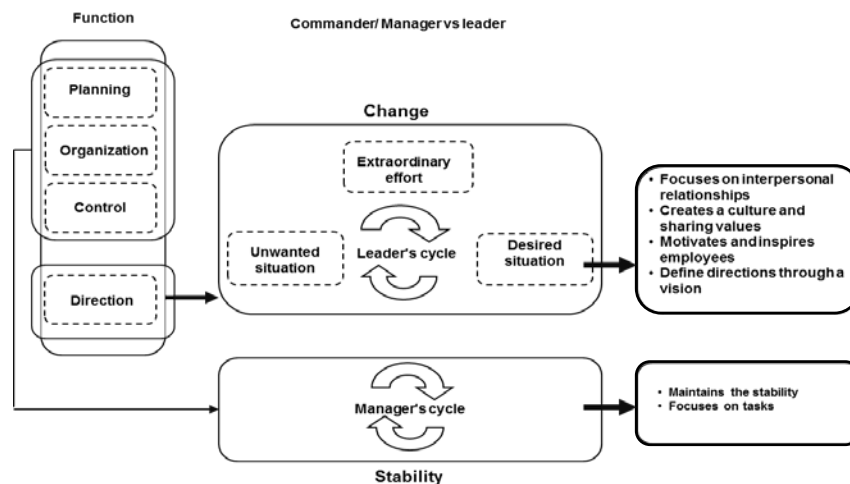


Figure 2 Cycles of Manager and Leader

Source: Self-elaboration

According to the Figure 2, it is proposed that an organization the same individual has the ability to play two roles in two different cycles: the manager's cycle and the leader's cycle. On this combination relies the "art to command", that is to say, in a certain place and moment, the commander must gather qualities of manager and leader and achieve a clear advantage over the adversary and, last, to exhort (motivation) subordinates to the victory through a noble (values) cause.

2. Level of Performance between Commander, Manager and Leader

In order to continue the research work, it is necessary to know if commanders, managers and leaders have the same levels of performance in an organization.

Question research 2: Managers, commanders and leaders have the same performance level in the organization?

Obviously, when introducing the performance evaluation we must frame it in the management of human resources by competence. Competences are defined as: the basic individual characteristics that are casually related to effective criteria of reference or superior performances at work or in a given situation (Spencer & Spencer, 1993); effective performance in an occupation, with variable basic levels of proficiency at the highest levels of excellence (Cheetham & Chievers, 2005).

According McClelland (1973), Boyatzis (1982) and Spencer and Spencer (1993) defined the variables of competences as predictor of superior performances and high motivation. To these authors, the "criteria of reference" of a competence is a critical factor in which a superior and efficient performance is the most used.

According to Chester (1985, p. 55), efficiency "is the accomplishment of the recognized objectives of cooperative effort". The level of accomplishment indicates the level of efficiency. The word "efficiency" derived from the word "effect" and is used in the context of cause-effect relations. Therefore, each level of efficiency may be seen as a variable caused by other variables (Gibson Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2006). To the authors, at individual level, efficiency is related to competences; at the collective level, leadership is one of the factors that promote organizational efficiency. Also Mintzberg (1973) considers that leadership stands for a role taken by managers, notably during activities requiring interpersonal behaviors.

Competences associated to leadership are framed in the function of direction or leadership in which managers must interact with cooperators as shown in Figure 3. In these functions, motivation, values, cohesion and satisfaction are considered as determining factors to achieve superior performances or extraordinary efforts of the cooperators (Rouco, 2012).

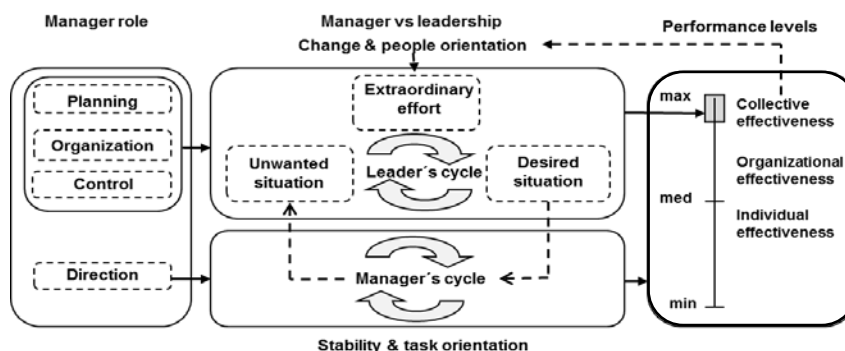


Figure 3 Leader's Cycle for High Performances Levels

Source: Self-elaboration

3. Competencies Associated with Hight Level of Organizational Performance

When trying to find the competences predictor of superior performances, we notice that all leadership theories contribute to the definition of a referential. As shown in Figure 4, the main leadership theories have been reviewed. Personality characteristics were and still are introduced as variables in several studies about leadership to achieve success in influence and leadership influence (Bono & Judge, 2004; Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2004; Lee & Ashton, 2004; Ashton et al., 2006). To Judge et al. (2002) and Bono and Judge (2004) there is enough research relating personality characteristics with leadership. That is to say, according to the most recent studies about personality characteristics, we may notice that there exist some of these characteristics that may be considered predictor of leaders' efficiency.

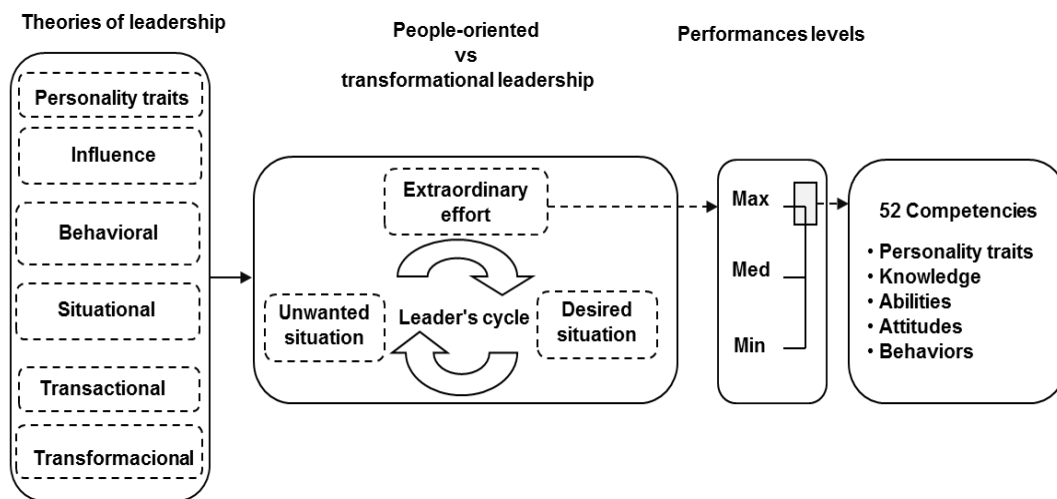


Figure 4 Leader's Cycle for High Performances Levels

Source: Self-elaboration

In the theories of situational leadership, we conclude that there is a relation between leaders and orientation to tasks or orientation to people (Judge, Piccolo & Ilies, 2004). Therefore, we may conclude that none of these orientations *per si* are able to explain efficiency of leadership. In each situation or considering the characteristics of the followers (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977, 1988), leaders adopt different types of leadership. For the current research work, the types considered are those adopted by the Portuguese Military Academy (Vieira, 2002), to know: directive, participative and by delegation. Avolio and Bass (2004) define transformational leadership in terms of impact of the leader about the followers. Burns (1978) considers transactional leadership as a change of rewards based on results. Avolio and Bass (2004) define transactional leadership using a wider range than Burns. Avolio and Bass (2004) consider transformational and transactional leadership as being distinct but not exclusive proceedings and he recognizes that the same leader may use these two types of leadership in different situations.

Question research 3: Which are the leadership competences that commanders consider as more important to obtain superior performances?

Based on revision of literature, approximately 500 scientific papers have been analyzed, covering different areas of knowledge (management, psychology, sociology, education and military), identifying 52 leadership competences related to superior performance. The research only ended when the subject became saturated, that is to say when new competences ceased to be found in the researched articles, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2 Leadership Competences Associated to Superior Performance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will to experience • Multicultural willing • Technical and professional skills • Take risks • Self-confidence • Self-control • Self-esteem • Organizational evaluator • Capacity to resolve problems • Charisma • Cohesion and team work • Command and direction • Commitment • Communication • Aggressive communication • Assertive communication • Knowledge of military culture • Organizational awareness • Consideration • Courage • Determination and perseverance • Diffuse information • Efficient in interactions and complex environments • Empathy • Flexibility and adaptability • Manager of conflicts and negotiation • Manager of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humor • Influence/coercion • Influence/persuasion • Influence/reference • Initiative and autonomy • Integrity • Social intelligence • Judge and decide with efficiency and ethics • Loyalty • Directive leadership • Participative leadership • Leadership by delegation • Optimism and enthusiasm • Orientation to human relations • Orientation to tasks • Strategic reasoning • Promotion of development • Analytical reasoning • Critical reasoning • Recognition, positive feedback and valuation • Interpersonal relations • Resilience • Take decision • Transparence • Vision
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4. Identification and Competences Development

According to Sinott, Madison and Pataki (2002) the development of competences may be observed as a “life cycle” which points out continuous enhancements. The first steps of this “life cycle” may be identified as a competence model through the identification of work requirements, roles and relevant competences. The creation of competence models may be carried out through several approaches. The most common ones are at the level of function or organisation (Mansfield, 2004). The second approach takes in consideration the objectives of organisation, vision, strategy and tries to develop a set of competences that are applied to the organisation as a whole, to an area of the organisation or a function inside the organisation (Byham & Moyer, 2005).

Question research 4: There are different levels of proficiency competences between organizational levels?

Naturally, after the identification of a model it is necessary to verify if the levels of proficiency of each competence are the same at all organizational levels, so that every individual may develop his minimum patterns to achieve superior performances. In general, at the highest hierarchic levels, a larger spectrum of qualities is required, giving more emphasis to the capacity to applying these qualities according to the situation.

5. Methodology and Methods

First, from the qualitative method approach, we began to differentiate the roles and levels of performance between the commander, manager and leader.

Second, from the literature review and a qualitative research 52 competences have been identified, which have a close and positive connection with satisfaction and performance. This research ended when the subject

became saturated. From the description of different authors and technical manuals of the areas of social sciences and military doctrine, a referential of competences was created for the military context, using the 52 competences and respective descriptions. This project was adopted by military experts.

Third, 204 items have been associated from the literature revision. From the qualitative analysis, the referential and respective items have been submitted to a validation commission. Using the Lawshe method (1975) 68 items were obtained.

Finally, a survey has been elaborated in which the preliminary version was submitted to a validation commission and a previous test has been carried out — with 37 Portuguese Army Officers. In its final version — Leadership Competences Survey (Rouco, 2012), the first part of the survey included social and demographic data, with 16 questions. The second part of the survey was composed by 68 questions which permitted to evaluate the ideal performance — pattern and the actual performance of the exercise of the Command and Leadership functions. Ten-point Likert scales with anchors “not at all important” (1) and “strongly important” (10) were used to measure ideal performance-pattern. The actual performance scale used anchors of “strongly ineffective” (1) and “strongly effective” (10).

5.1 Sample

The population selected for the research belonged to the Portuguese Army–1997 Officers for the organic framework of 2010. The dimension of the sample was calculated considering the total of effectives of the organic framework of the Portuguese Army with 351 individuals with a level of confidence $\lambda = 95\%$ and precision level $D = \pm 5\%$. For this level of confidence, the normal distribution indicates the value $Z_{\alpha/2} = 1.96$. Based on the result of the people studied (351), a stratification was made considering the hierarchic ranks inside each branch and service, in order to obtain a rate (Subaltern Officers and Captains = 171) (Superior Officers = 150) (Generals = 30).

5.2 Data Analysis

The statistic treatment used was the factorial analysis, method of the main component analysis, since it enables to summarize the information present in the original variables, in a reduced number (component) orthogonal (not correlated) that explain as much as possible the variance of original variables. The dimensions extracted are characterised by descriptive statistics, covering the averages, dispersion, asymmetry coefficient, flattening asymmetry and *Pearson* correlation coefficient. To verify if there are significant differences between the levels of proficiency of each competence in all organizational levels, the method used was the multiple comparison of averages, post-hoc test — Tukey.

5.3 Results

Following the appropriate statistics proceedings for the application of the factorial analysis, it was noticed that the KWO value was 0.97. Bartlett’s sphericity test presents a p-value < 0.001 so we conclude that the variables are significantly correlated. To the extraction of each factor, the method of “principal component analysis” with values higher than 1. Table 3 shows the results of the extracted factors.

Six factors have been retained that explain 63% of the total variability. To ensure that the factors extracted are reliable, namely those with values close to 1, “*Alpha de Cronbach*” was used as reliable evaluation. The *alpha* values were between 0.83 and 0.93. After having extracted the six factors and the respective variables, we tried to find a dimension capable of explaining the correlations found and that will correspond to our interpretation of the component created by the analysis.

Table 3 Factors to the Reference Pattern

Items	Reference pattern					
	Matrix					
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
13 items	$\alpha = 0.93$					
8 items		$\alpha = 0.87$				
6 items			$\alpha = 0.85$			
9 items				$\alpha = 0.91$		
6 items					$\alpha = 0.83$	
6 items						$\alpha = 0.86$
Values	22.96	1.69	1.57	1.34	1.11	1.05
% of the explained variance	0.48	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02

Note: F–Factor in force; α –“Alpha de Cronbach”

Factor 1 with a value of 22.96 is associated to the “orientation to the mission through the example and ethics”; factor 2 with 1.69 is linked to the “decision making and planning”; factor 3 with 1.57 is related to “vision”; factor 4 with 1.34 is associated to “cohesion and team work”; factor 5 with 1.11 is linked to “conflict management”; and factor 6 is associated to “participative leadership and commitment”. In the six dimension we have 26 leadership competences to achieve superior performances.

Table 4 Dimensions and Description of the Competences Model

Dimensions	Description
Orientation to the mission through the example and ethics (OME)	Capacity to influence and motivate the subordinates by integrity and example, optimism and enthusiasm, determination and perseverance, self-control and self-confidence, technical skills, capability to solve problems, to efficiently achieve performances, to accomplish the mission and being recognized by their performances.
Decision making and planning (TDP)	Capacity to make decision with courage and confidence in any situation and to efficiently implement solutions to accomplish the objectives within the delays established, even with the others hostility and to assertively communicate these decisions to the subordinates.
Vision (VIS)	Capacity to evaluate the internal and external organisation environment and adequate the resources available to accomplish goals at long term, as well as to update capacities and adapt behaviours in order to be more effective in the different situations.
Cohesion and teamwork (CTE)	Capacity to develop within the subordinates a feeling of union and “body spirit” through an open communication, promoting the team work based on trust and experience, developing the capacities of each subordinate, trying to be an element of reference and stability, in order to achieve performances according to the organizational patterns, respecting beliefs, values and cultural traditions of others.
Conflict management (GCO)	Capacity to solve conflicts in case of different interests, with transparency and support other in the accomplishment of objectives within an environment of trust and respect.
Participative leadership and commitment (LPE)	Capacity to engage the subordinates and take their suggestions in consideration for the decision making, as well as to try to align their interests with the objectives of the organization and granting responsibility to the subordinates for the accomplishment of tasks.

Table 5 registers the results of the dimensions that constitute the model, in terms of averages, dispersion, asymmetry coefficient, flattening coefficient and *Pearson* correlation coefficient. The differences between values are not therefore very significant. The higher average value is related to dimension orientation to the mission through example and ethics with 8.88. The dimensions are asymmetric, moderate and platykurtic (kurtosis) with exception to dimensions “Orientation to the mission through the example and ethics” and “Conflict management”. All dimensions are strong correlated. It is important to stress out the association between “orientation to the mission through the example and ethics”, “decision making and planning” and “cohesion and team work” to achieve superior performances.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Matrix

Dimensions	Descriptive statistics				Correlations matrix					
	X_m	S	g_1	g_2	OME	TDP	VIS	CTE	GCO	LPE
OME	8.88	0.67	-0.60	0.08						
TDP	8.42	0.80	-0.66	0.92	0.83 ^(**)					
VIS	8.12	0.97	-0.91	2.40	0.73 ^(**)	0.72 ^(**)				
CTE	8.57	0.79	-0.61	0.49	0.85 ^(**)	0.83 ^(**)	0.73 ^(**)			
GCO	8.61	0.79	-0.44	-0.13	0.77 ^(**)	0.70 ^(**)	0.69 ^(**)	0.79 ^(**)		
LPE	8.55	0.84	0.82	1.61	0.75 ^(**)	0.69 ^(**)	0.67 ^(**)	0.78 ^(**)	0.74 ^(**)	

Note: X_m –Average; S –Standard deviation g_1 –Asymmetry coefficient (*Skewness*); g_2 –Flattening coefficient (*Kurtosis*); ^(**) Significant correlations for 0.01.

Table 6 shows the K-S test with Lilliefors correlation to the dependent variables — different levels of proficiency competences between organizational levels.

Table 6 Multiple Comparison of Averages — Tukey for Dimensions in Performance

Dimensions	Categories of Officers		Tukey Test <i>p-value</i> (sig.)
Orientation to the mission by example, ethics and determination	General Officers	Subaltern Officers and Captains	0.04
Decision making and planning	General Officers	Subaltern Officers and Captains	0.00
		Superior Officers	0.03
Vision and external and internal environment	General Officers	Subaltern Officers and Captains	0.00
		Superior Officers	0.01
Cohesion, team work and cooperation	General Officers	Subaltern Officers and Captains	0.02
Participative leadership and commitment	Superior Officers	Subaltern Officers and Captains	0.00

Considering the results, we conclude that General Officers have a significantly different perception from the remaining categories of Officers of the dimensions “decision making and planning” and “vision and external and internal environment” to achieve higher levels of performance. General Officers have a different perception from Subaltern Officers and Captains of dimensions “orientation to the mission by example, ethics and determination” and “cohesion, team work and cooperation” to achieve higher performances.

According to Table 7 there are competences with significant differences considering the level of proficiency between the different organizational levels.

Table 7 Different Levels of Proficiency Competences between Organizational Levels

Organizational levels	Direct Leadership (Subaltern Officers and Captains)	Organizational Leadership (Superior Officers)	Strategic leadership (General Officers)
Direct Leadership (Subaltern Officers and Captains)	-	-	-
Organizational Leadership (Superior Officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Participative leadership • Assertive communication • Problems resolution 	-	-
Strategic leadership (General Officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Optimism and enthusiasm • Development of others • Communication • Problems resolution • Courage • Flexibility and adaptability 	-	-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Vision • Assertive communication • Example • Determination and perseverance • Integrity • Cohesion and team work • Charisma 		-

5.4 Discussion

According to the conceptual framing, it is believed that any individual may take the aware role of manager and leader in order to achieve superior performances in each moment of the organisational life.

In what concerns management and leadership cycles, transactional and transformational leadership complement each other, since transactional leadership adjusts the expectations about performance and establishes a minimum level of confidence, while transformational leadership constitutes the effective highest spot of a scale of leadership behaviours (reference standard) and supports transactional leadership to achieve the team objectives (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; McClelland, 1973). Transformational leadership is linked to the relation with people and intrinsic rewards. In difficult moments of crisis (not required situation) an individual performing the role of transformational leader must achieve performances above the accomplishments foreseen (extra effort) in order to motivate the followers and reach the required states with high levels performances (Donnelly et al., 2000). The challenge for formation schools is to develop in each individual the awareness and the capacity of reflexion to perform the role of manager and leader, according to the situation, in order to achieve superior performances.

5.5 Conclusions

The six dimensions that a military man must possess for the role of leader, in order to achieve superior performances there are: oriented to the mission through example and ethics; decision making and planning; vision; cohesion and team work; conflict management; and participative leadership and commitment. The six dimensions identified and often using other designations meet the studied frameworks and frameworks with 26 competences deriving from scientific papers that are aggregated in four domains:

- Domain of oneself (personal or cognitive competence) — Integrity, optimism and enthusiasm, determination and perseverance; self-confidence; self-control; courage; flexibility and adaptability; transparency; and consideration.
- Domain of the relationship with others (social competence) — Influence by reference; development of others;

recognition; positive feedback and valuation; communication and assertiveness, cohesion and team work; charisma; opening to different cultures; participative leadership and commitment; orientation to human relationships.

- Domain of work, activities and tasks — functional competence: technical and professional skills, capacity to resolve problems; and decision making.
- Domain of management — organizational competence: orientation to the mission; command and direction; evaluation of the organization; vision; management of conflicts.

The dimensions that contribute the most to a superior performance and that are strongly linked are: “orientation to the mission through the example and ethics”, “decision making and planning” and “cohesion and team work”.

Concerning the level of proficiency of competences in the different organizational levels, we notice that “decision making and planning” dimension and the competences therein associated meet the results foreseen (MOD-UK, 2005; ND-Canada, 2005), in which Officers in higher hierarchical levels must have organization and management skills, including the power of communication complemented by judgment capacity and self-confidence that help them to exercise their function with efficiency.

6. Limitations

The elaboration, for the first time, of a model for management of development of leadership competences in the Portuguese Armed Forces did not permit to establish a comparative analysis with other results, as well as with the final models with different dimensions.

7. Implications for Theory and Practice

From the theoretical point of view, this study offers a model of competences associated to leadership which may be compared with others and may be another attempt to differentiate the role of leader and manager according to reference patterns defined by one sample which goes from team level to strategic level that attended the same formation school and served the same Institution. In practical terms, the model makes possible to verify eventual gaps before each formation, as well as to distinguish the individuals who are above the reference pattern.

8. Future Research

For future researches it is suggested to replicate the model of management of leadership competences to other civil and military organisations in order to verify the existence of significant differences concerning the dimensions and competences that constitute the model of this research.

Research must be replicated at 360° in order to detect the different perceptions about behaviours associated to leadership, thus contributing to the adjustment of scales at performance levels. Research must be replicated in other situations to identify key competences that are common.

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