



# **How Transformational Leadership and Employer Branding increase Innovative Work Behaviors**

Master degree in Management

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Leiria, September of 2025



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Dissertation under the supervision of Professor Andrea Sousa, and co-supervision of  
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Leiria, September of 2025

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# Abstract

Innovation is an important aspect for organizations to maintain their competitive edge. Organizations can look into their employees for a driver of innovation in the workplace. Employees drive innovation through innovative work behaviors, which can be stimulated by an organization through appropriate leadership or come more naturally to certain individuals. This work then seeks to understand how transformational leadership as a style of leadership influences innovative work behaviors and what kind of organization people who display more innovative work behaviors are most attracted towards, informing organizations on how employer branding can attract innovation through innovative workers. We surveyed 135 employees from Portuguese organizations to request their collaboration in answering a self-report questionnaire, and with this data, we found that transformational leadership has a positive impact on innovative work behaviors and that one subdimension of employer branding (interest value) is better at attracting employees who display more innovative work behaviors than the others. The novelty of this work comes from testing established knowledge in Portugal and from directly connecting innovative work behaviors and employer branding, something that hasn't been done a lot before.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, Employer Branding

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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of an organization is to maximize value for shareholders. The way to achieve this goal is through creating a robust and sustainable business capable of producing good results. For a business to be successful, it needs to be capable of competing with other businesses and performing better than average. This often means having a sustainable competitive advantage, something that said business does better than the competition that offers value to costumers and makes them choose this business when it's time to buy (Jiang & Gu, 2016; Shin et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015). One of the ways this happens is through offers more innovative than the competition, innovation is a powerful source of competitive advantage, and employees can be the catalyst behind this innovation (Rank et al., 2004). Employees that act in ways that stimulate innovation and that display innovative work behaviors can be what gives a business the edge it needs to compete and stand above the competition, therefore, businesses might want to look for ways to maximize the number of employees that display these behaviors and the behaviors themselves (Savelsbergh et al., 2012; Somech & Khalaili, 2014). In this paper, we're going to look into two approaches, how to stimulate innovative behaviors, and how to attract and retain people that already display them. In other words, we're going to investigate how leadership can influence innovative work behaviors and what employer brand characteristics these employees are more attracted to (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Khan et al., 2020; Sharifirad, 2013).

There are many types of leadership, all with their own positives and negatives, organizations need to be cautious when it comes to their choice of which type of leadership to employ. Transformational leadership is one of these types that organizations can choose since it's an effective, contemporary leadership philosophy (Derue et al., 2011; Anthony, 2017; Monzammel & Hann, 2016). Transformational leadership expands and broadens employees' interests while catering to their needs, thus boosting their morale and motivation. In the end, these employees have a better understanding of the organization's goals and adhere to them more naturally (Joo & Lim, 2013; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). It is expected that employees working with transformational leaders have higher creativity levels (Gong et al., 2009), encouraged by the example set by the transformational leader's creative and engaging behaviors (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Basadur et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2020).

Innovative work behaviors are actions and behaviors that create, develop, and apply new ideas and solutions in the workplace in order to improve the work being done (Rank et al., 2004). One of the goals of this study is to analyze the link between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors in order to help organizations and leaders better understand the tools at their disposal and their impact on employees. More specifically, we aim to verify whether the correlation between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors in an organization is positive (Afsar & Umrani, 2019).

Meanwhile, when we talk about employer branding, we're working with a concept that is an extension of ideas related to branding that already existed in marketing applied to human resource management (John & Raj, 2020). The term "employer brand" can be more or less seen as a package of benefits that an organization offers and the image of the organization that package creates (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Farooq et al., 2024). When a specific package becomes associated with a specific organization, that can be said to be their brand as employers (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). The role of employer branding in this paper is to find out which characteristics of employer brands employees who display more innovative work behaviors perceive as preferable and try to arrive at a conclusion as to what type of employer brands organizations should try to build to attract these employees.

For our research, we're going to need data on three variables, transformational leadership, innovative work behaviors, and employer branding. To measure transformational leadership, we'll use a scale based on Rafferty and Griffin (2004). To measure innovative work behaviors, one based on Jong and Kemp (2003). And finally, to measure employer branding, a scale based on Berthon (2005).

This work offers insight that can be useful for companies to increase their performance in the market, and it tests knowledge that, while not extensively researched, has been established before in a new context, Portugal, potentially informing businesses on how they should act in this context. Additionally, directly investigating the impact of employer branding on innovative behaviors is not something that has been sufficiently done yet, reinforcing a gap in the literature, especially when these topics are worked on at the same time as transformational leadership.

With the introduction done, we'll review the existing literature in the next chapter, followed by the formulation of hypotheses, an explanation of the methods chosen for the research, an analysis of the results found, and a conclusion where we'll present the key takeaways.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Innovative Work Behaviors

Innovation is a topic that requires special consideration by modern organizations, as it can be a competitive advantage in an increasingly fierce market (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Jiang & Gu, 2016; Shin et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015). Innovation is necessary to keep up with rampant consumer expectations and demands and to deal with problems, complications, and challenges (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Savelsbergh et al., 2012; Somech & Khalaili, 2014). One source of innovation organizations should turn to is their employees by stimulating innovative work behaviors (Afsar & Umrani, 2019). Employee innovative work behavior refers to actions and behaviors, that usually go beyond employees' expected roles, that create, develop, and apply new ideas and solutions to the workplace in order to improve performance, processes, products, or services (Choi et al., 2021; Hock-Doepgen et al., 2025).

The reason employees can be such a good source of innovation is because they often have a different perspective than that of the people making decisions (Bos-Nehlet et al., 2017). Innovation is usually the result of a choice, a finding only produces impact when it is chosen to be implemented, and even then, efforts may not bear fruit (Bos-Nehlet et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2017). The people making decisions, be they high-level executives or operational chiefs, usually perform different tasks than that of the average employee in any given organization. Their decisions can and often do lead to many innovations, but their perspective is still only one, limiting their knowledge and the array of decisions they even realize can be made (Javed et al., 2017; Muchiri et al., 2020). The average employee, on the other hand, has a perspective that's different from that of the decision maker. They know the work they do better than anyone else, they know the hardships, the problems, the potential, among other things. As a result, they often have ideas for solutions, for improvements, for new strategies (Bos-Nehlet et al., 2017; Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Muchiri et al., 2020). These are ideas that for the traditional decision-maker are hard to arrive at but can lead to innovation. In this sense, merely listening to employees with ideas puts organizations on the path to innovate, but they can go even further, they can encourage these ideas with an organizational culture that incentivizes and rewards thinkers, as well as encouraging discussion between employees about the best ways to do things and bringing more perspectives to the table (Bos-Nehlet et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2017; Muchiri et al., 2020).

There are many factors that influence innovative work behaviors, and to better understand them, it's useful to be aware of them (Muchiri et al., 2020). Some of the most common and important antecedents that control innovative behaviors are the employee's personality, contextual characteristics, job design and characteristics, trust between coworkers and leaders and their relationships, performance expectations, the organization's strategy, and role and style of leadership, among others (Bos-Nehlet et al., 2017; Javed et al., 2017; Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Muchiri et al., 2020). Many studies have found connections between these antecedents and innovative work behaviors. Our study will focus on leadership, as it has been highlighted in the past as a crucial way to stimulate innovative behaviors (Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Muchiri et al., 2020).

While personality and other internal factors play a role in innovative behaviors, it's still possible to stimulate them, and organizations can aim to do that. For innovative work behaviors to more easily emerge, the biggest requirements are a good relationship between employees and leadership and an effective style of leadership capable of inspiring (Muchiri et al., 2020). One of the styles of leadership that fosters those behaviors is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on inspiring and motivating employees towards ambitious goals and developing their maximum potential by aligning them with the organization's values and vision (Saad Alessa, 2021; Dubinsky et al., 1995). This type of leadership empowers employees and stimulates innovative work behaviors, hopefully leading to innovation and creating the foundation for a strong, sustainable competitive advantage (Rank et al., 2004).

## **2.2. Transformational Leadership**

From around the middle of the twentieth century, research into leadership focused on the effects of democratic and autocratic approaches, trying to find the answer to the question of who should lead. At the time, another very important question in leadership research was the analysis between focusing leadership on tasks or on relationships (Bass, 1985). Initially, it was believed that it was just a matter of doing the proper research, and we'd arrive at a solution to the previous questions. Over time, we have come to realize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to leadership questions (Bass, 1985). Many variables, such as which goals are chosen and the context the leadership takes place in, change what the ideal leader is, the decisions they should make, and how they should act (Bass, 1985). When faced with a difficult situation, some leaders will lead alone and find a path forward through adversity,

while others will involve their followers in the decision-making process and find new perspectives and roads to success (Bass, 1985). This is the primary reason why many different leadership styles exist nowadays (Bass, 1985). There are two styles of leadership that stand as the origin point of many of the more modern leadership styles. These are transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999). Our work will focus on transformational leadership, but we will provide a brief definition for transactional leadership for context. Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on the transaction part of the relationship between leader and subordinate (Bass, 1985). The leader is aware of the subordinates' needs, but not on a personal level (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999). Transactional leaders will clearly communicate what they want to their subordinates while highlighting what they get in exchange for their work and effort (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999).

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that inspires and motivates employees to achieve their maximum potential (Bass, 1985; Bednall et al., 2018). Transformational leadership is composed of four different types of behaviors exhibited by transformational leaders: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1985; Bednall et al., 2018; Yukl, 1999). Idealized influence can also be interpreted as charisma. It refers to when the leader, with their actions, shows employees the vision and the mission and instills them with pride in their work (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999). Inspirational motivation is a type of motivating encouragement that builds up employees and helps them gain confidence in their work and the cause (Bednall et al., 2018; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Intellectual stimulation can be understood as a culture created by the leader that encourages employees to perceive and approach tasks in different ways. encouraging them to experiment and arrive at new solutions and ways to do their work (Bednall et al., 2018; Yukl, 1999). Finally, individual consideration refers to adjustments made to how employees are treated on a personal level. This includes activities like coaching, mentoring, and adjusting the complexity of tasks and goals, taking each employee's competences into consideration (Zhu & Akhtar, 2013). Transformational leadership surpasses transactional leadership, which focuses on persuading employees' behavior for rewards, because its way of motivation is more intrinsic and more intellectually stimulating (Zhu & Akhtar, 2013).

Rafferty and Griffin (2004) see leadership a little differently, and given their scale is the one we're going to use, we'll go over the dimensions they define. Overall, their view of transformational leadership is not that different from the previous view, adapting their scale

from measures created by House (1996) and Podsakoff et al. (1990). Their scale separates transformational leadership into five dimensions: articulating a vision, intellectual stimulation, inspirational communication, supportive leadership, and personal recognition. Articulating a vision is about expressing idealized futures based on the organization's values. Intellectual stimulation stimulates followers' interests in problems and develops their ability to think about solutions. Inspirational communication is about encouraging messages that build confidence and motivation. Supportive leadership is about behaviors that satisfy the followers, noticing their concerns and needs. And personal recognition requires leaders to properly praise and acknowledge efforts made toward specific goals (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004).

Transformational leadership appears in this paper because its potential impact on innovative work behaviors is documented in many studies, with some recent studies going as far as to call it one of the most influential predictors of the innovative work behaviors (Agazu et al., 2025).

### **2.3. Employer Branding**

The brand of an organization as an employer, the employer brand, is one of many ways organizations are evaluated, especially by potential employees (Figurska & Matsuka, 2013; Reis et al., 2021). Having employees that exhibit plenty of innovative work behaviors can be very important for organizations' competitive advantage (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Innovation is crucial for organizations to stay competitive in modern markets, and creative individuals are a powerful force of innovation (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). For some organizations, successfully attracting and retaining creative individuals can mean obtaining a powerful, sustainable competitive advantage, netting the organization extraordinary results (Bednall et al., 2018; John & Raj, 2020). As such, the employer brand is an important thing to consider for organizations.

The keyword in the previous paragraph is attracting, and that's what we're going to be focusing on. However, due to the structure of our work, we can't ignore the concept of retention. Being able to attract creative individuals is something that organizations must know how to do to make innovation one of their competitive advantages (Chitu, 2020; John & Raj, 2020). To this end, organizations can look towards employer branding. With some effort, organizations can create an employer brand that attracts creative people. Just as it's

important to attract people that display innovative work behaviors, it's just as important to make sure they're satisfied and committed after being brought in (Figurska & Matsuka, 2013).

Employer branding as a concept is an extension of ideas related to branding that existed in marketing applied to human resource management (John & Raj, 2020). The term "employer brand" can be seen as a package of effective, economic, and psychological benefits that an organization offers its employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). The specific package of benefits becomes associated with a specific employing organization, becoming its employer brand (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

When deciding on the benefits that make up an employer brand, it's important to consider the attractiveness of each benefit and the impact on the brand. Benefits offer value to the employee, but there are multiple types of ways to provide value to employees, which are labeled as different types of values (Berthon et al., 2005). Understanding these different types and how they attract specific types of people is what distinguishes a good employer brand from a bad one (Hackman, 1980; Puri, 2018). Different organizations and positions require different people, and a good brand is going to attract the ones perfect for the job. In our case, we're looking to understand what kinds of value people who display higher levels of innovative work behaviors are attracted to (Berthon et al., 2005; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). A good brand helps not just in getting them through the door but also in retaining them (Figurska & Matsuka, 2013). Organizations need to make sure that the benefits that got people interested in working in said organization match the expectations they had once they start effectively working (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). The benefits received help keep employees satisfied and committed to their work and organization (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Otherwise, the innovative talent the organization is fostering will be lost over time, and with it, its competitive advantage (Figurska & Matsuka, 2013; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). In the end, to understand what makes both attracting and retaining talent function, it's first important to understand what attractiveness actually is and how it provides value to potential employees and actual employees.

Employer attractiveness is a concept that is closely related to the employer brand. This is a concept heavily developed by Berthon in 2005. In his study, he suggested that employer attractiveness is an antecedent of employer branding. Employer attractiveness is closely related to the perception of potential employees, it's the benefits they envision from working

in a specific organization. The collective perception of the various potential employees creates an image of that organization as an employer, meaning that the more people that see benefits in working for that organization, the better their image, and the more valuable their employer brand becomes (Berthon et al., 2005).

Berthon (2005) defined five dimensions for attractiveness that organize the benefits into different categories. The different categories of attractiveness provide value to employees in different ways, with these ways being more attractive to certain personalities than others. Berthon calls these five dimensions “Interest Value”, “Social Value”, “Economic Value”, “Development Value”, and “Application Value”.

Starting with “Interest Value”, this dimension provides value to the employee through the job being interesting. This means the employer provides an exciting work environment and novel work practices and makes use of its employee’s creativity to create good and innovative products and services. “Social Value” provides value to the employee by having being an organization with good relationships between the various members of the team. The third dimension is named “Economic Value”, and here the employer provides value through economic benefits. This means higher salaries, job security, and promotions. The next dimension is “Development Value”, and it is related to the employee’s growth. It refers to a job where the employee has opportunities to learn and gain new skills. Finally, we have “Application Value”, which is attractive because the position asks and requires the employee to apply what they know. It gives purpose to the effort of learning the required skills for the job (Berthon et al., 2005).

Generally speaking, benefits are always a positive for the employee. What is important to consider is how much they’re valued. Even if everything is beneficial in some way, people have different priorities and needs (Chitu, 2020; John & Raj, 2020). This means that certain people will prefer one type of value over the others. Since for this study we’re interested in learning how to attract and retain creative individuals, we want to know which of the five values creative people lean more towards. In the next section, we’ll go over the hypotheses that test whether displaying more innovative behaviors correlates with more interest towards any of these values of the employer brand.

## 3. Hypotheses

### **3.1. Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviors**

To formulate the hypothesis of our work, we'll start by going over the key points of the literature review that justify each hypothesis. On the link between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors, the interaction between these two variables is pretty straightforward. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that inspires employees and motivates them (Sharifirad, 2013). This inspiration and motivation can potentially increase innovative worker behaviors (Khan et al., 2020; Sharifirad, 2013). It's exactly this relationship that we want to investigate. Investigate whether or not leaders that display transformational traits inspire innovative work behaviors in their subordinates (Khan et al., 2020; Sharifirad, 2013).

Since these are psychological traits and effects, theories that work with those topics are relevant here. The leader-member exchange theory, LMX theory for short, tells us that leaders don't treat all employees the same, and that, generally speaking, when leaders treat employees favorably, these are more motivated to produce results and reciprocate the gesture (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). The effect we should see when combining this information with our research is leaders that treat employees in an intellectually stimulating way, which in turn leads to them wanting to reciprocate with innovative work behaviors (Bednall et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2020; Rockstuhl et al., 2012).

With this in mind, our first hypothesis is

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Transformational leadership positively impacts innovative work behavior.

### **3.2. Relationship between Innovative Work Behaviors and the dimensions of Employer Branding**

For these ones, our goal is to look at employees that display higher levels of innovative work behavior and see which types of companies are more attractive to them through the lens of employer branding and the five dimensions of Berthon (2005). We want to test which of these dimensions are more attractive for employees who display more innovative behaviors.

Before defining our hypotheses, these dimensions we're working with and what it means for a company to have an employer brand that displays more of each value is a concept that is related to the concept of organizational identity (Whetten, 2006). Organizational identity refers to attributes that distinguish an organization from their similar organizations and that manifest in the way the company runs and operates and the culture (Whetten, 2006). If we recall how Berthon (2005) defined the subdimensions, their definitions were not unlike attributes that would make part of an organization's identity. In that sense, our hypotheses seek to draw a connection between employees who display innovative behaviors more frequently and organizations whose attributes provide benefits in the five ways defined by Berthon.

And so, our hypotheses are:

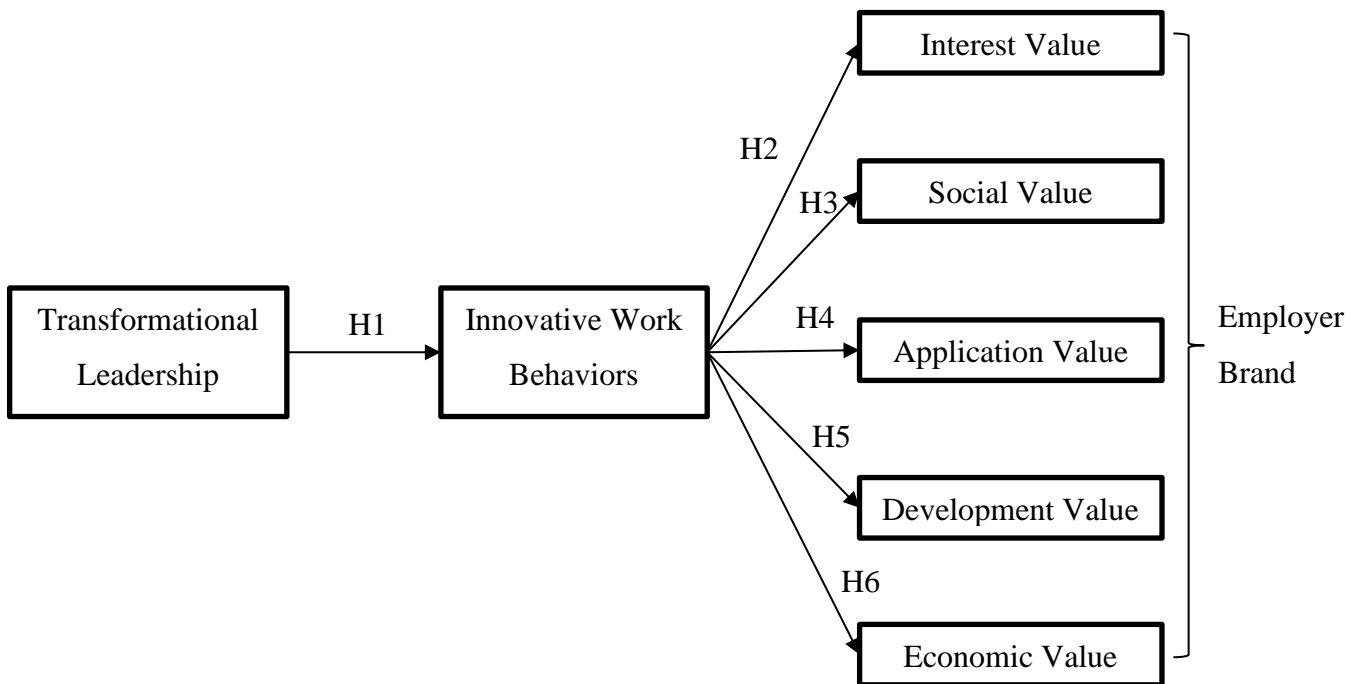
Hypothesis 2 (H2): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more interest value.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more social value.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more application value.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more development value.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more economic value.



**Figure 1 - Conceptual Model**

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Sample and Type of Study

We chose to develop an empiric, quantitative study to test the hypothesis above (Afsar & Umrani, 2019). We gathered the data through questionnaires sent to more than one hundred Portuguese organizations. We requested their help to share the questionnaire, creating a snowball sample. We opted not to restrict the study to a specific sector of business in order to get a broader picture of reality. We wanted to measure the impact of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviors and what type of organizations employees with that display more innovative work behaviors prefer regardless of sector.

In the end, our sample is composed of 135 valid answers. Regarding the ages of the inquired, ages from 18 to 27 and 44 to 59 are the most frequent, with a small gap existing between 28 and 43. Ages 18 to 27 make up 37% of all answers, 28 to 43 make up 20.7%, 44 to 59 account for 40%, and 2.2% for ages above 60. The questionnaire included the option for ages under 18, but none of the inquired selected it.

We also asked how long the inquired worker had been working in their current position, and we found out that 64.5% of them have worked in the same organization for more than 3 years, with 30.4% having worked for more than 10 years. Next, we asked if they were public workers or not, and we learned that only 15.6% worked for the state. Finally, we found out that 2.2% of the inquired workers were employed in the primary sector, 18.5% in the secondary sector, and the last 79.3% worked in the service sector.

### 4.2. Variables and Data Gathering

There are three main variables that we are analyzing in our study: transformational leadership, innovative work behaviors, and employer branding. In the first hypothesis, transformational leadership is the independent variable, and innovative work behaviors are the dependent variable (Khan et al., 2020; Sharifirad, 2013). In the second hypothesis, innovative work behaviors become the independent variable, and employer branding is the dependent variable, more specifically, the interest value dimension. These variables were measured with questionnaires made following the scales created by Jong and Kemp in 2003, Rafferty and Griffin in 2004, and Berthon in 2005. Jong and Kemp's scale was used to

measure innovative work behaviors, Rafferty and Griffin's scale was used to measure transformational leadership, and Berthon's scale measured employer branding.

Rafferty and Griffin's scale has fifteen questions, which are used to measure five different subdimensions of transformational leadership. These subdimensions are called vision, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership, and personal recognition. All questions are structured as 5-level Likert scales, with 1 being strongly disagree, 2 being disagree, 3 meaning neither agree nor disagree, 4 being agree, and 5 being strongly agree. As our questionnaire was by workers, these questions about leadership asked about their thoughts on their direct, hierarchal leader.

In Jong and Kemp's work in 2003, they used a scale with eight questions used to measure innovative work behaviors. These questions also use 5-level Likert scales, with each number having the same meaning as they do in Rafferty and Griffin's scale, explained in the previous paragraph. In our questionnaire the workers answered how they rate their own behaviors. For our questionnaire, we used an adapted version of the scale. The original work by Jong and Kemp, made in 2003, has 48 questions in total, separated into seven different dimensions that they hypothesize influence innovative work behaviors. They have a scale to measure innovative behaviors, as they call them, and it's those eight questions that they used that we're interested in and the ones we applied in our work. These 8 questions ask the inquired employees to reflect and answer about their behaviors, providing sufficient data for our work.

Finally, Berthon's scale, used to measure which aspect of an organization an employee is attracted to, uses twenty five questions that separate employee's preferences into five different types of value. These are interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value, all of which are explained in the employer branding section of the literature review. The scale asks employees to measure how important each item is to them when looking at potential employers on a 7-level Likert scale. In this scale, one means it's not very important for them, and seven means it's very important. The numbers in between have no specific label.

### **4.3.Data Processing**

Once we gathered the data, we started working toward verifying the hypothesis, but we also explored the data to try and find other interesting quirks that could provide the readers of

this work with some valuable insight. The first thing to do was calculate Cronbach's alphas to ensure the data gathered was robust and that there were no problems with our application of the questionnaire.

For the hypotheses, we tested them through linear regressions between the variables. To validate the findings, we would then verify the assumptions of the linear regression model, we tested the homoscedasticity and lack of autocorrelation in the residues, analyzed influential observations, and tested the normality of the residues.

To enrich our work, we also tried to find correlations between variables that weren't directly involved in hypotheses. We tried to find connections between the sociodemographic data and transformational leadership, innovative work behaviors, and employer branding, but without going into too much detail, these attempts were largely fruitless. The few connections found lacked the statistical significance to claim they were anything more than coincidence.

Where we found some success was in separating transformational leadership and employer branding into their respective subdimensions and then looking at how each dimension influenced or was influenced by innovative behaviors. We'll go into more detail in the following section.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1. Means and Descriptive Analysis

To begin analyzing the data, we'll start by looking at the means and other interesting values of the variables being studied and their various dimensions. We can start by taking a look at transformational leadership. Averaging out the answers people gave to the various questions gave us a mean of 3.68. Considering that our questions were formatted in a 5-level Likert scale, this means that the average leader places above the median value of 3.

**Table 5.1 - Transformational Leadership Subdimensions' Means**

Dimension:	Mean:
Vision	3.6
Inspirational Communication	3.85
Intellectual Stimulation	3.58
Supportive Leadership	3.66
Personal Recognition	3.73

To learn more about the data, the next thing we did was compare the means of the various dimensions and see where Portuguese leaders do better and where they fall shorter. The scale we used divides transformational leadership into five dimensions. As a quick refresher, these are vision, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership, and personal recognition. Looking at the data in table 5.1, we very clearly see that inspirational communication, with 3.85, is where they rate the highest, and intellectual stimulation, with 3.58, where they fall short. Vision, with 3.6, is not doing much better when compared to intellectual stimulation. On the other side, personal recognition (3.73) is the second highest subdimension.

In the paper presenting the scale created by Rafferty and Griffin (2004), the result they found was different from ours. The means of their dimensions hover between 2.9 and 2.95 except for vision, which has a mean of 3.37. This does not match our findings, both in terms of the means found, which are different, and regarding which dimensions show the highest means. A different study, one by Bednall et. al. (2018), found a mean for transformational leadership of 3.33. This value is higher than Rafferty and Griffin's (2004) value (3.01), closer to ours

(3.68) but still smaller. These values are for transformational leadership as a whole rather than each dimension. Bednall does not make the distinction in his work. Additionally, the value of 3.01 found by Rafferty and Griffin is a mean of the means of dimensions they found.

When it comes to employer branding, we arrived at the value of 5.85 as the mean. In this case, we're working with a 7-level Likert scale, meaning 4 is the middle value. Also, to give some context, this scale measures the expectations and preferences of employees when looking at benefits offered by employers. We're once again going to analyze each individual dimension to learn more about the expectations and preferences of Portuguese employees.

**Table 5.2 – Employer Branding Subdimensions' Means**

Dimension:	Mean:
Interest Value	5.96
Social Value	5.95
Economic Value	5.72
Development Value	5.91
Application Value	5.71

As a refresher, Berthon (2005) divides employer branding into five dimensions, with each representing a type of value provided by a company's benefits. The five dimensions are interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value. Looking at table 5.2, we can see that interest value, social value, and development value are the ones the people in our data value the most, all with values above 5.9. On the other hand, economic value and application value are the things people least prioritize.

In a study run by Berthon (2005), he used his scale to measure the attractiveness of working at Sony, and the dimensions that consistently reported higher numbers were social, development, and economic value. In our data, social and development still rate higher than the others, but instead of economic value, interest value was more appealing to our sample, meaning our findings are in line with his study save for that exception. Another study, run by John and Raj (2020), found a mean for employer branding of 3.86 for the variable without considering subdimensions. They used a 5-level Likert scale, while we used a 7-level scale and found a mean of 5.85. This comparison is not the best it could be because of this difference, but if we look at both means as a percentage of the maximum value, we can at

least look at the side-by-side. 3.86 out of 5 is 77% and 5.85 out of 7 is 84%. The difference is not very big, so, at least in this context, and we can say our findings are more or less in line with John and Raj’s findings.

Finally, we have the results of Jong’s (2003) scale for innovative work behaviors with a mean of 4.03. The scale we used has no subdimensions. These questions followed a 5-level Likert scale, just like transformational leadership did, and as such, we can look at both their deviations to learn a little more about these values. Transformational leadership had a mean of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 0.76. Innovative work behaviors has a mean of 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.59. We can see that the answers of transformational leadership are more spread out than the answers for innovative work behaviors. The paper by Bednall et. al. (2018) makes for a good frame of comparison here too. They found a mean for transformational leadership of 3.33 with a standard deviation of 0.92, values that are different from ours but simultaneously not that far. They also analyzed innovative work behaviors in the same paper, finding a mean of 3.9 with a standard deviation of 0.62, values that are close to the ones we found. Interestingly enough, their results also show the mean of innovative work behaviors being higher than transformational leadership, just like ours did.

**Table 5.3 - Transformational Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviors Comparisson**

Variable:	Mean:	Standard Deviation:
Transformational Leadership	3.68	0.76
Innovative Work Behaviors	4.03	0.59

### **5.2. Regression of Transformational Leadership on Innovative Work Behaviors**

To test the correlation between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior, we ran a linear regression test using transformational leadership as the variable explaining innovative work behaviors. With the null hypothesis being that there is no correlation between both variables, we found enough statistical evidence to assert that the null hypothesis is false with a 99% confidence level. Now that we know that the two variables might be correlated, we next tried to measure the impact transformational leadership has on innovative work behavior. What we ended up finding was that transformational leadership

explains 8.4% (R Squared of 0.084) of the variation of innovative work behavior and that they had a positive relationship with a beta of 0.223, an increase in transformational leadership means an increase in innovative work behavior.

**Table 5.4 - Model's Coefficients**

Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.204	0.0241		13.3	0.000
Transformational Leadership	0.223	0.064	0.289	3.481	0.001

**Table 5.5 - Model Summary**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change
0.289	0.084	0.077	0.56303	0.084	12.119	1	133	0.001

To increase the robustness of the results, we ran tests to validate the assumptions of the model. We verified the homoscedasticity of the residues and ensured there was no autocorrelation. We looked for influential values by seeing if Cook's distance, standardized residues, and standardized DFFits were within acceptable ranges, and verified the residues followed a normal distribution. In all of these tests, the only problem found was three values that exceeded the acceptable DFFits value, classifying them as influential values. Analyzing each individual case revealed valid responses to the questionnaire, so we opted not to remove them from the analysis. All three cases were examples of people who don't find the characteristic of transformational leadership in their leader but show disproportionately high innovative work behaviors regardless. Someone's way of being isn't just influenced by their leader but by other factors as well, something that shouldn't be too surprising, considering transformational leadership only explains 8.4% of the variation of this variable. Other studies analyzing this relationship had similar findings, with Sharifirad (2013) finding 13.3% of the variation being explained by transformational leadership. Another study, this one by Khan et. al. (2020) found a beta of 0.272 on the correlation of transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors, not too far from our 0.223. Afsar and Umrani in 2019 found a

beta of 0.503, which is a value significantly higher than ours. In their study transformational leadership also explained 33.6% of the variation, significantly higher than our findings.

With the data available, we decided to explore which of the dimensions of transformational leadership was more influential. This was done with five different linear regressions, each measuring the variation in innovative work behaviors with one of the five dimensions of transformational leadership. In all cases, there was statistical evidence to believe that there was a correlation between the dimension and innovative work behavior at a 99% confidence level, except for vision, which had to settle for a 95% confidence level. In all cases, the relationship between the dimension and the variable was positive, but some explained the variation in innovative work behavior better than others as shown in the following table (table 5.6).

**Table 5.6 - Individual R square of each dimension of Transformational Leadership**

Dimension:	R squared:
Personal Recognition	0.083
Vision	0.044
Inspirational Communication	0.054
Supportive Leadership	0.059
Intellectual Stimulation	0.007

Personal recognition was the one that most influenced innovative work behavior, with it explaining 8.3% of the variation. Vision was the one that explained the least with 4.4%. The other three dimensions, in ascending order of influence, were inspirational communication, with 5.4%, supportive leadership, with 5.9%, and intellectual stimulation, with 7%. These results are more or less in line with Sharifirad's findings in 2013, where he found that transformational leadership as a whole explained 13.3% of the variation. With transformational leadership being a more complete variable than each of the dimensions, it makes sense it would explain more than each individual dimension.

### **5.3. Regression of Innovative Work Behavior on Employer Branding**

In this section, we're going to look into how the relationship between innovative work behavior and the individuals' preferences towards the various dimensions of employer

branding and how much they seem to want out of a job position in terms of benefits in general.

We started this section with the simplest regression, measuring the impact of innovative work behaviors on employer branding in general which, in this case, can be read as whether people’s expectations are generally higher or lower depending on the level of innovative work behaviors they exhibit. After running a simple test, we found out that there isn’t enough statistical evidence to claim that innovative work behaviors affect employer branding, even at a 0.1 significance level.

We then looked towards the individual dimensions, and here we found mixed results. Application value, development value, and economic value also have no significant statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, meaning we can say that innovative work behaviors do not influence the preference for benefits that provide value in these ways. Application value has a beta of 0.163 but a p-value of 0.220, development value has a beta of -0.088 but a p-value of 0.428, and economic value has a beta of 0.035 with a p-value of 0.794. The two remaining dimensions are social value and interest value. Social value shows significant statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis for a significance level of 0.05, and 3% of the variation is explained by innovative work behaviors. However, social value has a beta of -0.26, meaning the relation between these two is negative. Finally, interest value is where the results show the strongest correlation, giving us sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis at a significance level of 0.01. The percentage of the preference for interest value explained by innovative work behaviors is 7.2%. The beta for interest value is 0.372, this time representing a positive relationship. Both these values show that the relationship between innovative work behaviors and interest value is stronger when compared to social value.

The values for the regressions between innovative work behaviors and interest value and between it and social value can be found in the two sets of tables below. As a solid correlation could not be found between innovative work behaviors and the other three subdimensions, putting the data into tables would not have much meaning.

**Table 5.7 - Model's Coefficients - Interest Value as Dependent Variable**

Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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Model	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.462	0.471		9.472	0.000
Innovative Work Behaviors	0.372	0.116	0.268	3.209	0.002

**Table 5.8 - Model Summary - Interest Value as Dependent Variable**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change
0.268	0.072	0.065	0.78546	0.072	10.297	1	133	0.002

**Table 5.9 - Model's Coefficients - Social Value as Dependent Variable**

Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
Model	Beta	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	6.994	0.527			13.282	0.000
Innovative Work Behaviors	-0.260	0.129	-0.172		-2.012	0.046

**Table 5.10 - Model Summary - Social Value as Dependent Variable**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change
0.172	0.03	0.022	0.87794	0.03	4.050	1	133	0.046

When comparing to similar studies, we get mixed results. John and Raj, in 2020, measured the impact of employer branding on innovative work behaviors. This study has some important differences from ours, namely, that they're working with employer branding as a whole rather than its subdimensions as defined by Berthon (2005), and their relationship is flipped, with innovative behaviors varying with employer branding. While different, we can still look to them for comparison. In their study, employer branding explained 16.4% of the variation of innovative work behaviors, and they found a beta of 0.1763, meaning a positive

correlation. Obviously, with the relationship we found between social value and innovative behaviors being negative, that finding does not match the findings of John and Raj (2020). Interest value, on the other hand, matches John and Raj's findings. The percentage explained is lower, while the beta is higher. This makes sense considering their study is working with a variable that encompasses all dimensions. Their beta is smaller because it encompasses both the positive effects of some dimensions and the positive effects of others. With our other three variables being not as impactful, the logic remains consistent, and we can draw some parallels.

The relationship between employer branding and innovative work behavior is one that, beyond the study by John and Raj (2020), hasn't been explored too much. At least not the direct relationship. In their work, John and Raj measure the direct impact of employer branding on innovative work behaviors, but they also measure impact while using employee engagement as a mediator. They argue that employer branding impacts employee engagement and that employee engagement in turn impacts innovative work behaviors. Studies analyzing both of those relationships exist and are more numerous, but for the direct connection like we're investigating in our work, there are not so many.

The last thing we did here was confirm the model's assumptions for the regressions. Once again, we found next to no problems in all of our tests expect for two outliers in the link between innovative work behaviors and interest value when looking at DFFits. Both were cases of people who responded favorably to questions measuring interest value but that also reported very low levels of innovative work behaviors. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this. It's perfectly fine for someone to desire an interesting job, regardless of whether they themselves display innovative behaviors, and perhaps, this may just mean that this person doesn't display innovative behaviors currently because their current job is not interesting enough for them. In the end, we decided to keep these observations, as they are meaningful to our research.

## **5.4.Hypotheses**

Given what we've discussed so far, most of the work for answering our hypothesis has already been done. We're working to test 6 hypotheses, so we'll go over them one by one.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Transformational leadership positively impacts innovative work behavior.

For hypothesis 1, we found sufficient data to consider that transformational leadership impacts innovative work behavior. The coefficient found was 0.223, a positive coefficient, and given everything discussed up until this point, we can safely discard the null hypothesis given the data we found.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more interest value.

For hypothesis 2, we also found sufficient statistical evidence there to assume that there's a correlation between innovative work behaviors and interest value. Hypothesis 2 requires a positive relationship between the two, and that's exactly what the coefficient found proved with a value of 0.372. Given everything discussed before, the correct decision here is to discard the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more social value.

For hypothesis 3, there is statistical evidence to say that innovative behaviors influence social value. However, the beta is negative, with a value of -0.26. This means innovative work behaviors make people feel less attraction towards employers whose employer brand provides more social value. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. Furthermore, we found that there is statistical evidence proving the opposite of hypothesis 3, so we reject hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more application value.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more development value.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Employees that show higher levels of innovative work behaviors are more attracted towards employer brands with more economic value.

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 all have the same conclusion. There was not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis. We cannot say that there is a connection between innovative work behaviors and attraction towards any of these values, and we must reject these three hypotheses.

It's simpler to understand what this means if we first imagine an employer brand which balances all five benefits. If we increase one type of benefit while keeping everything else the same, we'd get five types of brands each specialized in one of the five types of value. All these brands would do better at attracting innovative work behaviors than the balanced brand since more benefits are more attractive. However, the brand which focuses on interest value would attract innovative behaviors better than all the others, while the one focused on social value would do the worst.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Summary

We started this study with the goal of exploring some ideas on how organizations can stimulate and attract innovative work behaviors. During the course of our work, we found that transformational leadership is capable of stimulating innovative behaviors and that the right employer branding is capable of attracting them.

With our hypotheses, we found that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors that showed that the existence of transformational leaders causes subordinates to display more innovative work behaviors. At the same time, we found that not all dimensions of employer branding are as effective at attracting employees who display more innovative work behaviors, and that it is brands known for providing interesting work that are more appealing to these individuals. This is an interesting finding since similar studies, such as the one by John and Raj in 2020, didn't find the need to look at employer branding through the different dimensions, looking at the link between innovative work behaviors and employer branding as a whole. It's the goal of taking a deeper look into this connection that justifies individual hypotheses that test the relationship between innovative work behaviors and each subdimension of employer branding in our work.

Transformational leadership, in recent years, has repeatedly proven to be one of the biggest determinants of innovative work behaviors (Agazu et al., 2025). The positive relationship that we found aligns with those findings and reinforces already existing literature. This continues a trend found in previous works that agree with this statement, such as the works by Afsar and Umrani (2019) and Khan et. al. (2020) and reinforces the results we found.

The other half of our work focused on employer branding as a way to attract and retain employees who display more innovative work behaviors. Research that connects these variables directly is not as thorough as the previous topic, and the work we can best compare our results to is the one by John and Raj (2020). Without making a distinction between subdimensions, they found similar results to ours, where the higher the perceived value provided by an employer brand, the more attractive it is for employees who display more innovative work behaviors. Employer branding is a topic that is still being actively

researched, and while not as direct, the following studies have findings that are in line with our results. Choi et. al. (2021) worked on a study where, among other findings, they discovered that perceived organizational support played a positive role in inspiring and sustaining innovative work behaviors. Perceived organizational support can come from many different sources, and one of them is the employer brand and the benefits the company provides its workers. This connection is explored in the paper by Farooq et. al. (2024) and helps reinforce our findings.

The relationships we set out to find with this work ended up being in line with findings from other works, however, while exploring the data further, we found a few differences that warrant discussion, namely, the subdimensions for transformational leader and employer branding do not perfectly match the ones found in other works. In Rafferty and Griffin's (2004) sample analyzing transformational leadership, they found vision to be the quality more commonly found in leaders, while inspirational communication was our most commonly found. Berthon (2005), in the samples collected about employer branding, found that, along with social and development value, economic value was one of the things people found most attractive in an employer brand. In our findings social and development value also have great importance, but rather than economic value, it was interest value people valued more. These works aren't exactly recent, so that is one possible explanation for the differences, or perhaps the fact that our study was done in Portugal may be the reason for the different results.

## **6.2. Practical Applications**

Our first hypothesis, transformational leadership positively impacts innovative work behavior, having found data that prove it true, means that organizations can use transformational leadership to stimulate innovation through employees' behaviors.

Companies that want to stimulate innovative work behaviors could coach their employees in leadership roles and strengthen their transformational qualities (Alamri, 2023). Additionally, organizations can work to improve communication between top managers and average workers to bring ideas closer to decisions-makers and reward innovative thinking. They should also invite average workers to speak and participate in important decisions and meetings to add their unique insight (Alamri, 2023).

The other hypotheses are related to the employer branding, and to sum everything up, employer brands can be used to attract employees that display more innovative work behaviors. Companies that wish to attract workers who display more innovative behaviors will do better by creating a brand as an employer that makes them known for being an interesting place to work out. Companies that focus their brand as employers on the social aspects will have a comparatively harder time attracting this kind of worker. This is the conclusion we draw from our data while following a logic similar to John & Raj's work from 2020.

Companies that wish to provide more interesting work should train their leaders, as leadership plays a role in making work more engaging (Neuber et al., 2021). They will also benefit from making the work done meaningful to the people doing it and creating mechanisms that can show that meaning to workers (Zahari & Kaliannan, 2022).

### **6.3.Limitations and Future Research**

One limitation that we came across that's very common in this type of work is a small sample size. We contacted over 300 Portuguese companies with requests for their collaboration, and in the end, we only received answers from around 150 individuals. In fact, only around 10 of these were obtained by reaching out to these companies, with the remaining being obtained through friends and acquaintances. The response rate was so small that it may actually call into question the validity of directly contacting companies for studies in this context. Obviously, this was not part of this work's scope, so we don't have the data to validate this claim, but this social phenomenon might be pronounced enough to warrant investigation. Regardless, for our purposes, the sample size wasn't as big as we would have desired, and that should be taken into consideration when assessing this work. The data and our findings are valid, however, there is room for further research with a more robust dataset.

Another limitation is inherent to the snowball method of gathering data. This type of sample limits the representativeness of the population. Future research that wishes to use the snowball method can try to circumvent this problem by focusing on specific sectors and getting more representative samples with this method in that way.

Another problem stems from the fact that the questionnaire asked the respondents to answer a variety of questions about themselves, with some of the options being more socially desirable than others. Some people may have struggled to pick the option that truly

represented them, either due to an innate bias or out of shame, even in an expressly anonymous questionnaire like ours. Using alternatives to self-reporting questions may be a path for further research.

Future studies interested in the topics we covered or adjacent topics may want to work with employee engagement as one of their variables, as it's a versatile variable that fits within these topics and has plenty of research done, making more literature available to reference.

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## Appendices

Appendix A – List of Questions:

Employer Branding (Scale of 1 to 7):

O reconhecimento/valorização do meu desempenho pela chefia.

Pertencer a uma organização com um ambiente de trabalho descontraído.

A possibilidade de o emprego atual alavancar para futuras oportunidades.

Sentir-me bem comigo mesmo(a) por trabalhar numa determinada organização.

Sentir-me mais autoconfiante por trabalhar em determinada organização.

Adquirir experiência que que acrescenta valor ao meu percurso profissional.

A existência de boas relações com a chefia.

A existência de boas relações com os colegas.

Pertencer a uma organização onde posso contar com o apoio e incentivo dos colegas.

Pertencer a uma organização com um ambiente de trabalho entusiasmante.

Pertencer a uma organização que adote práticas de trabalho atuais e que está a par das tendências do futuro.

Pertencer a uma organização que valoriza e faz uso da minha criatividade.

Pertencer a uma organização que desenvolve produtos e serviços de alta qualidade.

Pertencer a uma organização que desenvolve produtos e serviços inovadores.

Pertencer a uma organização que proporciona oportunidades de progressão na carreira.

Pertencer a uma organização com um papel ativo na sociedade.

Pertencer a uma organização onde terei oportunidade de colocar em prática os conhecimentos adquiridos no ensino superior.

Pertencer a uma organização onde terei oportunidade de passar o conhecimento adquirido a outros.

Pertencer a uma organização onde sinto que pertenço e sou aceito.

Pertencer a uma organização orientada para o serviço ao cliente.

Pertencer a uma organização onde sinto segurança em relação à segurança do meu emprego.

Pertencer a uma organização que me permite ter experiências em diferentes departamentos.

Pertencer a uma organização com um ambiente de trabalho feliz.

Pertencer a uma organização com oferta salarial acima da média do mercado.

Pertencer a uma organização com um pacote salarial global atrativo.

Transformational Leadership (Scale of 1 to 5):

O meu chefe elogia-me quando desempenho o meu trabalho melhor do que o aceitável.

O meu chefe encoraja as pessoas a verem as situações de mudança como sendo repletas de oportunidades.

O meu chefe age de forma atenciosa face às minhas necessidades pessoais.

O meu chefe não faz ideia para onde a organização está a caminhar.

O meu chefe desafia-me a pensar em problemas antigos de novas formas.

O meu chefe diz coisas positivas sobre o nosso departamento.

O meu chefe tem em consideração os interesses dos colaboradores.

O meu chefe tem noção exata onde quer que a nossa empresa esteja daqui a 5 anos.

O meu chefe tem em consideração os meus sentimentos pessoais antes de agir.

O meu chefe tem ideias que me forcem a repensar algumas coisas que eu nunca tinha questionado.

O meu chefe diz coisas que fazem com que os colaboradores se sintam orgulhosos por fazerem parte desta organização.

O meu chefe congratula-me pessoalmente quando faço um excelente trabalho.

O meu chefe tem perceção exata sobre “para onde estamos a caminhar”.

O meu chefe já me desafiou a repensar algumas coisas que eu nunca teria questionado.

O meu chefe reconhece quando meloro a minha qualidade de trabalho.

Innovative Work Behaviors (Scale of 1 to 5):

No meu trabalho, tenho ideias com frequência.

Na minha empresa, as pessoas consideram-me como um forte defensor/a da renovação e da mudança.

Gosto de experimentar as coisas de uma maneira nova.

Penso em projetos inovadores como um desafio.

No meu trabalho, sou promotor de muitas iniciativas de melhoria.

Os meus colegas olham-me como alguém que gosta de fazer coisas novas.

Gosto de contribuir para a implementação das ideias dos outros.

De forma contínua procuro acompanhar as tendências e os desenvolvimentos no meu trabalho, através da leitura, da presença em conferências ou participação em cursos de formação, etc.