



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Leadership types and their impact on marketing

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the leadership preferences of Gen Z employees working in marketing. The research objective is to identify the characteristics that are the most valued by this target group when it comes to leadership and to define the most suitable leadership styles for them. Additionally, the research also focuses on how leadership influences the job satisfaction and motivation of Gen Z marketers. The following research questions were developed to address the research topic: *“What are the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most?”*, *“How does leadership affect the motivation and job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in marketing?”* and *“What leadership styles do Gen Z employees working in marketing prefer?”*

The paper introduced prevalent leadership types in academic literature including transactional leadership, transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, servant leadership and democratic leadership. Based on previous findings the research gap was determined, which is that the leadership preferences of Gen Z individuals working in the marketing sector is an underexplored area. A qualitative research approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis which highlighted three main themes: human-centered leadership, communication in leadership, and respect for independence. The findings were interpreted through the literature and research questions and suggest that there is not one traditional leadership type that is ideal for Gen Z marketers, but a mix of the most valued characteristics should be used. These include empathy, mentoring, open-mindedness, clear communication, verbal recognition and autonomy.

Keywords: leadership, marketing, Gen Z, qualitative research, thematic analysis, job motivation, employee satisfaction

Resumo

Este estudo visa explorar as preferências de liderança dos trabalhadores da Geração Z que trabalham em marketing. O objetivo da investigação é identificar as características mais valorizadas por este grupo-alvo no que diz respeito à liderança e definir os estilos de liderança mais adequados para eles. Além disso, a investigação também se centra na forma como a liderança influencia a satisfação no trabalho e a motivação dos profissionais de marketing da Geração Z. As seguintes questões de investigação foram desenvolvidas para abordar o tema da investigação: “Quais são as características de liderança que os trabalhadores da Geração Z que trabalham em marketing mais valorizam?”, “Como é que a liderança afecta a motivação e a satisfação profissional dos trabalhadores da Geração Z em marketing?” e “Que estilos de liderança preferem os trabalhadores da Geração Z que trabalham em marketing?”

O documento introduziu os tipos de liderança predominantes na literatura académica, incluindo a liderança transaccional, a liderança transformacional, a liderança *laissez-faire*, a liderança servil e a liderança democrática. Com base em conclusões anteriores, foi determinada a lacuna de investigação, ou seja, que as preferências de liderança dos indivíduos da Geração Z que trabalham no sector do marketing são uma área pouco explorada. Foi adoptada uma abordagem de investigação qualitativa com recurso a entrevistas semi-estruturadas. Os dados foram analisados através de uma análise temática que destacou três temas principais: liderança centrada no ser humano, comunicação na liderança e respeito pela independência. Os resultados foram interpretados através da literatura e das questões de investigação e sugerem que não existe um tipo de liderança tradicional que seja ideal para os profissionais de marketing da Geração Z, mas que deve ser utilizada uma mistura das características mais valorizadas. Estas incluem a empatia, a orientação, a abertura de espírito, a comunicação clara, o reconhecimento verbal e a autonomia.

Palavras-chave: liderança, marketing, Geração Z, investigação qualitativa, análise temática, motivação no trabalho, satisfação dos trabalhadores

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature review	4
2.1. <i>Leadership in organizations</i>	4
2.2. <i>Leadership types and their characteristics</i>	6
2.2.1. Transactional leadership	6
2.2.2. Transformational leadership	7
2.2.3. Laissez-faire leadership.....	9
2.2.4. Servant leadership	10
2.2.5. Democratic leadership	12
3. Methodology	15
4. Results.....	19
4.1. <i>Human-centered leadership</i>	19
4.1.1. Mentoring.....	19
4.1.2. Empathetic leadership	20
4.1.3. Open-mindedness.....	21
4.2. <i>Communication in leadership</i>	22
4.2.1. Clarity and transparency.....	22
4.2.2. Verbal recognition.....	23
4.3. <i>Respect for independence</i>	24
4.3.1. Time management	24
4.3.2. Trust and autonomy	25
4.3.3. Empowerment through responsibility	25
5. Discussion	27
6. Conclusion.....	32
7. References	35
8. Appendix.....	39
8.1. <i>Interview questions</i>	39

8.2.	<i>Table about participant information</i>	40
8.3.	<i>Coding table about mentoring</i>	41
8.4.	<i>Coding table about empathetic leadership</i>	43
8.5.	<i>Coding table about open-mindedness</i>	45
8.6.	<i>Coding table about clarity and transparency</i>	47
8.7.	<i>Coding table about verbal recognition</i>	49
8.8.	<i>Coding table about time management</i>	50
8.9.	<i>Coding table about trust and autonomy</i>	51
8.10.	<i>Coding table about empowerment through responsibility</i>	52
8.11.	<i>Thematic map</i>	53

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the leadership types that are present in organizations and explores their unique characteristics and consequences. After exploring the different types of leadership through the examination of literature, this research aims to define the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most. The research questions include *“What are the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most?”*, *“How does leadership affect the motivation and job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in marketing?”* and *“What leadership styles do Gen Z employees working in marketing prefer?”* This section aims to present the business and academic relevance of these research questions.

Leadership has a critical importance for businesses, which is shown by how the top performing CEO-s generate about 90 percent of their industry’s value. Additionally, the top leaders also generate 2.8 times more total shareholder return in a year than average performing leaders (McKinsey & Company, 2023). CEO-s also have the ability to determine how leadership spans through the organization, which is shown by how people’s immediate bosses lead, that impacts the employee’s experience. Despite the importance of effective leadership, according to research by McKinsey & Company (2023) only 25 percent of workers consider their leadership culture to be inspiring. However, companies are recognizing the benefits of great leadership and 55 percent of them are investing in leadership development. Organizations that are focusing on leadership development are 2.4 times more likely to achieve performance targets, which highlights the importance of good leaders. Nevertheless, profits are not the value leaders should bring, but they also must focus on showing a compelling purpose, since employees at purpose driven companies are four times more engaged at work, which leads to competitive advantage (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Another aspect that highlights the business importance of the research is the role of marketing in organizations. Worldwide the advertising and marketing spending has grown by five percent in 2023 to over 1.65 trillion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2023). People in marketing are facing higher expectations every year to build brands and deliver growth. To achieve growth, an efficient marketing operating model is needed, with clearly articulated goals by the leader. This is shown by how according to McKinsey & Company (2024) 42 percent of leaders highlight their clear link between marketing activities and business outcomes as their strongest differentiator. This underscores the crucial role of marketing in the success of organizations and shows the need to explore the ideal leadership for marketing employees.

The academic importance of the research questions is shown by how this specific topic has not yet been thoroughly explored by scholars. By the review of academic literature, we can find results that suggest that transformational leadership fosters innovation (Alhitmi et al., 2023) and that marketing innovations have positive effects on firm performance and customer experience, which leads to competitive advantage (Athaide et al., 2024). Studies also show that transformational leadership can create a suitable environment for redesigning marketing strategies (Freihat, 2020) and that transformational leadership, innovation and marketing performance are deeply connected (Afriyie et al., 2019).

Despite these mentioned academic insights about the influence of transformational leadership on marketing, there is a lack of research exploring in depth what are the main characteristics that lead to effective leadership for marketing employees. This highlights a gap that the current research aims to address by examining the right leadership types for people working in marketing, more specifically, focusing on the preferences of Gen Z. To explore this research gap the study uses the synthesis of previous academic literature and the findings of primary research and will adopt the structure explained in the next section.

To explore this subject in detail the study will adopt the following structure: first a review of prior academic research to identify the most important concepts in relation to the research topic. Following this, the description of the research method, then the results are presented. Furthermore, the main findings and conclusions are discussed and lastly the implications, limitations and future directions are presented.

2. Literature review

2.1. Leadership in organizations

Before examining the different types of leadership, it is important to explore what leadership is. Leadership is difficult to define and there is not one widely accepted definition as to what it is exactly. Despite the lack of universal agreement, many scholars agree on the fact that leadership includes an influencing process. This influencing process happens between a leader and followers and results in outcomes. The characteristics of the leader and the follower's perception of this person have an impact on the influencing process, along with the context in which the process takes place (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Hilton et al. (2021) mention different kinds of definitions for leadership, which also emphasize the role of an influencing process. Besides this, they also bring examples where leadership is defined by the relationship between the people who want to lead, and people who decide to follow. According to Hogan and Kaiser (2005) leaders are the people who oversee their organizations. They argue that leaders can reach the position of being in charge either by having the most influence in a group of people or through being appointed by more senior leaders.

Leadership has an impactful role in overcoming the problem of organizing collective effort (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Leaders help the coordinated functioning of their organizations by defining the group goals and making the group reach its maximized potential. They recognize the individual abilities of the members and use them to the group's advantage, as well as help resolve conflicts for optimal operations (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Leaders are needed for the survival of a group because they have the ability of creating and maintaining effective teams. They make their followers give up their individual pursuits for a certain amount of time and have them work in favor of the common goal of the team (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Vision has a significant role in making people go beyond their selfish interests, so a pivotal aspect for leadership is to develop and promote this vision to the team (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003).

On the contrary, bad leaders have a negative impact on their followers. Bad leaders can be defined by lacking the characteristics that are needed for success. This can include having poor interpersonal skills, such as acting cold and being insensitive or arrogant. Other signs of incompetent leadership are the inability of building a team, getting work done and to transition into a leader after being promoted. These leaders can be overly ambitious but not following through with their commitments and by this betraying the trust of their followers (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

This further highlights the importance of good leaders since they are vital for the well-functioning of an organization (Day & Antonakis, 2012). With good leadership organizations can prosper and both the financial and psychological well-being outcomes are enhanced. Positive consequences of leadership also include improved job performance and job satisfaction, as well as greater commitment to the organization. Groups that are lead well can outperform their competition, which is also shown in financial metrics such as income, sales growth, return on investment, and return on assets (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). To summarize, effective leadership is essential for the success of organizations, since it improves performance such as productivity and profitability, while also leading to employee welfare (Gheitarani et al., 2021).

Now that leadership has been defined, we can see that there are many variations explaining the concept. The variety in definitions implies that there are different dimensions and behaviors that can explain leadership, and this leads us to different leadership styles. By leadership styles we refer to a combination of traits that different leaders possess and use when they influence their followers. Based on their leadership style, leaders have different characteristics, behaviors and skills that shapes the way they lead (Hilton et al., 2021). To have a deeper understanding of leadership styles, it is important to explore some of the most relevant types and their characteristics.

2.2. Leadership types and their characteristics

2.2.1. Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns, in his book *Leadership* (1978) along with transformational leadership. Transactional leaders engage in transactions with their followers, by recognizing what they want, and the leaders help to get it for them in exchange for support. According to Bass (1997) transactional leadership is an exchange where the leader rewards or disciplines the follower based on them acting accordingly to a mutually agreed-upon role. This is called contingent rewarding, which means that leaders have an understanding and an agreement with the followers on what needs to be done, and they get rewards based on this. This reward system reinforces positive performance and sets the expectations for followers on what they have to achieve. The series of exchanges has the goal to maximize individual gains and organizational outcomes, for example a leader giving a promotion to an employee that exceeds their target (Hilton et al., 2021).

There is a mutual dependence in the relationship of the two parties, since leaders give something to the followers in exchange for getting something that the leader wants. In this situation leaders are in an influential position because it is in the best interest of the followers to do what the leader wants. The transactions can be low-quality, which is simply the exchange of goods or rights, while high-quality transactions have the layer of interpersonal bond between the leader and the follower (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987).

Another component of transactional leadership is management-by-exception, which can be either active or passive. When active, leaders monitor their followers and if there are mistakes in their performance, the leader corrects it. On the other hand, passive management-by-exception means that leaders first wait for mistakes to happen before intervening and correcting them (Bass, 1997). Taking action at this point is usually too late, which makes management-by-exception not as effective as contingent reward

(Hilton et al., 2021). When exploring the negative side of transactional leadership deeper, it is shown that this leadership style by itself does not lead to job satisfaction and can induce more stress (Bass, 1999).

Despite the aforementioned weaknesses, transactional leadership motivates employees to enhance their performance through contingent rewards, which leads to positive organizational outcomes. The exchanges motivate employees to achieve their targets and complete the tasks that are required from them. This leads to better organizational efficiency and the attainment of goals. The clear expectations can also reduce workplace anxiety and help employees focus on the organizational objectives, such as increased production and quality, and better customer service. In summary, transactional leadership can be effective in organizations, by utilizing contingent rewards, which creates consistent expectations and helps with motivation (Hilton et al., 2021).

2.2.2. Transformational leadership

As previously mentioned, transformational leadership was also introduced by James MacGregor Burns, in his 1978 book titled "Leadership". Transformational leadership goes a step beyond transactional leadership, and it is more than just the compliance of followers based on the exchange of commodities. This leadership type originates in the values and the beliefs of the leader, which also changes the goals and the beliefs of the followers. These values are personal to the leader such as self-confidence and the faith in the moral righteousness of their beliefs. Transformational leaders gain their influence by demonstrating these characteristics through building an image, articulating goals and evoking motivation (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). These leaders also show their followers the importance of the outcomes and get them to go beyond their self-interests to achieve them (Bass 1997).

The main characteristics of transformational leaders include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

Idealized influence refers to when a leader has a strong vision that they share with the followers, which creates a sense of mission within them. This leader is charismatic and shows conviction and determination in their beliefs, which earns the trust and respect of the followers. A strong part of idealized influence is also that followers want to identify with their leader because they admire them and act as a role model for them. Additionally, followers can have faith in their leaders to solve critical problems with innovative solutions and risk-taking (Bass, 1997).

Inspirational motivation means that transformational leaders enhance the enthusiasm and optimism of their followers which inspires them. To achieve this, leaders use simple language and fluent communication, while also incorporating symbols and metaphors, which provides meaning for the followers. In their messaging they also outline promising futures for the followers and create high expectations (Bass, 1997).

By intellectual stimulation the leader uses creativity and intelligence to stimulate new perspectives and solve problems with new ways of thinking. This method encourages the questioning, rethinking and reshaping of old methods and creates new possibilities (Bass, 1997).

Lastly, individualized consideration ensures that the leader pays attention to each follower and coaches them in their personal development according to their needs. This creates new development opportunities for the followers, while they are mentored by the leader. The consequence of this personalized attention is that it makes the followers feel important and valued by the leader (Bass, 1997). On the other hand, individualized consideration could have detrimental effects in some contexts and result in less satisfaction. According to research by Bass (1999) leaders who use individualized consideration can sometimes be perceived as threatening or engaging in favoritism, which leads to inequity.

To explore the negative sides of transformational leadership further, it is important to mention the research conducted by Seltzer, Numerof, and Bass in 1989. They were

interested to explore the assumption whether transformational leadership style can be linked to increased stress and burnout symptoms. The motivation for this was the assumption that employees with transformational leaders spend longer hours at work and put more energy in their roles, which could lead to them neglecting other commitments or personal needs. The results of the study mostly showed no negative correlation between transformational leadership and burnout, however the intellectual stimulation component could have a detrimental effect. Intellectual stimulation can lead to higher levels of stress and burnout due to it requiring thinking in new ways and giving reasoning to them.

Overall, the research suggests that transformational leadership is more likely reduce burnout in general. By creating motivating and supportive environments, followers are willing to put in extra effort. Followers also tend to be satisfied with transformational leaders and their effectiveness (Seltzer et al., 1989). Other positive outcomes of transformational leadership style are job satisfaction, high levels of organizational commitment and performance. This leadership style also fosters autonomy while encouraging team collaboration, which makes it effective in various sectors such as the military, healthcare, business and education (Bass, 1999).

2.2.3. Laissez-faire leadership

Laissez-faire leadership can be defined as the absence of leadership or as zero leadership (Yang, 2015). These types of leaders tend to be inactive and absent when they are needed and can avoid making decisions (Bass, 1997). Laissez-faire leaders fail to take responsibility for managing their followers and do not engage in rewards or punishments (Yang, 2015). They don't provide direction for their followers and do not interfere in the work of them. These leaders also do not provide support and are disengaged in satisfying the needs of the members of their group (Klasmeier et al., 2022).

Some studies suggest (Yang, 2015) that laissez-faire leadership can have positive effects, such as fostering autonomy and self-determination. This type of leading could also be seen as a sign of respect to the employees' boundaries and not as the absence of leadership. Despite this positive approach most research suggest negative outcomes with laissez-faire leaders (Yang, 2015).

Laissez-faire leadership leads to negative job satisfaction, negative satisfaction with the leader and low commitment to the organization (Buch et al., 2015). Since the followers don't get support, they can experience difficulties performing their job tasks. Not only does this leadership have negative effects on the contractual tasks, but employees are also more likely to reduce their organizational citizenship behavior due to their expectations being not met. This means that employees do not invest extra effort in voluntary tasks, and they only perform the mandatory obligations (Klasmeier et al., 2022). Further negative outcomes of laissez-faire leadership include role conflict and role ambiguity. These can hinder the effectiveness of the employees. It can also have destructive effects such as conflicts between coworkers and even bullying at the workplace. (Skogstad et al., 2007). Overall, it can be stated that laissez-faire leadership has negative outcomes on both the personal relationships within the team and on the work effectiveness, which makes it a harmful leadership style for organizations (Klasmeier et al., 2022).

2.2.4. Servant leadership

The term servant leadership was first introduced in an essay by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970. It means that leaders put the needs of their followers before their own and the focus on helping the employees grow. Their goals if for their employees to reach their maximum potential and by this achieve organizational and career success. Their motivation is however not only to reach the organizations objectives, but they also want the employees to improve for their own goals. This means that servant leaders are not driven by self-interest, and they don't look at their followers as a means to

reach what the leader wants. Other characteristics of servant leadership include ethical behavior, building relationships with the followers and empowering them (Liden et al., 2008). The needs of the followers are a constant priority of servant leaders, and they focus on all the beneficiaries of the organization. They engage their followers by involving them in managerial decisions and focus on their development. Personality traits of servant leaders include open-mindedness, trustworthiness and high emotional intelligence (Gheitarani et al., 2021).

An important element of servant leadership style is to respect the followers as human beings while also working towards achieving organizational goals. This makes the leader responsible for the success of the organization at the same time as having moral responsibility for the followers. This leadership style is against the glorification of the leader, which is emphasized in other types of leadership (Slack et al., 2020). In comparison to transformational leadership, servant leadership adds a layer of social responsibility (van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders tend to be humble, authentic and empathetic and are committed to the growth of people and the building of a community. They are also great at listening to their followers and providing direction to them (Slack et al., 2020).

These characteristics make servant leadership suitable for various fields, one example which is academics in higher education. According to Aboramadan et al., (2021) servant leadership creates a stimulating work engagement, that has a positive impact on academic's job performance and organizational commitment. Servant leadership is also common in the public sector due to the fact that leaders in public organizations can have stronger intentions to serve compared to leaders in private organizations. It is important in the public sector to have ethical leadership, which makes it ideal for servant leaders who promote ethical behavior and ethical climate. These perceptions of an ethical climate are directly related to trust in leadership, which aligns well with the public sector's goal to serve the public good. On the contrary, in bureaucratic and

deeply hierarchical environments servant leadership can face significant difficulties (Slack et al., 2020).

This brings up the further barriers that could arise when implementing a servant leadership style. According to research done by Liden et al. (2008) some employees have negative views on servant leadership and associate it with micromanagement. Sometimes employees do not want their leader to get to know them and find it uncomfortable when leaders are seeking to guide and develop them.

Despite the few possible negative outcomes, servant leadership has several benefits for the followers and the organization. Examples for these include self-actualization, better job performance, positive job attitudes and a strong focus on corporate social responsibility and sustainability (van Dierendonck, 2011). Furthermore, servant leadership leads to more content employees and positive employee engagement which leads to better performance and also establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage for the organization. Lastly, the high levels of trust from the leader's direction also enables smoother organizational operations (Slack et al., 2020). Overall, servant leadership is beneficial for organizations, as it has several positive attitudinal, behavioral and performance outcomes (Canavesi & Minelli, 2022).

2.2.5. Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership in general follows a behavior that is consistent with democratic principles, such as equal participation, self-determination, deliberation and inclusiveness. Other central elements of democratic leadership include preventing the development of strong hierarchies where status and privilege are dominant. Democratic leaders aim to eliminate the inequalities and reduce the concentration of power. The members are actively involved in the group and there can be found a level of comradery. Group members can also express criticism honestly as well as praise (Gastil, 1994). Leaders also have a discussion with the group first, before giving orders, which allows the followers to make contributions and collectively decide what to do

(Hilton et al., 2021). In a case of democratic leadership, members of the group can act as leaders without having formal authority to do so, since here leadership is about the behavior and not the position. In this situation all the members of the group help to achieve the desired goals (Gastil, 1994).

The three main characteristics of democratic leadership according to Gastil (1994) can be summarized by distributing responsibility among the members, empowering them and helping the group's decision making. All members of the group are serving these functions and the role of a leader, and a follower can be easily exchanged. Distributing responsibility means that a democratic leader tries to get the maximum participation of every member in the group to achieve the objectives. The responsibility in these cases is spread among the group, rather than concentrated on one person.

The second characteristic of Gastil (1994), which is empowerment, can be achieved by setting high standards to the members that are still achievable but are challenging to them so they can develop. When asked, leaders offer suggestions or instructions to the members to help in their development.

The final characteristic is aiding deliberation which means helping the group's decision making. Democratic leaders must make sure that the decision making is productive. They can help the deliberative process through a positive emotional setting, facilitation and with their constructive participation. Democratic leaders have to listen to the ideas of the members and attempt to find a solution that is aligned with the group's collective interest (Gastil, 1994).

After discussing the characteristics of democratic leaders, it is also important to highlight the traits of their followers to understand this leadership style deeper. Democratic followers must be willing to take on responsibility in order to help the well-being of the group. They also must be held accountable for their actions and maintain their autonomy, which means to acknowledge and exercise their freedom. They also have to strive to develop their leadership skills, since here the role of leader

and follower are exchanged frequently. Lastly, when they are in the role of the follower, they must be willing to work for those who are leading to reach the goals of the group (Gastil, 1994).

When it comes to what field democratic leadership is suitable for, it can work efficiently in business since it satisfies the needs of employees for power, achievement and affiliation (Gastil, 1994). More specifically, according to Hilton et al. (2021) democratic leadership is effective in the telecommunications industry where there is a stiff competition. The participation in the decision-making processes brings out the creativity and innovation in employees that helps to achieve growth. On the contrary, this leadership style is not suitable in situations where there is a clearly defined problem that needs a straightforward technical solution, such as in the medical field (Gastil, 1994).

Despite the possible barriers, democratic leadership motivates employees, since their opinions are valued. This leadership style provides opportunity for employees to implement their creative ideas and participate in the decision-making. These factors lead to positive outcomes such as enhanced organizational performance (Hilton et al., 2021).

Now that these leadership styles have been introduced, it shows that managers must utilize the right leadership styles in order to achieve success (Gheitarani et al., 2021). There is not a single best leadership structure that works everywhere, but the style needed depends on the given situation (Gastil, 1994). When the right leadership type is chosen, that has a significant impact on the organizational performance, so leaders have to find the most effective solution (Gheitarani et al., 2021). To explore what the right leadership type for Gen Z employees in marketing is, research has been conducted. The following chapter will describe the methodology used to address the research questions.

3. Methodology

The research objective of this paper is to identify the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most and how leadership affects their motivation and satisfaction at work. The aim of the research is to determine the leadership style that Gen Z marketers prefer. To explore this research topic, research questions were developed, which this study is set out to answer through qualitative research. Below the research questions can be found along with the explanation of what the questions aims to address.

What are the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most? This question aims to determine the specific characteristics that are important for Gen Z marketers through the synthesis of literature and primary research. The next question is *How does leadership affect the motivation and job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in marketing?* This question focuses on the impact of leadership and explores how leaders affect their employee's motivation and satisfaction in their work. This question is also important to address to provide foundation for the managerial implications that the research sets out to provide. Lastly, *What leadership styles do Gen Z employees working in marketing prefer?* is the third research question. This question aims to determine the leadership style and the combination of needed characteristics for a leader to be suitable for Gen Z marketers. The questions were developed to explore the gap in the existing literature and address the leadership preferences of this group, which is in an underexplored area in current leadership research. After the research questions were defined, next the most appropriate research method was determined to suit this study.

For the research method, a qualitative method was chosen, since this is suitable to explore personal experiences and gain in-depth understanding of individual preferences. The qualitative method allows to investigate the nuanced opinions and values of Gen Z marketing employees and answer the research questions through their perspectives. To explore these perspectives semi-structured interviews were

conducted, where a set of pre-determined questions were asked from all the participants in the same order. According to Kallio et al. (2016) semi-structured interviews are a successful qualitative research method, and they allow reciprocity between the participants while giving space for follow-up questions and the opportunity for the individual verbal expressions of the participants. This method allows discussion and to get a rich understanding but also gives a structure for the interview, so similar type of information is extracted from the participants. Research interviews are also efficient at exploring the experiences, views and motivations of participants as it was highlighted by Gill et al (2008), which are the areas this study aims to explore regarding Gen Z marketing employees and leadership, so it makes them a well-suited approach for this research topic.

After the presentation and justification for the research questions and the research method it is important to specify how the interviews were conducted. The interviews were held in person with the participants for the approximate duration of 20 minutes and were recorded for the purposes of the analysis. The questions were open-ended and allowed the participants to go in detail about their experiences and express themselves freely while maintaining a structure across the interviews. According to Gill et al. (2008) open-ended questions are good for qualitative interviews in contrast to closed-ended questions. Based on this source (Gill et al. 2008) it is also suggested to start with questions that are easier to answer and then proceed to more sensitive topics, so the questions first included general questions about the participants workplace and position, then their opinions about leadership were explored and then their thoughts about leadership and marketing. The interview questions that were asked can be found in the appendix and they show that the questions aimed to indirectly ask the characteristics that Gen Z marketing employees value and used several types of questions with different techniques such as association or finishing sentences to get rich qualitative data. The next section includes information about the sample of the study that provided the necessary insights for this research.

The sample of the study consist of Gen Z people who work in the marketing field. Although there is some variation in the dates depending on the sources, according to Pew Research Center (2019) Gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012. The sample included employees from different kinds of organizations in the marketing sector such as agencies, multinational companies and small businesses. This diversity in organizations aimed to give a representation of different environments within the marketing field. Regarding how these professionals were found, the research used convenience sampling, and the participants were selected based on their characteristics that were required for the research topic such as age and occupation. Information about the participants workplace, job position, age and gender can be found in the appendix in form of a table for the purposes of more clarity. Ten interviews were conducted where the saturation point was reached which as described by Rahimi & Khatooni (2024) means that no new additional themes or insights emerged from the data. Lastly, when it comes to the ethical considerations of the research, all participants consented to the interviews, the recordings and the use of their data, and their anonymity was ensured by changing their names to their participant number.

Now that the method and sample is presented, this section describes the analysis of this research. To analyze the data gained from the interviews, thematic analysis was conducted. This approach was chosen to identify the underlying themes in the data to determine the characteristics that are important for Gen Z marketers about leadership. For the thematic analysis this research followed the steps presented by Braun & Clarke (2006). The first step was to familiarize with the data which was transcribing the interviews and highlighting important ideas in them. Then, the generating initial codes step was done by creating a table with quotes from the interviews and assigning codes to them summarizing the main ideas of the quotes. To codes with similar meaning, similar colors were assigned in the table. Following this, the searching for themes step was done by grouping the similar codes together based on the assigned colors. The

reviewing themes step ensured that the themes were connected to the codes and that they could be found throughout the sample. The tables with quotes, codes and themes can be found in the appendix. After this a map was created to outline the connection between the themes, which can also be found in the appendix. All the aforementioned coding, tables and map were prepared manually. Then, through the defining and naming themes step, the themes were given names to reflect their concept, and notes were taken about their specifications. Lastly, the producing the report step was executed, that allowed for the analysis of the information, which can be seen in the next chapters. First the themes and sub-themes are introduced, then a description is given of them and then quotes presented, that support the findings. The discussion interprets the findings in context of the literature and the research questions. Following the steps of Braun & Clarke (2006) aimed to have a rigorous guide to analyze the data which concluded in the results presented by the next chapter.

4. Results

Now that the research method is clearly defined, this chapter presents the results of the research. The results chapter summarizes the findings in form of the main themes and sub-themes that were defined through the thematic analysis, which then are going to be analyzed in the discussion chapter.

4.1. Human-centered leadership

The first main theme that the research showed is Gen Z employee's preference for human-centered leadership. Across the sample all of the respondents highlighted traits and experiences that are connected to valuing people-focused leaders. Based on the interview answers this theme was broken down into three sub-themes, that are mentoring, empathetic leadership and open-mindedness. The following sections explore the sub-themes in detail supported by quotes from the interviews.

4.1.1. Mentoring

The first sub-theme that emerged in human-centered leadership is the importance of mentoring. The Gen Z marketing employees who took part in this research strongly value mentorship from their leaders. This theme is characterized by the need for nurturing from the leader and supporting the employees in various situations. A mentoring leader helps the growth of the employee and encourages their professional development. They can also challenge the employees in healthy ways to step out of their comfort zones and help them evolve. An important aspect of this is guidance, since the leader does not leave the employees alone in difficult situations, but stays by their side, supports them and even stands up for them when needed. Gen Z employees value mentoring to a high level which is shown by the following quotes.

Participant 4 mentioned an example where the positive effects of this leadership-style are shown: "We were working with a client and last year, they were kind of disappointed and they were not satisfied with the work and gave bad feedback about

us. But my leader instead of scolding us or the team, she really stood up for us. She's been by our side and really dedicated the time to rethinking the strategy and get us out of trouble. And she's super, super busy. Like no one else in the company, but she really dedicated the time to make our situation easier and better and not just in the client's eyes, but to educate and improve us."

Participant 5 highlighted how she thinks mentoring has great importance when starting in marketing: "The first word that comes to my mind is mentoring, because I think starting a position in the marketing field, it is really important to have somebody who is in the field and who is in the industry and understands the whole company all together. In this position, it's really important to kind of mentor the new employees."

Participant 3 shared her positive experience about her leader when she stood up for her in a situation where employees from a different department treated her unfairly: "So, they were really acting rude with me, and I told it to my leader that they are using this kind of tone of when talking to me. And she was like, okay, then let's call together a meeting, and we will be in person in the office all together, so I can protect you."

These quotes present the overarching theme in the interviews that show the importance of a supporting attitude by a leader.

4.1.2. Empathetic leadership

The next sub-theme connected to Human-centered leadership, is the role of empathy and emotional intelligence by leaders. Gen Z marketing employees find it important to have understanding and compassionate leadership. They would like their leader to create a safe space where they are easily approachable and are there to support when needed. The participants value an environment where they feel trust and psychological safety. Based on the results it is important that the leader is understanding when it comes to mistakes and cares about the employees not just the results.

Participant 4 had a negative experience with one of her former leaders, which contributed to her decision to leave the company. She mentioned the following about her former leader: "I would say the lack of empathy, he was not caring at all, just if the result is not good, then everything is bad. He was very result oriented." When asked about a positive experience with a leader, Participant 4 highlighted the following: "The first thing which came to my mind is emotional intelligence and empathy, because he was that kind of person who was not interested in, so for example, if one task or one thing wasn't done, he more focused on why is that, or the background of how the employee could feel, what's the reason why she or he was that lost, or why she or he failed in this task, rather than being angry and only focusing on the fact that it's not done."

Participants also mentioned how the support and empathy of their leaders created a better work environment for them and even served as a motivation to work harder.

4.1.3. Open-mindedness

The final sub-theme related to this theme is open-mindedness in leaders. Many participants highlighted how this trait is especially important for leaders in marketing due to the fast-changing environment. Based on this they think leaders should be flexible and avoid being strict or stubborn. Employees also find it important for leaders to be open to their ideas and care about their opinions.

Participant 1 praised her leader saying: "She is always considerate of what I think is best to do for the company's marketing and appreciates my opinion" and when asked to finish the sentence "A good leader for a marketing team is..." the first thing that came to her mind was the word "open-minded" and explain how she thinks "Because it's such a fast-changing market that you have to be open-minded to be able to adapt to every change on the market. And it's every day changing."

Listening and being open to ideas also affects the motivation of Gen Z employees which is shown by Participant 10 mentioning: “If I felt that my opinion was not being listened to, I would not be motivated at all.”

Overall, the participants believe that leaders should let employees explore their own ideas and accept their inputs with an open mind. The aforementioned three subthemes highlight the importance for leaders to put their employees first and supporting them in their work life.

4.2. Communication in leadership

The second main theme that emerged encompasses the use of communication in leadership. When it comes to this theme all participants mentioned several thoughts that show how communication affects their satisfaction.

4.2.1. Clarity and transparency

This sub-theme highlights how Gen Z marketing employees value clear communication and clear requirements from their leaders. They would like to have understandable information about their tasks and about what happens in the company in general. They expect their leader to be transparent with them and tell the impact of their tasks and reasoning behind them. When something is complicated, they want their leaders to explain it to them and give the necessary details needed.

This theme is shown by the following quote from Participant 3: “The clear requirements would be the first one that comes to mind and good communication skills and methods and being like there at work. So, I wouldn't like a leader who is running around saying “do this, then do that” and not having clear requirements. And when you can see that their head is thinking about a hundred things because they have bigger responsibilities. That's why they cannot tell you exactly what to do and just give a call to you that please do this for me without any clear details.”

Participant 7 points out how poor communication can hinder the effectiveness of work and the employee's motivation: "So we had a project where we built a webshop with different designers, and there was a leader in the marketing team who didn't really have the right way of communication ever, so every meeting was a disaster, and she was super bossy and anxious, and she was a super difficult personality to work with, and it was definitely a blocker every week to proceed with our own tasks because she was questioning everything we do, but she never set the goals or the clear requests what she needs, so then it was a disaster and everybody felt super weird and not motivated at all. So, I think the main difficulty here was the communication."

4.2.2. Verbal recognition

The second sub-theme in regard to communication in leadership is verbal recognition. Many participants said that verbal encouragement and their leader's expression of satisfaction highly motivates them. Appreciation that is shown through words inspires them to work harder and makes them feel validated. When their efforts are recognized through praise and different forms of positive feedback, they are satisfied with their leaders and work.

Participant 1 mentioned how her leader's expression of satisfaction affected her: "I felt really appreciated because they kept saying it out loud, how they are satisfied with me." This example underlines the importance of small gestures such as verbally recognizing when something was done well. This kind of communication makes the employees feel appreciated which enhances their satisfaction at work.

Verbal recognition not only helps with satisfaction, but also motivation, which is shown by how Participant 2 has motivation to work even harder when being appreciated: "Whenever I see that somebody appreciates whatever I do, I have this motivation to do the double job." This is an important implication for managers, which shows that expressing appreciation verbally leads to employees willing to do more for the organization.

Overall, based on the theme that emerged through the research, is that Gen Z marketing employees require clear communication from their leaders and verbal recognition boosts their motivation, which highlights the importance of the right communication in leadership.

4.3. Respect for independence

The final theme emphasizes the participants' need for trust, freedom and independence in their work. This is shown by the three sub-themes, which are time management, trust and autonomy and empowerment through responsibility.

4.3.1. Time management

Having good time management is an important aspect for Gen Z when it comes to their leaders. They believe that their leaders should respect their time and respect their work hours, so not reaching out to them on the weekends or evenings. They also have strong opinions regarding deadlines and feel that a good leader should give realistic deadlines and not expect things to be done earlier.

Participant 3 mentioned compared two of her previous leaders based on their time management style: "She looked down on my job. She was like *Why are you staying so late at work?* And I had a lot of things to do that she gave me. And she was like *What? I cannot imagine what type of tasks you have that you cannot finish sooner.*" In contrast to this she sees good time management as motivational: "If they are really keeping up with the schedules, bring good energy to the workspace, and I can see that they are really taking the work seriously, but not taking the job to home, to their personal life, that motivates me that I can do the same with my life as well."

In conclusion, according to the participants good leaders should have awareness about the workload of their employees and knowledge about how much time it takes to get certain tasks done. When leaders set boundaries and manage their time well that also serves as a motivational tool for the employees.

4.3.2. Trust and autonomy

The next sub-theme within respect for independence relates to Gen Z's need for freedom and autonomy in their work. Many participants highlighted several examples that show their dislike for micromanagement from leaders. Gen Z marketing employees want to get the job done at their own pace and not get too many questions from their leaders in the process.

A quote from Participant 2 that supports this theme is the following: "No micromanagement. I can't work with micromanagement. If they don't trust you, I'm not comfortable working with that kind of team. For me, it doesn't matter how much the company pays me, I never can work with that kind of people."

Participant 10 has similar views on this: "I really don't like being micromanaged, and I also really don't like it when we work together on something in a call that I could do on my own easier. Afterwards of course we can go over it and discuss it, but I prefer to work at my own pace and the final result is the goal."

Overall, most participants believe that good leadership is based on trust and respect and the lack of micromanagement. They feel leaders should give the opportunity to have liberty and explore their creative ideas especially in the marketing field.

4.3.3. Empowerment through responsibility

The final sub-theme is connected to how Gen Z marketing employees feel about responsibility. While some participants need more guidance, most participants feel empowered by getting full responsibility on work tasks. Getting full trust from their leaders gives them confidence and they see it as a reward that motivates them.

Based on her experience Participant 7 also supports this idea: "I think in my previous experiences, it was always super motivating whenever they would give me a higher responsibility, let's say, for a special project or an event. And I think that was always a kind of reward for me, because then that meant that I did a good job. I think that full

responsibility would be super positive for me, because then it would mean that she's satisfied with my job, and that he or she has the trust in me that I can handle a bigger project on my own as well.”

In conclusion, the three main themes along with their sub-themes suggest that Gen Z marketing employees favor leaders who combine emotional intelligence and a human-centered approach, while providing clear communication and respecting the autonomy of their employees.

5. Discussion

After becoming familiar with the results, this chapter interprets these findings in relation to the literature and the research questions. As mentioned in the introduction providing ideal leadership has a great importance in the success of organizations (McKinsey & Company, 2023) and the results also support this idea by the participants emphasizing how much a leadership style change would affect their work. Some participants even decide to stay or leave a company based on their leader, which is shown by the example of Participant 4: “Probably it would have an effect of everything, not just my creativity and motivation, but really all in all how I would feel in the company, because in my current job, I was looking for a good leader. So probably it would change my mindset and how I feel all in all in the company. So therefore, I would feel upset because she was one of the biggest reasons why I chose to work here. But if we are speaking about my previous leader, he was completely the opposite. So, he could only improve himself in a positive way and only change in a good way. So that would probably make me stay there and not to quit because of him.” To see the most suitable leadership style for Gen Z marketers the results of this research were compared to the previous findings from literature.

When it comes to the first theme, which is human-centered leadership we can see how these values align with the characteristics introduced at servant leadership. The participants emphasized their desire for guidance, mentoring and empathy from their leaders which correlates with servant leaders’ tendency to not only focus on the organizational objectives, but on the improvement and nurturing of employees as described by Liden et al. (2008). Based on Gheitarani et al. (2021) servant leaders also involve their employees in decisions and are open-minded towards them, are trustworthy and have high emotional intelligence, all of which are important aspects of the human-centered leadership theme.

Moving on to communication in leadership, the participants need to have transparency, clear requirements and verbal recognition ties to contingent rewards, which is an element of transactional leadership. According to Bass (1997) contingent rewarding creates a clear understanding between the leader and follower on what has to be done and based on this, rewards are given, which reinforces positive performance. According to Hilton et al. (2021) contingent rewarding reduces workplace anxiety and helps with motivation, which aligns with the findings of how when Gen Z marketing employees get clear communication and verbal recognition, they feel motivated.

The third theme, respect for independence, links to the literature in several ways, one of which is laissez-faire leadership. The research by Yang (2015) which showed the positive effects of leadership highlights how it can foster autonomy and self-determination. This connects to Gen Z employee's desire for trust and freedom in their work and how it gives them confidence. However, based on the first theme we can see that besides this, the participants also require support and guidance when needed, which they would not get from a laissez-faire leader, who according to Bass (1997) tends to be inactive and absent when needed. Based on the study by Klasmeier et al. (2022) we also know that laissez-faire leaders do not provide support and don't want to satisfy the needs of their employees which suggest how overall it would not be suitable for Gen Z employees working in marketing. The sub-theme trust and autonomy emphasizes the participants dislike for micromanagement, which can also be tied to servant leadership. According to research by Liden et al. (2008) some employees have negative views on servant leadership, because they associate it with micromanagement and find it uncomfortable when leaders try to guide and develop them. This can be seen as a conflict between servant leadership and the need for autonomy which is an important aspect for Gen Z. While we know that Gen Z marketing employees also have negative views on micromanagement, however they still emphasize their preference for a leader who mentors them and encourages their

professional development. Lastly, it is important to mention the connection between democratic leadership and the findings of this research. The characteristics of democratic leadership according to Gastil (1994) such as empowerment, distributing responsibility and being involved in the decision-making connect both to the human-centered leadership theme and to the respect for independence theme. Taking on responsibility, maintaining autonomy and exercising freedom are all important aspects of democratic leadership and helps the creativity and growth of employees. According to Hilton et al. (2021) democratic leadership motivates employees, gives them opportunity to implement their creative ideas and participate in the decision-making, which are all important elements for Gen Z marketing employees, as it is shown by the quotes in the results section. While these characteristics of democratic leadership align well with the leadership preferences of Gen Z in marketing, the fact that the role of leader and follower can easily be exchanged, and the absence of formal authority, can be viewed as negatives. Although Gen Z marketing employees like to be included in decisions, they are mostly against flat hierarchy and prefer a linear team where everybody knows their responsibilities which aligns with the clarity and transparency sub-theme. This is shown by the quote from Participant 2 when he shared his thoughts about flat hierarchy: "Even though I am open to collaboration and open work, I am against of these kinds of teams. I like very straightforward, very linear teams, where everybody knows their area and responsibilities. So, if we are working on the campaign's creative idea, I don't need all these people to comment." As well as other participants, Participant 9 also shared a similar view: "I think in a team without a hierarchical leader, the decision-making would probably take longer, because everyone would need to agree. It could be good that it could create a more open environment, but it could also lead to confusion about responsibilities. I personally work best when there is clear direction and someone I can turn to for guidance when I need it. I don't mind hierarchy in the workplace because I think it makes things more efficient and smoother for everyone." This again highlights the values such as clear responsibilities and guidance, which were present in the themes.

Transformational leadership connects to all three main themes with its characteristics. Its use of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1997) align well with the human-centered leadership values. With intellectual stimulation the leader encourages new ways of thinking, which satisfies Gen Z's need for open-mindedness and freedom for creativity. Individualized consideration and paying attention to each employee's development and mentoring connects to the results highlighting the desire for guidance and support from the leader. The inspirational motivation characteristic of transformational leadership connects to the second theme, since here according to Bass (1997) the leader uses simple to understand language, fluent communication and positive messages. This ties to the sub-themes of clarity in communication and verbal encouragement. Lastly, according to Bass (1999) this leadership style also fosters autonomy, which supports the third theme, respect for independence, with its emphasis on trust, freedom and no micromanagement.

To answer the research question *"What are the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most?"* we can summarize that the traits Gen Z marketing employees value can be broken down into three categories. First, the human-centered leadership values, such as mentoring, guidance, support, empathy and open-mindedness. Then the traits related to communication, which are providing clear requirements, verbal encouragement and transparency. Lastly, Gen Z marketers prefer leaders who give them independence, trust, responsibility and autonomy.

The research question *"How does leadership affect the motivation and job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in marketing?"* can be answered by that leadership strongly influences the satisfaction and motivation of Gen Z marketers. Mentoring leaders create a safe work environment and make employees satisfied and supported. Clear communication helps to reduce the stress of Gen Z marketers and verbal recognition from the leader gives them motivation to work harder. Trust and responsibility also gives them motivation and enhances their confidence. The importance of good leadership also

shows how the lack of empathy, communication issues and micromanagement leads to dissatisfaction and even resignation.

This leads to the final research question, which is *“What leadership styles do Gen Z employees working in marketing prefer?”* Based on the synthesis of research and literature it can be stated that Gen Z marketing employees’ preferences for leadership show a mix of characteristics from the leadership types that were introduced in the literature. They value clear communication and requirements and recognition for their work which is present in transactional leadership in form of contingent rewarding. Additionally, their preference for autonomy and independence shows some elements present in both laissez-faire and democratic leadership. Despite the importance of freedom for Gen Z marketing employees, the most emphasized element in leadership for them is mentoring, empathy and support. These characteristics are present in transformational leadership, but are most dominant in servant leadership, where the leader seeks to guide and develop the employees. Servant leaders’ respect, empathy and emotional intelligence makes them capable to provide human-centered leadership, that is the most suitable for Gen Z marketing employees.

This research contributes to literature by providing findings about the ideal leadership for a specific target group which is Gen Z employees working in marketing, which was a previously underexplored area in literature. The study offers new insights about the leadership preferences of a younger generation entering the workforce and fills a gap by providing a generation and industry specific perspective. The next chapter summarizes this paper as a whole and highlights its main contributions along with limitations and future directions.

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore the characteristics of different types of leadership and identify which are the most suitable for Gen Z employees who are working in marketing. In order to do this, first the business and academic relevance of the paper was introduced, highlighting the crucial part of leadership in the performance of organizations. Then, the most relevant concepts in literature were summarized by defining leadership and describing some main leadership types including transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, servant and democratic leadership. Following this, the methodology chapter presented the research method and showed why this approach is the most suitable for the topic. The results chapter described the three main themes and its sub-themes and explained the characteristics most valued by Gen Z marketers, supporting it with quotes from the interviews. Finally, the discussion chapter interpreted the results considering the previously presented literature and the research questions that are *“What are the leadership traits that Gen Z employees working in marketing value the most?”* *“How does leadership affect the motivation and job satisfaction of Gen Z employees in marketing?”* *“What leadership styles do Gen Z employees working in marketing prefer?”*

Summarizing the answers to the research questions, it can be stated Gen Z marketing employees prefer people-focused traits in leaders that helps them grow in their work, while still maintaining their autonomy. Leadership highly affects the satisfaction and motivation of employees, with responsibility and verbal recognition leading to high motivation and a supportive environment to satisfied employees. Based on the results there is not a single best leadership style that was introduced in the literature that works for Gen Z marketers, but it is a blend of leadership styles that combines the most suitable characteristics.

The findings of this study have important implications to companies employing Gen Z marketers and shows direction for the ideal leadership to keep them satisfied and

motivated and by this support the goals of the organization. The research suggests the characteristics leaders should focus on and highlights how they should avoid being overly controlling but also too passive. By addressing the needs of Gen Z employees, organizations can benefit from the positive outcomes of a supportive leadership style such as positive job attitudes, better job performance, competitive advantage and strong commitment to the organization.

When it comes to the academic contributions of this paper, the research showed a comprehensive overview of the leadership traits that are important for people working in marketing, specifically Gen Z employees. The results offer valuable insights about leadership preferences that fill the previously stated research gap and provides foundation for future research. Regarding managerial contributions, the study offers practical guidance for leaders of Gen Z employees, who are increasingly present in the market and shape the workforce. The managerial implementation of the findings can help organizations attract and retain motivated and satisfied Gen Z marketers.

The limitations of the study include that the focus was narrowed down to Gen Z and people working in marketing, so the results can't be generalized to other generations or fields. Additionally, the results rely on self-reported data from the participants which can be subject to bias. Lastly, the study focuses solely on the participants experiences regarding their leader and does not examine other factors such as organizational culture due to the scope limitations. Future research gives the opportunity to explore other areas withing the research topic to overcome the limitations that were present in this study.

Directions for future research include to explore the preferences of other generations and create a comparative analysis between the results of Gen Z. Focus on different fields besides marketing can also create a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Future research could also use a mixed-method approach and combine the qualitative data with quantitative data to provide a more objective view on the results.

Additionally, there is the opportunity to examine different organizational factors and explore their effects on employee satisfaction and motivation besides leadership. In conclusion, this study has provided important results that can be applied in practice in organizations and provides foundation for future research in the academic field.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Interview questions

- Tell me about your current workplace and your job position.
- When and how did you start working in this area? What motivated you to work in this field?
- What are the first 3 words that come to your mind about your leader? Why these words?
- Imagine a new leader arrives to your team. What kind of qualities should this person have for you to be able to work together well?
- Think of a past leader who you had a very positive experience with. What made you feel this way?
- Think of a past leader who you had a very negative experience with. What made you feel this way?
- Tell me something that your leader said or did that made you feel very motivated.
- If your current leader would give you full responsibility for an important project, how would you feel?
- Finish this sentence: "A good leader for a marketing team is..."
- Tell me about a marketing project you worked on where leadership played an important role. How did it affect you and your team?
- If your leader would change their leadership style, how would that affect your creativity and motivation?
- Imagine that you work in a team, where there is no hierarchical leader, and you all make the decisions together. How would that impact you and your work?

8.2. Table about participant information

Name	Birth Date	Gender	Organization	Position
Participant 1	1999	Female	Small business	Marketing manager
Participant 2	1997	Male	Medium business	Social media marketing manager
Participant 3	2000	Female	Multinational enterprise	Marketing trainee
Participant 4	2000	Female	Agency	Marketing campaign coordinator
Participant 5	2000	Female	Agency	Marketing intern
Participant 6	2000	Male	Multinational enterprise	Brand manager
Participant 7	1997	Female	Agency	Publisher manager
Participant 8	2001	Female	Small business	Marketing and event management trainee
Participant 9	2000	Female	Agency	Junior communications planner
Participant 10	1999	Female	Small business	Website manager

8.3. Coding table about mentoring

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 2	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Allows growth	When I started the job, she told me to just observe the situation and think of whatever is needed to do and whatever I want to do. That was great. She gave me an opportunity to grow.
Participant 3	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Stands up for employees	So, they were really acting rude with me, and I told it to my leader that they are using this kind of tone of when talking to me. And she was like, okay, then let's call together a meeting, and we will be in person in the office all together, so I can protect you.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Negative view about not standing up for people and opinions	Not being brave about saying an opinion or stand to anyone's side, a coward, I think. Only wants to be a good person in his leader's eyes and don't care about what the employees think about him. He is a bootlicker.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Negative view about leaving employees alone with problems	And yes, actually, he was like, okay, I will be a good man, I won't say anything, I will let them to do whatever they want to do. And I think it was just made the situation much worse, because we were left alone.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Provides guidance and direction	Actually, if he holds my hands a bit and gives me a good direction or a good start, how I should start working on a project or the opportunity that we can have consultations, then I would feel extremely good, because it would tell about him that he's trustworthy and really believes in me. But other than that, if the reason is, I don't know, for example, the lack of time and he just passes me the task, then it would probably make me feel bad. But other than that, I think it's a good thing.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Stands up for the team, provides guidance	We were working with a client and last year, they were kind of disappointed and they were not satisfied with the work and gave bad feedback about us. I think the reason of this was a direction change from the client side and maybe that resulted in miscommunication. But my leader instead of scolding us or the team, she really stood up for us. She's been by our side and really dedicated the time to rethinking the strategy and get us out of trouble. And she's super, super busy. Like no one else in the company, but she really dedicated the time to make our situation easier and better and not just in the client's eyes, but to educate and improve us.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Fights for employees	One thing or one attribute to the potential new leader could be generous in terms of money, and not just money, he or she should be dedicated to really fight for the employee's rights and salaries.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Negative view about not helping with problems	So he was not people-oriented at all. I can completely say that with confidence. And in terms of any conflict, he was the person who we cannot count on, I mean, couldn't count on, because he rather stayed silent and didn't participate in any debate and didn't do anything in terms of conflicts.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Listening, mentoring	And also, he was a really good listener. So in case of any conflict, he always made the right choice, and somehow he was capable to solve all these things which are normal in beside the team, that there are conflicts, but he was really capable to handle all these things. So he was a good mentor.

Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Mentoring for new employees	The first word that comes to my mind is mentoring, because I think starting a position in the marketing field, it is really important to have somebody who is in the field and who is in the industry and understands the whole company all together. In this position, it's really important to kind of mentor the new employees.
Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Discussions about the need for guidance	A really good experience for me was that they had this time-to-time sessions with me when I was able to ask and they also asked if I'm all right, if I could do my job, do I need any help. So, basically, it was a feedback session but from both of us and they were interested in my side and they didn't say just their side.
Participant 6	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Guidance, explaining what to do	So, maybe one thing that this boss or leader was doing to me is, like, explain at the beginning, you know, when you are new at a place, it's important to hold somebody's hand, to know, okay, explain what to do and not just let him swim or just, okay, you should find out how you should do it, because I think it's not expectable from someone who has just arrived there to know everything.
Participant 7	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Supportive	She is very supportive. Because whenever I had any issues or I had some topics that I didn't know about or didn't have any previous knowledge, then she was always super helpful to solve the issue or teach me some kind of things.
Participant 7	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Stands up, fights for employees	Even though I like my manager very much, if I would have a new leader, I think I would appreciate if, like whenever I have some problems with the, let's say the founders of the company, and I have some issues for example, or some higher expectations with my salary or the workload I have, I would appreciate it more if my manager would fight a little bit more for our rights or our requests and try to solve it more than my current manager. So like articulate our problems more towards the higher management.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Mentoring, supporting development	He was also dedicated to mentoring. He always supported my professional development, always looked for opportunities for me to advance. He always provided guidance and feedback and helped me improve and grow in my career. He was also really proactive about it and it really enhanced my work experience there.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Trust about providing support	Since I have complete trust in my leader, I would be confident that they are giving me a task that matches my capabilities. I would be happy because this would mean that I can handle the challenge and that I would receive all the necessary support, either from my leader or from a colleague. Of course, I would still feel a bit of anxiety, but this wouldn't stem from my leader but rather it would come from my own insecurities.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Helping with problems	Whenever I had an issue, they were always approachable and ready to help and ensured that problems were solved efficiently. I felt like they looked out for my best interests and made sure I had the support I needed.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Guidance to help with difficult projects	A while ago, we had a big tender, which we always prepare with our leader, but this was for a very important client and the leader's role was even more crucial here. Our leader was very clear with deadlines and priorities and made sure that everybody stayed focused even under this big pressure. I think this guidance really helped with staying organized and confident through the process and creating a strong proposal.
Participant 10	Human-centered leadership	Mentoring	Challenges, supports, allows growth	My boss also challenges me and he always pushes me out of my comfort zone by giving me tasks that I think I'm not ready for yet or doing them correctly yet. But he trusts me and always supports me, and by this I get the chance to grow in my work.

8.4. Coding table about empathetic leadership

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 2	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Understanding of mistakes	She accepted the mistakes in a very graceful manner. And she always said that, you have to do mistakes. Otherwise, it means that you do nothing
Participant 3	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Flexible and understanding with mistakes	She is flexible, because if I say I started working on this, but I met with some problems during the execution, then she will understand it and she will be like, okay, I saw that you started working on it, but you have a barrier, problems in the execution. So, she's flexible and not so strict if the work is not done at the due date, if you can explain what happened and it was not your fault. Even if her boss is also requesting it to be done, like she is understanding in this way.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Emotional intelligence, empathy, understanding of mistakes	The first thing which came to my mind is emotional intelligence and empathy, because he was that kind of person who was not interested in, so for example, if one task or one thing wasn't done, he more focused on why is that, or the background of how the employee could feel, what's the reason why she or he was that lost, or why she or he failed in this task, rather than being angry and only focusing on the fact that it's not done
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Negative view on lack of empathy	I would say the lack of empathy, he was not caring at all, just if the result is not good, then everything is bad. He was very result oriented.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Cares about the employees and the atmosphere	And he was really caring, and really the most and biggest priority for him was the atmosphere, the vibe, the, how the team feels day by day, and he could do everything to get all the rights that we should have. Yes, he was actually the most positive person with the best attitude.
Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Empathy, understanding	They should be empathetic or something like this, because a good leader should understand not just the not just the work and the things that are related to the job, but also have to understand the people and work with the people in a more empathetic way
Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Respect, empathy	Another good experience and I don't know how to say it in a right way. Maybe, I would say that they showed to me that they are also people. So, they didn't come to me as I have to respect them but they came to me as a person and treated me as a person too and I think it's really important as well that they are not in some kind of high chair and showing off and everything but they are also people and trying to make the company better in a personal way and in an empathetic way.

Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Negative view on the lack of respect	So, they didn't respect me. I was just an intern in a really bad sense.
Participant 8	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Empathy, supportive, good atmosphere	My boss there was a woman that was very empathetic with everyone in the office. If I had problems with my tasks, she would listen to me and help me, so she was creating a safe space there, she was very thoughtful. The atmosphere in the office was never bad, we were laughing all throughout the days with the others, my boss included, she was funny too. So overall, she was always there when someone needed her, and we all knew that we could share any problems with her.
Participant 8	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Support, empathy	So one of the larger events that I was organising was the career fair for the whole university, and actually, first I didn't really know where to start. It was pretty overwhelming and when the day came that I had to deliver her what I gathered so far, my notes were pretty messy. Then, we talked through what I had and she made suggestions, so not orders about what else I should do. I felt like that she was really valuing my opinions and ideas, and with her empathy and guidance, I was able to manage my part.
Participant 8	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Respect, no power games	The fact that I was respected and I was treated like a human being. I think some bosses and colleagues just want to exercise power, and that doesn't lead to good things.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Feeling seen by the leader	One of the most motivating experiences I've had with a leader was when I decided to leave my current position for another company that offered a lot higher salary. Through my two-month notice period, my leader remained very supportive and kind, making sure I left on good terms. However, after starting the new job, I soon realized it wasn't the right fit for me. In less than a day, he arranged everything with management to make my return possible. Since then, I have felt truly valued and motivated. Knowing that my leader genuinely appreciates me and sees my worth has made a very big difference in how I approach my work.
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Negative view on dismissive, intimidating leadership	I had a very negative experience with a past leader because her leadership style was based on favoritism, and unfair treatment and also fear. She had a small group of favorites and she was always friendly to them, but to everyone else he spoke in a dismissive and degrading way. She was not supportive or motivating but wanted to rule us by intimidating us. There was always someone as a target and was continuously pressured and pushed to the point where they left the company. No matter how much effort you put you never got any acknowledgement only the few favorites. I was under a lot of pressure and fear and stress and she was one of the reasons why I left that company.
Participant 10	Human-centered leadership	Empathetic leadership	Honest, understanding of mistakes	My leader has always been very honest and open. It was always communicated to us that everyone's thoughts were valued, and that mistakes could happen, and if you made a mistake or had a wrong opinion, he would accept it. He would always be honest with us and tell us if something was wrong, or it needed to be changed, and also if we were doing something well.

8.5. Coding table about open-mindedness

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 1	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Considerate, cares about employees opinion	She is always considerate of what I think that is best to do for the company's marketing and appreciates my opinion
Participant 1	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open-mindedness for marketing leaders	A good leader for a marketing team should be open-minded.
Participant 1	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Negative view on leaders who don't consider others opinions	Somebody who doesn't want to listen to others opinions. And who is really stubborn and just wants to make things their way.
Participant 1	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open-mindedness for marketing leaders	A good leader for a marketing team is... open-minded. Because it's such a fast-changing market that you have to be open-minded to be able to adapt to every change on the market. And it's every day changing.
Participant 4	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open-mindedness for marketing leaders	Let's say open-minded, because marketing is such a creative and easygoing department, where you cannot be so strict. And there are so many areas, social media, Google search and so on. So a marketing leader should accept that maybe his or her employees know it better.
Participant 5	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Humble, open to the team	I think it may be controversial, but the first thing that comes to my mind is that they should be humble because they are the new ones in the team. And I actually have a story for this when I was working in a marketing agency and we got a new leader and she came to us like the leader that knows everything, has 20 years of experience and she was just really annoying us with all these high expectations that she had to us. And she didn't really care about our team, how our group works in a day-to-day basis. So, I would say, first of all, a new leader should be humble and should get to know the team and the people that are in the team.
Participant 6	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open-mindedness and creativity for marketing leaders	A good leader for a marketing team is creative and open-minded, because as a leader, and as a marketing leader, you have to be open-minded, because the generation gap we're just experiencing between our leaders is really what could affect the work if they would be strict and not open to any kind of new idea. And in marketing, I think that's the most important thing, because everything is changing, the world is changing, the way of advertisements is changing, and you have to implement or adapt to those

Participant 6	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Listen to how things change	<p>She came back from pregnancy, and she worked at the company previously, but she left for five years, but she came back as she would know everything, and the things changed during that time and that made me not like the situation. She came back and started to say everything, how we should do that and how it was before. Things changed and I already did them for the past two years and then she just came and said that's not how it is, but I said, yes, it is, because I do it right now.</p>
Participant 8	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open to new ideas, accepts employees	<p>A good leader for a marketing team is letting me be myself and is eager to explore new ideas that I bring to the team.</p>
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Creativity, teamwork	<p>For me a good leader for a marketing team is someone who inspires creativity and encourages teamwork. I think it is important that they give clear direction while trusting the team to do their job.</p>
Participant 9	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Helpful with problems, open-minded	<p>For me, the most important thing in a leader is that they make me feel comfortable reaching out to them with my problems and that they approach issues with an open and solution-oriented mindset.</p>
Participant 10	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Open to employee's ideas	<p>My manager listens to my ideas, he is interested in my ideas, and he also really counts on them.</p>
Participant 10	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Not valued opinion leads to lower motivation	<p>If I felt that my opinion was not being listened to, I would not be motivated at all.</p>
Participant 10	Human-centered leadership	Open-mindedness	Listening to the team's operations	<p>This is actually very relevant because my new manager just joined. The most important thing is that they should make sure to learn about the company's way of working, and the dynamics of the team and stick to what we already have. Of course, they can bring new ideas, we can optimize things based on their view, and I'm actually really open to that, but they shouldn't try to completely turn things upside down. They should ask a lot of questions about how things have been done until now and try to understand why we did things the way we did.</p>

8.6. Coding table about clarity and transparency

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 2	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Negative view about no communication on firing decisions	Throughout my time with her, she said goodbye to about eight people from the marketing team. And all the time when she said goodbye, she didn't explain anything to anybody else. Every time is like xy is no longer a member of our team. So just to respect her privacy, we won't share any more details.
Participant 3	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Clear requirements and communication	The clear requirements would be the first one that comes to mind and good communication skills and methods and being like there at work. So, I wouldn't like a leader who is running around saying "do this, then do that" and not having clear requirements. And when you can see that their head is thinking about a hundred things because they have bigger responsibilities. That's why they cannot tell you exactly what to do and just give a call to you that please do this for me without any clear details.
Participant 3	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Clear communication and mediate relationships in the team	A good leader should know how to communicate the task and mediate the relationship in between the team members.
Participant 4	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Transparency	Transparency is also one thing which is important, transparency about the roles, the responsibilities, and everything, every insight which we have to know.
Participant 5	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Negative view on the lack of communication	They didn't even say to me that yeah you are doing your job not in the right way. Please just listen more carefully. So, I think that was the worst experience that they couldn't communicate well what am I doing wrong. I still don't know what I did wrong, and they started to search for somebody else.
Participant 6	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Transparency	She is transparent and there is transparency in the whole team also, so it's not just from my boss, but other departments we work all together very transparently. And she does the same with me, so when I don't do something or I forgot something, she reminds me or if she asks me anything to do, then she tells me why she asked it from me, so that's why. Transparency is very important, because if you see why the tasks are important, then it's clear for you why you do it and that's how it goes well, I think.

Participant 7	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Clear communication and KPI-s to track work	I think a good leader in a marketing team should always set some certain KPIs and some certain goals, and then always would check on you if you reach those goals, and if not, then what's missing or what could you do more to reach that goal. And then I think a good tracking system is always important to track your work, and I think a straightforward communication and also a clear briefing at all times. I think these are the most important ones.
Participant 7	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Communication affecting the success of the project	So we had a project where we built a workshop with different designers, and there was a leader in the marketing team who didn't really have the right way of communication ever, so every meeting was a disaster, and she was super bossy and anxious, and she was a super difficult personality to work with, and it was definitely a blocker every week to proceed with our own tasks because she was questioning everything we do, but she never set the goals or the clear requests what she needs, so then it was a disaster and everybody felt super weird and not motivated at all. So, I think the main difficulty here was the communication.
Participant 8	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Negative view on communication issues	I had a boss in another role that was not really communicative. Or at least, she thought that she was communicating, but actually, she didn't. I really felt like that she couldn't really express her feelings properly. For example, there was a time when I was organising an event, she told me that she would book a venue, because she knew the owner of a very nice place. She even sent me the details in email. However, when I arrived at the venue, it turns out that she didn't even book anything. In the end, I solved the problem, but the next day she was basically giving me the silent treatment, because in her mind, I was the one who messed things up. I didn't really understand this, actually, I think this wasn't really fair. I really became tired of her, so I was really happy that I could leave.
Participant 9	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Clear communication, support and trust	It's also important to me that my leader communicates clearly, and provides support when needed, and trusts the team to take ownership of their tasks.
Participant 10	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Negative view on lack of clarity	However sometimes there is a lack of clarity and it is not entirely clear to us, as employees, what the top-level's views are, or the main objective is for certain things. Sometimes it feels like the divisions in the company are living completely separate lives.
Participant 10	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Clear communication, support, feedback	Clear communication and positive feedback are so important I think. I hate it when I get a task, and then ask a few follow-up questions, and then still can't understand what exactly is expected of me, and it not because I don't get it, but because the leader can't define the goals clearly or what they actually want. So yes, clear instructions and constructive feedback, and being available, and showing appreciation for my work, these are the main things that are really important to me.
Participant 10	Communication in leadership	Clarity and transparency	Transparency, freedom, data driven	A good leader for a marketing team is transparent with the team, and provides creative freedom and also makes data driven decisions.

8.7. Coding table about verbal recognition

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 1	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Verbal expression of satisfaction	I felt really appreciated because they kept saying it out loud, how they are satisfied with me.
Participant 1	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Verbal appreciation of work as motivation	Something like that they loved my idea for a new project or campaign. And that they really think I am outdoing myself.
Participant 2	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Appreciation drives motivation	Whenever I see that somebody appreciates whatever I do, I have this motivation to do the double job.
Participant 4	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Quotes as motivation, puts effort into motivating the team with words	He was always posting to LinkedIn, and he said really unique and important quotes. He said so many things, and once I collected it all together. His favorite song was Unstoppable from Sia, and he always used that word to each and every teammate that we are unstoppable. He was really good in that. And also, to be your best version.
Participant 5	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Verbal recognition, awards, especially in marketing	Another experience was that when I was working in this marketing agency, in a monthly basis, we had this kind of like championship or award for the best content creator, for the best graphic designer and basically, they just awarded the best employees. But not in a kind of way that these are the best employees or these are the ones who worked the most but in a kind of way that they awarded the creativity. So, I think this is also important in the marketing field especially that you appreciate the creativity of the marketing employees especially in the content creation and social media side.
Participant 5	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Verbal recognition as motivation	I was an intern at the marketing agency and there was like a whole process. For one month, I was in one position, then I could try another position for one month and then, I could choose which one I like better. After the one month, they said to me that I am really doing a great job. They felt like that I care about the job which was really important for them and also felt good for them that as an intern, I care this much about the job. They also said that I was in the line with all the flow. So, I followed the instructions well and even was one step before everything. Basically, they said to me that I did my job really good and they hope that I will choose the content creators. So, of course, I stayed in that group and I really liked it and it was really motivational for me as well.
Participant 6	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Motivates with helping to achieve goals, have a talk about it	She is motivating, because every year we have to do a PDP talk, that means you should watch what your career goals are, and then she always sees the potential in me, so she is like, ok, what are your plans, and she tells me what to do to achieve those.
Participant 6	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Verbal recognition both from leader and team	Something that my leader said that made me feel very motivated is that the team is very satisfied with me, because we have, like, feedback form of 360, so everyone around you gives feedback to you and she was proud of me and she said do it like how you do it right now and it will be good.
Participant 8	Communication in leadership	Verbal recognition	Encouragement and support as motivation	So the first boss that I was talking about, she was very nice. She always encouraged everybody. For example once there was a time when I had to deliver a presentation in front of a large audience, and of course I was very nervous. But she made sure that I knew that whatever happens, she will help, and that she knew that I would be killing it. So that was very nice.

8.8. Coding table about time management

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 1	Respect for independence	Time management	Good with time management	That person should be really good with time management. And should work really fast, because I'm like that. I hate when people are slow.
Participant 1	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on not appreciating deadlines	And somebody who doesn't appreciate the deadlines.
Participant 2	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on not respecting time boundaries	Initially it was like meant to be a part time job. And then they fired everyone, and the next time told me, "Participant 2", you had to lead. You had to do everything. And I was like, based on our agreement, I just help you part time. I can't do that.
Participant 3	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on not respecting other's time and work	She looked down on my job. She was like "Why are you staying so late at work?" And I had a lot of things to do that she gave me. And she was like "What? I cannot imagine what type of tasks you have that you cannot finish sooner."
Participant 3	Respect for independence	Time management	Good time management as motivation	If they are really keeping up with the schedules, bring good energy to the workspace, and I can see that they are really taking the work seriously, but not taking the job to home, to their personal life, that motivates me that I can do the same with my life as well.
Participant 3	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on no knowledge about how much time tasks take	They give a call to you that please do this for me without any clear details and then requires it to be done in an hour. And they don't even know like how much work it takes to do that.
Participant 5	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on not respecting time boundaries	They expected me to leave the university earlier even though I had classes. They expected me that I should stay in over work hours and do my job right there. Also, there were deadlines and one week before the deadline they said to me that is this ready and I said we have one more week and they said to me but you have to do it right now and I didn't understand why.
Participant 7	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on not respecting time boundaries	I think her communication was not really straightforward, and she never respected my work time, and she would even text me on weekends on my phone or WhatsApp, which is, I think, not really respectful towards your employee.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Time management	Negative view on no knowledge about how much time tasks take	There is also something else I have noticed with many leaders that I dislike. They assign unrealistic tasks or deadlines to you because they have no idea what it actually takes to get that job done. They don't understand it either because they don't really know their own division or because they never had to do that kind of work themselves. I worked with leaders who never had to climb the work ladder and gain hands-on experience in the tasks that they are giving, and it really shows how they don't understand.

8.9. Coding table about trust and autonomy

Name	Theme	Sub-theme Code	Quote
Participant 2	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	No micromanagement. I can't work with micromanagement. If they don't trust you, I'm not comfortable working with that kind of team. You need to have liberty on your vision. If it happens on a daily basis or something, that's the red flag. For me, it doesn't matter how much the company pays me, I never can work with that kind of people.
Participant 2	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	A good leader for a marketing team one who never micromanages. People in marketing really need to have liberty to have the opportunity to breathe and have creative ideas to work. And if you work in the marketing field and if you micromanage everything, and if you don't give your team a chance to think and develop the idea and the vision, and from the very beginning, you say, "I don't like this word, change it" then why do you hire them? Just hire those people whose aesthetics are close to you and you agree.
Participant 2	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	I still have a feeling that she just wants to check me out, you know, whether I'm doing something or not. So that's what I don't like because we have a deadline based work. So this is the deadline, and you have to check on a certain deadline. So in between, you don't need to, don't be panicked. I'm doing my job. And I think that I showed you already that I always constantly do everything.
Participant 3	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	I want to say that a good leader for a marketing team is easy to hold accountable. The team can hold them accountable. Also authentic, trustworthy and credible. It's important that you can respect and trust them and that he doesn't consider himself higher than the people he's working with, so he would do the same.
Participant 4	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	Micromanagement. Yes, because his boss was also someone who was dedicated into micromanagement and always looked for every simple and unnecessary details of what the employees are doing, and my leader just followed this example. He didn't see the whole picture in front of himself. He was always asking for details which were not his business.
Participant 8	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	My boss was laid-back, she knew that I was a student besides my work, and her mindset was focused on "As long as the work is done, I don't care when you get to the office or where you work from." And honestly, this was very nice, it created a kind of mutual trust and respect, and I think that this is very important.
Participant 8	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	Overall, I think that a healthy workplace starts with colleagues that you can turn to with trust.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	I really don't like being micromanaged, and I also really don't like it when we work together on something in a call that I could do on my own easier. Afterwards of course we can go over it and discuss it, but I prefer to work at my own pace and the final result is the goal.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	I can't complain, my manager absolutely gives me room to be creative, he is not micromanaging me at all.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	Having freedom and power to make decisions really motivates me. I think when you have control over something, then you are naturally more motivated to work on it. As soon as I had the authority to make decisions in a project, I treated the project like my own child, improving it and perfecting it.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Trust and autonomy	I think it is also very important that I like it when I have a say in things and get some autonomy in making decisions.

8.10. Coding table about empowerment through responsibility

Name	Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Quote
Participant 1	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Full responsibility gives confidence	I would be really confident in myself. Because that would mean that they really can rely on me and they trust in my capabilities and everything. So I think I would be proud of myself and self-confident that I can do the task successfully
Participant 3	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Full trust and responsibility as a positive	Really good. I would feel like they are trusting my work and that they think that I'm able to do that.
Participant 6	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Full responsibility as motivation	It's more motivating for me, because if I have the full responsibility, that means that I have to look out for every little detail and I have to have it in mind from the beginning to the last point, so actually it motivates me.
Participant 7	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Full responsibility as motivation	I think in my previous experiences, it was always super motivating whenever they would give me a higher responsibility, let's say, for a special project or an event. And I think that was always a kind of reward for me, because then that meant that I did a good job. I think that full responsibility would be super positive for me, because then it would mean that she's satisfied with my job, and that he or she has the trust in me that I can handle a bigger project on my own as well.
Participant 8	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Full responsibility gives confidence	When I was given responsibility over large events, not every aspect of the events, but a lot, I was feeling very proud. For me, this meant that my work is I guess of quality, and that she thinks that I was a person qualified for doing such things.
Participant 10	Respect for independence	Empowerment through responsibility	Enjoys full responsibility but can be too much in terms of workload	Actually, this just happened to me. At first, I usually feel overwhelmed by these situations and my mind is full with all the small details. So first, I feel stressed, but it also depends on the nature of the project, but overall, I would be really happy. I love having creative freedom, and I believe that if I'm the one in charge, then things will turn out well. But also this can be very demanding, especially when I have other responsibilities. If I already to have too much workload then I wouldn't like taking on something extra.

8.11. Thematic map

