ARTICLE

Effects of Psychological Safety and Marginalization on the search for LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership positions

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ABSTRACT

This article verified the effects of psychological safety and marginalization on the search for leadership positions among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and non-binary workers, among others (LGBTQIAPN+) in corporate environments. We carried out a quantitative study with 302 participants using an online questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. We found that the presence of psychological safety and the absence of marginalization are positively associated with seeking LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions. Psychologically safe environments, in which professionals can freely express their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, increase confidence in their ability to lead. The absence of marginalization also contributes to leadership development by removing barriers to accessing leadership opportunities, allowing them to reach their full potential, increase self-efficacy and have better working relationships. These results contribute with empirical evidence that strengthens the advancement of literature on LGBTQIAPN+ leadership, by verifying relationships that have previously been little investigated, and highlight the importance of organizational policies that protect and allow LGBTQIAPN+ workers to be heard, aiming to reduce marginalization and encourage appreciation, so that they feel safe in truly being who they are.

Efeitos da Segurança Psicológica e Marginalização na busca por posições de Liderança LGBTQIAPN+

RESUMO

Este artigo verificou o efeito da segurança psicológica e da marginalização na busca por posições de liderança de trabalhadores lésbicas, gays, bissexuais, transgêneros, queers, intersexuais, assexuados, panssexuais, não binários, entre outros (LGBTQIAPN+) em ambientes corporativos. Realizamos um estudo quantitativo com 302 participantes por meio de um questionário online. Os dados foram analisados por estatísticas descritivas, análise fatorial exploratória e modelagem de equações estruturais. Descobrimos que a presença de segurança psicológica e a ausência de marginalização estão associadas positivamente à busca por posições de liderança LGBTQIAPN+. Ambientes psicologicamente seguros, em que os profissionais podem expressar livremente sua identidade de gênero e/ou orientação sexual, aumentam a confiança em sua capacidade de liderar. A ausência de marginalização também contribui para o desenvolvimento da liderança, pois remove barreiras para acessar oportunidades de liderança, permitindo que alcancem seu pleno potencial, aumentem a autoeficácia e tenham melhores relações de trabalho. Esses resultados contribuem com evidências empíricas que fortalecem o avanço da literatura sobre liderança LGBTQIAPN+, ao verificar relações até então pouco investigadas, e ressaltam a importância de políticas organizacionais que protejam e permitam que trabalhadores LGBTQIAPN+ sejam ouvidos, visando diminuir a marginalização e fomentar a valorização, para que se sintam seguros em ser realmente quem são.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Segurança Psicológica, Marginalização, Liderança LGBTQIAPN+

1. INTRODUCTION

People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, or non-binary, among others (LGBTQIAPN+) have faced oppression, persecution, and dehumanization by society (Capriotti & Donaldson, 2022). These experiences are often driven by conservatism and with characterized as one of the the main barriers in guaranteeing their rights (Sousa Junior & Mendes, 2021). The acronym LGBTQIAPN+ is used here as a comprehensive term to represent different sexual orientations and/or non-hegemonic gender identities (Reid & Ritholtz, 2020), which suffer from discrimination and exclusion. In many countries, homosexuality is not accepted, especially in homonegative cultures, where revealing being LGBTQIAPN+ can result in social ostracism and/or incarceration (Ilac, 2021). Furthermore, homosexuality remains illegal in 69 countries, 11 of which provide the death penalty (Magni & Reynolds, 2023). This situation is reflected in the work environment, in which many workers with non-hegemonic sexual orientations and/or gender identities suffer prejudice, discomfort, and even danger (Bailinson et al., 2020).

Despite social pressure to accept diversity, negative attitudes towards the LGBTQIAPN+ community persist, especially in Brazil (Hoffmann et al., 2021). The work environment continues to be permeated with values and prejudices that result in different forms of exclusion (Castro et al., 2021; Paniza, 2020) and marginalization for LGBTQIAPN+ individuals (Fassinger et al., 2010; Gamboa et al., 2021 ; Hoffman & Pryor, 2023; Wang et al., 2022), harming their careers

(Mara et al., 2021). These inequalities do not arise from individual choices but are rooted in culturally established organizational norms that favor the heteronormative order (Kamasak et al., 2020) and generate feelings of diminishment and non-belonging (Irigaray, 2021). LGBTQIAPN+ professionals report significant barriers in the workplace and feel they need to overcome non-LGBTQIAPN+ colleagues to gain recognition (Bailinson et al., 2020).

Among pre-judgments in the work context, the consideration that LGBTQIAPN+ individuals are not suitable for leadership positions (Castro et al., 2021) requires more discussion, given that the traditionally accepted view is that such positions should be occupied by male heterosexuals (Ilac, 2021), with characteristics associated with masculinity (Fasoli & Hegarty, 2020). Gender discrimination and homophobia contribute to the construction and affirmation of masculinity in a society's culture, and behaviors of superiority and subalternity are related to the degree of conformity to heteronormativity (Saraiva et al., 2020). Hence, companies need to combat the marginalization experienced by LGBTQIAPN+ workers (Fassinger et al., 2010; Kamasak et al., 2020) and support their leaders in implementing mechanisms that allow these individuals to feel safe in their work environments (Bryant-Lees & Kite, 2021).

In this context, the presence of psychological safety in the corporate environment plays an important role, as it refers to the ability of individuals to freely express their ideas, questions, and concerns at work (Edmondson, 2020), without fear of being judged as inferior or incompetent (Singh et al., 2013). This feeling of being psychologically safe encourages people to take interpersonal risks, to communicate more, to contribute voluntarily and to collaborate with each other in the workplace (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Consequently, a psychologically safe environment can encourage LGBTQIAPN+ professionals to express their different gender identities and/or sexual orientations and seek leadership positions.

Given the above, we seek to answer the following question: What is the effect of psychological safety and marginalization on the search for leadership positions by LGBTQIAPN+ workers in corporate environments? There is little evidence in the literature about the exercise of leadership by LGBTQIAPN+ professionals (Gamboa et al., 2021; Roberts, 2020; Wang et al., 2022) and according to the survey carried out by Center Talent Innovatin in 2019, in Brazil, 41% of workers claim to have suffered discrimination due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work, and 33% of Brazilian companies would not hire LGBTQIAPN+ for leadership positions (Simor, 2020).

Therefore, the objective of this article was to verify the effect of psychological safety and marginalization on the search for leadership positions of LGBTQIAPN+ workers in corporate environments. No previous studies were found that addressed this relationship in the national databases Scielo and Spell and in the international databases Scopus and Web of Science. Through a survey with 302 LGBTQIAPN+ professionals, two hypotheses were tested to investigate the positive effect of the presence of psychological safety, and the absence of marginalization in corporate environments, on the search for leadership positions by LGBTQIAPN+ workers. Our findings indicated statistically significant effects, showing that the presence of psychological safety and the absence of marginalization in the workplace positively influence the willingness of LGBTQIAPN+ professionals to seek leadership positions.

We emphasize that we tested some of the theoretical relationships proposed by Fassinger et al. (2010) in their multidimensional model of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership enactment. Consequently, we hope that this article, by demonstrating the relationship between the presence of psychological safety and the absence of marginalization in the workplace with the possibilities of advancement

to leadership positions by LGBTQIAPN+ professionals, will contribute to strengthening the literature on LGBTQIAPN+ leadership. Ultimately, we believe this discussion can encourage the adoption of organizational practices to promote "safe and secure work environments for all workers", aligning with United Nation's Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth (Organização das Nações Unidas no Brasil, 2015, p. 24).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. LGBTQIAPN+ LEADERSHIP

First, we highlight some distinctions between gender identity and sexual orientation, as they are often overlapping and confused. According to Louro (2014), gender identity is related to the social condition of identification with a gender, while sexual orientation refers to partners and the experience of sexual pleasures. In addition, according to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2021), gender identity is the inherent and felt sensation of being a boy, a man, or a male; a girl, a woman, or a female; or an alternative gender that may or may not correspond to your sex assigned at birth or your primary or secondary sexual characteristics. The term sexual orientation includes the sexual and emotional attraction of an individual to another individual and the behavior and/or social affiliation resulting from this attraction (APA, 2015).

LGBTQIAPN+ leadership consists of an intentional process of progressing the equity of different groups with non-hegemonic sexual and/or gender identities through strategies based on institutional policies and practices in order to promote social changes in the workplace (Pryor, 2020). Lay reports and media stories indicate that although there is no shortage of leadership behaviors carried out by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals, a representative part of this leadership occurs informally (Fassinger et al., 2010). Consequently, the lack of research on LGBTQIAPN+ leadership presents ethical challenges for organizations in creating an affirming work environment for these leaders (Wang et al., 2022).

Within this context, Fassinger et al. (2010) proposed a multidimensional model of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership, incorporating three dimensions: (1) sexual orientation, (2) gender orientation, and (3) situation. The first dimension, sexual orientation, refers to identity disclosure, as sexual orientation can be hidden in the workplace due to internalized stigmas and concerns about the judgment of others. For example, Chang and Bowring (2017) indicated that revealing sexual orientation created and maintained an atmosphere of openness and honesty in the relationship between leaders and followers. In contrast, Bryant-Lees and Kite (2021) demonstrated, with disclosure of sexual orientation when applying for a job, a distinct pattern of discrimination for gay and lesbian applicants who were rated lower on social skills, competence, and hireability than heterosexual candidates.

The second dimension, gender orientation, relates to the stereotypical presentation of gender roles by LGBTQIAPN+ leaders, as leaders who do not fit gender stereotypes may face challenges in their leadership (Fassinger et al., 2010). For example, studies have shown that transgender leaders who reveal their identity in the workplace may be perceived as less likable and effective by those they lead (Adams & Webster, 2017), and that gay men with feminine stereotypes may be perceived as more ineffective as leaders than gay men with masculine stereotypes (Pellegrini et al., 2020).

The third dimension, the situation, refers to the specific context in which LGBTQIAPN+ leaders operate, including the composition of the work group and the organizational culture. This context can affect leaders' behaviors and the results of their leadership process (Fassinger

et al., 2010). For example, gay leaders may need to integrate and normalize their identities in the workplace to challenge heteronormative norms (Roberts, 2020), and other LGBTQIAPN+ individuals may find it difficult to access work groups due to institutional codes that do not favor non-hegemonic sexual identities (Kamasak et al., 2020).

Finally, we point out that, although there are different acronyms to represent the community researched (for example, LGBTQ, LGBTI, among others) (DeWitt, 2018), in this article we use the acronym LGBTQIAPN+ as a comprehensive term to represent the different sexual orientation groups and/or non-hegemonic gender identities (Reid & Ritholtz, 2020). However, we emphasize that each letter of the LGBTQIAPN+ acronym refers to a distinct population, and the acronym can be used to mention the community as a whole (Pelletier & Tschurtz, 2012) but we should not disregard the heterogeneity present between these different groups and treat "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" as synonyms.

2.2. Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is an individual's mental state that influences a series of internal and external factors of the energetic system, affecting their professional performance at psychophysiological and psychological levels (Korneeva et al., 2017). It is a feeling in which individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves and safe to take interpersonal risks, exposing their vulnerabilities and contributing perspectives, without fear of being shamed, blamed, or ignored in the workplace (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). The development of a psychologically safe environment occurs gradually as individuals become familiar with each other and have positive experiences with interpersonal risk behaviors (Huang & Jiang, 2012).

The presence of psychological safety is associated with learning, knowledge sharing, team innovation, leadership inclusion, and a sense of belonging (McClintock & Fainstad, 2022; Siemsen et al., 2009). Previous studies have focused on the effects of psychological safety on workers' organizational behaviors. Choo et al. (2007) found that a psychologically safe work environment enables divergent thinking, creativity, risk-taking, and motivates engagement in learning. Siemsen et al. (2009) demonstrated that there were effects of psychological safety on knowledge sharing among coworkers in manufacturing and service operations.

Another set of studies discussed the role of leadership in followers' perception of psychological safety in the workplace. Edmondson (2003), in the health area, found that operating room leaders affected the team's psychological safety through interpersonal moves to emphasize the importance of others' contributions and minimize power differences within the team. Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009), in a financial institution, discovered that ethical leadership influenced the voice behavior of followers, with this relationship being partially mediated by the followers' own perceptions of psychological safety. Therefore, leaders play a fundamental role in building a psychologically safe environment for their followers.

Psychological safety allows individuals to believe that they can bring their "true selves" to work (Kožo et al., 2022), without fear of being judged as inferior or incompetent, especially when they belong to non-hegemonic groups (Singh et al., 2013), such as LGBTQIAPN+. The expression "being myself" is associated with being an openly LGBTQIAPN+ person (Schneider, 2016), being able to publicly express themselves about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The feeling of being psychologically safe causes individuals to voluntarily engage in expression, execution, and learning behaviors (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; McClintock & Fainstad, 2022).

On the other hand, the lack of psychological safety in the work context inhibits these individuals from speaking out and leads them to opt for avoidance behaviors, withholding their ideas, suggestions, or concerns (Sherf et al., 2021).

Regarding the climate of voice and silence, Bell et al. (2011) reported on the negative consequences of the climate of silence for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people in the workplace and presented practices for companies to build an environment in which these workers can express themselves freely without suffering social costs. Felix et al. (2018) discussed, based on the perceptions of male and female homosexuals, that the climate of voice is driven by individual decisions and actions of these workers to co-construct a work environment in which they are active social actors and have a voice. Gomes and Felix (2019) demonstrated that the climate of silence among gays and lesbians is influenced by different levels of the self and the particularities of homosexual individuals themselves and the colleagues with whom they interact in the workplace.

Psychological safety is linked to promoting voice, collaboration, team performance, voluntary contribution of ideas and actions, raising problems, suggesting organizational improvements, and recognizing errors (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Barnard et al. (2022) observed that an environment, despite having lasting heteronormative structures, can be considered by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers as a safe space, as they themselves evaluate, move and create these spaces. Noronha et al. (2022) found that Indian lesbians and gays perceive that one of the reasons for not expressing themselves freely in the work context is because they do not view it as a safe environment.

For that reason, based on the findings presented in this subsection, we argue that the presence of psychological safety in the workplace is positively associated with the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions, as it allows individuals to feel free to behave in innovative ways and challenge the status quo (Edmondson, 1999; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

- *H1. The presence of psychological safety is positively associated with the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions.*

2.3. MARGINALIZATION

Marginalization is understood as the effort to push groups and people to the side or even to the limit, being equivalent to other terms such as subordination, oppression, and exclusion (Causadias & Umaña-Taylor, 2018). According to the authors, it is considered a web of multidimensional processes, dependent on the context and largely determined by the historical, social, and cultural configurations of a society, as it is the result of the interactions between different social phenomena, as groups experience disadvantages and exclusion based on differences. LGBTQIAPN+ workers are affected by marginalization because they are incongruent with the traditional ideals and norms of sexuality and/or gender present in society (Fassinger et al., 2010; Suriyasarn, 2016; Wang et al., 2022). The effect of marginalization on the lives of LGBTQIAPN+ professionals presents negative results and impacts, such as the perception of inadequacy with leadership roles (Fassinger et al., 2010), jokes (Irigaray et al., 2010), fear (DeLeon & Brunner, 2013), discrimination (Suriyasarn, 2016), exclusion, and ridicule from colleagues (Kamasak et al., 2020).

Previous studies on marginalization have discussed its antecedents, the ways in which it manifests itself, and the moments in which it occurs. Gamboa et al. (2021) demonstrated that contextual antecedent factors, such as collectivist, religious, and heteronormative values, resulted in the structural marginalization of LGBTQIAPN+ issues and the disengagement of non-heterosexual professionals in the Philippine public sector. Irigaray et al. (2010) showed that heterosexuals use humor (jokes and irony) as a way to disqualify gays and lesbians, making this a source of suffering for these individuals, by reinforcing the marginalization to which they are subjected. Suriyasarn (2016) revealed that the majority of Thai LGBTQIAPN+ individuals surveyed were discriminated against and marginalized in various aspects and stages of employment, from education and training to accessing pensions and other social security benefits.

Furthermore, scholars have investigated marginalization related to the topic of leadership. Fassinger et al. (2010) pointed out potential negative impacts of marginalization on LGBTQIAPN+ leaders at all stages and levels of leadership development. DeLeon and Brunner (2013) pointed out that experiences of marginalization created the need for LGBTQIAPN+ educational leaders to build personal shields of protection, in addition to needing to be aware of how they present themselves, what they say, and to retreat when their personal or professional safety is at risk. Hoffman and Pryor (2023) highlighted that transgender leaders experience continuous marginalization in their work and in their identities, making it necessary to develop strategies to resist and create more possibilities of being and doing for other LGBTQIAPN+ people.

Along these lines, we emphasize that these findings demonstrate that marginalization is experienced in the workplace by LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in many ways, whether through disqualification from their work, personal and professional security, unequal career opportunities or disengagement, which can affect the advancement of LGBTQIAPN+ workers to leadership positions. LGBTQIAPN+ workers in environments where marginalization is present may have low self-efficacy when assuming certain leadership roles, be prevented from emerging as leaders in certain occupational structures, see their self-efficacy and success compromised, and perceive themselves as ineffective even if they have achieved professional success (Fassinger et al., 2010). Therefore, the presence of marginalization has a negative impact on these workers (DeLeon & Brunner, 2013; Fassinger et al., 2010; Irigaray et al., 2010; Kamasak et al., 2020; Suriyasarn, 2016). On the other hand, its absence may help LGBTQIAPN+ individuals achieve leadership positions and improve their self-efficacy as leaders (e.g., Fassinger et al., 2010). Based on these arguments, we formulate the following hypothesis:

- *H2. The absence of marginalization is positively associated with the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions.*

2.4. THEORETICAL MODEL

Considering the aforementioned arguments, we present the model suggested and tested in this study, through Figure 1, based on the multidimensional model of enactment of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership by Fassinger et al. (2010). Our model suggests that the presence of psychological security (a factor linked to the composition of the group) and the absence of marginalization have effects on the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions, with the presence of psychological security and the absence of marginalization being positively associated.
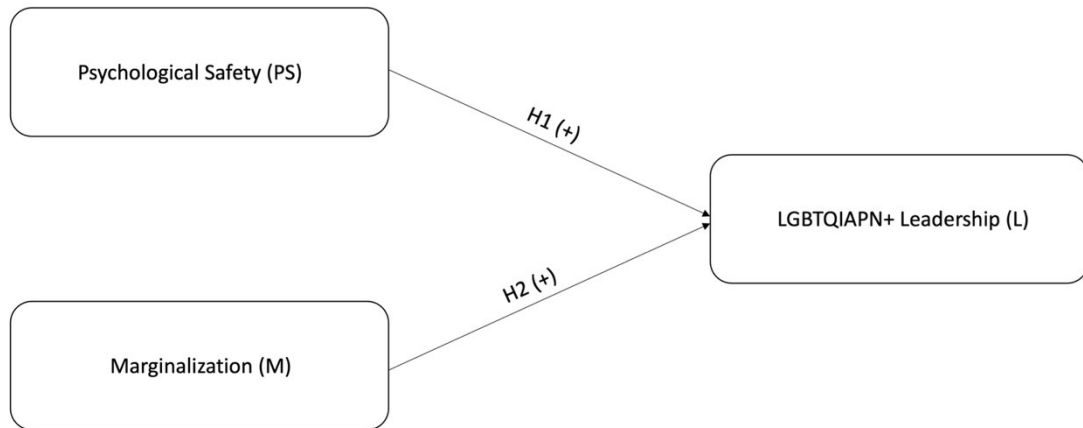
Figure 1. Suggested model.
Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

3. METHODOLOGICAL PATH

Considering the research question, this article adopted an exploratory nature, with a quantitative approach and data collection through a survey. The initial version of the questionnaire was constructed from 3 theoretical dimensions (LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership, Psychological Safety and Marginalization) represented by 17 items. The theoretical analysis of the items was carried out by three PhD professors, specialists in the area, who acted as evaluators in the agreement of the items, as well as in the exclusion or suggestion of new items to better represent the questionnaire. At the end of this analysis, the questionnaire consisted of 17 items, 1 of which was deleted and 1 new item added by the evaluators.

The target population for pre-testing and data collection was made up of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals who worked in corporate environments but who did not hold leadership positions. We carried out a pre-test to check whether the items were understandable, clearly worded, and presented no ambiguity for members of the population for whom the instrument was intended. The pre-test sample consisted of 31 LGBTQIAPN+ workers selected for convenience and who were not part of the final sample. The pre-test data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), resulting in 5 factors and 17 items that presented factor loadings greater than 0.50, considered adequate by Hair et al. (2005).

Data collection was carried out between the months of February and March 2022, through an online questionnaire on Google Forms, with questions on a six-point Likert scale, sent to participants via email, WhatsApp, and other social networks. Participants were informed about the objective of the research, the procedures involved, the potential risks and benefits, the voluntary nature of their participation and their anonymity in the research. All respondents agreed to the free and informed consent form. A coexistence sample, characterized as non-probabilistic, was used, and we obtained a return from 302 respondents in the survey. According to Malhotra et al. (2006), the total number of participants for an exploratory study should be at least 4-5 times the total number of study items. As this study contained 17 items, its sample size of 302 respondents from the target population of LGBTQIAPN+ workers meets this criterion.

Regarding data analysis, we carried out a descriptive analysis identifying the main items of the questionnaire and an EFA of the data in the Stata software version 16, with the varimax orthogonal factor rotation method, highlighted by Hair et al. (2009), as one of the most used, which resulted

in 4 factors. Item Q17, which was part of factor 2, was excluded because it presented a factor load below 0.50, which is considered a minimum value for the factor load to be relevant. We also excluded factor 4, composed of items Q7 and Q9, as it presented Cronbach's alpha below 0.60, which, according to Hair Jr et al. (2016), is considered unacceptable in exploratory research. Therefore, for data analysis, the questionnaire resulted in 14 items grouped into 3 factors as shown in the results section.

To test the theoretical model (see Figure 1), presented in the first and second hypotheses, we carried out a structural equation modeling analysis, also with the help of Stata version 16 software. Considering that there were negative items in two of the constructs, before the tests, these values were inverted so that all items in the questionnaire were presented assertively and aligned within their construct and, consequently, the interpretation of the results was not distorted. We emphasize that the Marginalization variable composed of all its negative items was inverted to represent the absence of marginalization in the workplace. The use of structural equation modeling sought to analyze existing relationships and the adjustment of the model proposed in the research. The adjustment measures indicated by Hair et al. (2005, 2009) and Malhotra (2014) to evaluate the proposed theoretical model.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Data were analyzed from a final sample of 302 LGBTQIAPN+ workers. Table 1 presents the demographic data of this group, which shows that the majority are male (74%), define themselves in terms of sexual orientation as gay (65%), are white (73%), identify with the cisgender gender (86%), work in the area of Administration and Business (33%), live in the Southeast region (60.3%), have a postgraduate degree at the level of complete specialization (37.7%) and have worked in the organization for up to 5 years (67.2%).

The EFA was carried out with the 14 items that resulted in three factors. The Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin (KMO) adequacy index was 0.8794, a value considered "good" according to Friel (2009). The total variance explained by the three factors is 62.53%, a satisfactory result, as it presents a percentage of total variance higher than the acceptable limit suggested by the literature (Hair et al., 2005). The factors indicated, as well as the factor loadings, means, and standard deviations of each item, are presented in Table 2. It should be noted that the negative items were inverted for a better comparison of means and so that all items in the questionnaire were presented assertively.

According to Table 2, the highest average was found in the "Psychological Safety" factor for item Q14 (5.1391), in which the majority of people say they feel capable of taking on a leadership role within the company. Next, item Q15 (4.7980) stands out, which addresses equal opportunities for LGBTQIAPN+ workers when leadership vacancies arise, showing equally high averages. The other items also show high averages, portraying issues such as feeling safe in the work environment (Q3, 4.7318) and being authentic in the work environment (Q2, 4.7185), aspects that are related to psychological safety. Therefore, it is observed that participants in this research feel that they work in a psychologically safe environment and realize that they are capable and have equal opportunities to compete for leadership positions.

Table 1
Sample characteristics (n= 302)

Age	%	Sex	%	Sexual orientation	%
20 years or less	3,6	Masculine	74,5	Asexual	0,3
21 – 30 years old	36,4	Feminine	24,5	Bicurious	1
31 – 40 years old	37,4	Others	1	Bisexual	13,2
41 – 50 years old	11,3	**Color or race**	**%**	Fluid	1,3
51 years or older	11,3	White	73,2	Gay	65,6
Gender identity	**%**	Black	5,3	Heterosexual	5,3
Agender	0,7	Brown	19,2	Lesbian	9,3
Bigender	3,3	Yellow	2,3	Pansexual	3
Cisgender	86,1	**Education level**	**%**	Sapiosexual	0,7
Genderfluid	1,3	High School	11,6	Others	0,3
Non-binary gender	2,3	Graduation	32,8	**Labor camp**	**%**
Variant gender	2,6	Specialization	37,7	Administration and Business	33,4
Transgender	1,7	Master`s degree	12,3	Arts and Design	4,3
Others	2	Doctorate degree	5,6	Biological and Earth Sciences	3,3
Location	**%**	**Working time**	**%**	Exact Sciences and IT	5
North	3	Less than 1 year	22,5	Social Sciences and Humanities	6,9
North East	5	1 – 5 years	44,7	Communication and Information	11,6
Midwest	7,6	6 – 10 years	13,9	Engineering and Production	6,3
Southeast	60,3	11 – 15 years	9,3	Health and Wellness	9,3
South	24,2	16 years or old	9,6	Others	9

Source: Research data (2022).

Regarding the "Marginalization" factor, the highest means were found in negative items that were inverted, resulting in a meaning opposite to the original purpose of the item. In this way, the majority of LGBTQIAPN+ workers reported that they did not suffer marginalization in the work environment in which they work. Item Q8 (4.4172) stands out, in which most people state that they were not harmed in the work environment; Q1 (4.3510), which addresses the absence of experiences of prejudice in the workplace; Q11 (4.1623), which considers that knowledge about workers' sexual orientation and/or gender identity does not negatively affect work relationships; and Q16 (4.1457), which deals with the fact that assuming sexual orientation and/or gender identity did not negatively influence the search for a leadership position.

Still according to Table 2, the highest average in the "LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership" factor was obtained in item Q6 (4.6358), in which most people agree that being authentic in the work environment, without suffering prejudice, positively influences performance in the workplace. work. We also emphasize the inverted item Q12 (4.1325) regarding people not feeling afraid of being harmed when talking openly about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the workplace. These items demonstrated that a significant number of respondents from the LGBTQIAPN+ community had experiences in which they were able to express their sexuality and/or gender identity without worrying about possible negative repercussions and that acceptance by their colleagues positively influences their work activities.

Factors	Items	Factor Loading	Mean	Standard deviation
Psychological Safety 0.8536*	Q2: I feel safe being myself in the workplace, asking questions and presenting my ideas and suggestions	0.7450	4.7185	1.4480
	Q3: I feel safe in my work environment, even when I disagree with the opinions of my colleagues	0.7800	4.7318	1.3968
	Q4: All my team members can openly fail without feeling rejected	0.7556	4.6060	1.4167
	Q5: I can openly fail in front of my team without feeling rejected	0.8477	4.6490	1.3819
	Q14: I feel able to be a leader within my company, regardless of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity	0.5637	5.1391	1.3396
	Q15: When leadership vacancies arise, I compete on equal terms with other colleagues, regardless of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity	0.6132	4.7980	1.5279
Marginalization 0.8166*	Q1: I have already suffered prejudice in my work environment because of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity**	0.8114	4.3510	1.7885
	Q8: I have already been harmed in my work environment because of my sexual orientation and/or gender identity**	0.8247	4.4172	1.7760
	Q10: My sexual orientation and/or gender identity influences others' opinions regarding my work**	0.6332	3.9139	1.7462
	Q11: The fact that people know about my sexual orientation and/or gender identity has already negatively influenced my work relationships**	0.8002	4.1623	1.7606
	Q16: Coming out with my sexual orientation and/or gender identity has already had a negative impact on my search for a leadership position**	0.6568	4.1457	1.7892
LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership 0.6940*	Q6: Being myself and talking openly about my sexuality and/or gender identity, without suffering prejudice, positively influences my work	0.6886	4.6358	1.6035
	Q12: I feel afraid of talking openly about my sexual orientation and/or gender identity in my work environment and being harmed**	0.7665	4.1325	1.8233
	Q13: Omitting my sexual orientation and/or gender identity gives me more chances of obtaining a leadership position**	0.7102	3.9404	1.8233

Source: Research data (2022). Note. *Cronbach's alpha **Inverted negative items.

Next, in Table 3, the correlation matrix between the latent variables measured was created. It was observed that all relationships between latent variables were statistically significant and presented a moderate strength of association, according to the classification by Hair et al. (2005). As for reliability, the values found in the three resulting factors demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha higher than the established criterion of 0.60 indicated by Hair et al. (2005). All three factors presented an Eigenvalue above 1, and the total Variance explained was 62.53%.

Table 3
Correlation matrix between latent variables

	1	2	3
1. Psychological Safety	**1.000**		
2. Marginalization	0.4223*	**1.000**	
3. LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership	0.5246*	0.4595*	**1.000**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.8536	0.8460	0.6940
Eigenvalue	3.4047	3.2559	2.0938
% Variance	24,32	23,26	14,96
% Cumulative	24,32	47,58	62,53

Source: Research data (2022).*P values < 0.05 (significant).

The absolute fit measures, according to Hair et al. (2009), demonstrate how well the presented model reproduces the data observed in reality. The Chi-square index is used to quantify the differences between the observed and estimated covariance matrices. The Chi-square value of 300.372 with 75 degrees of freedom is statistically significant (p = 0.000). The standardized Chi-square, resulting from the ratio between the Chi-square and the degrees of freedom (X^2/ d.f.), is above the acceptable range for the model (Hair et al., 2005; Malhotra 2014).

In Table 4, it is observed that the model obtained a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.10, a value considered acceptable for a good model. The Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) is 0.16, also within the desired parameter. The incremental fit measures, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), are slightly below the desired criteria. However, the indices reached values above 0.85, which is acceptable for exploratory research.

The results of the relationships between LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership (L), Psychological Safety (PS) and Marginalization (M) are presented in Table 5. To verify these relationships, p values were analyzed, considering them significant when they present p values < 0.05 .

Table 4
Fit indices

Classification	Measures	Minimum expected values***	Values found
Absolute fit measurements	X^2*		300,372
	P-value	>0,05	0,000
	X^2/d.f.**	<3,00	4,00
	RMSEA	<0,08	0,100
	SRMR	|4,0|	0,162
Incremental adjustment measures	CFI	>0,90	0,881
	TLI	>0,90	0,855

Source: Research data (2022). Note. *Chi square. **Degrees of freedom. *** absolute and incremental adjustment measures indicated by Hair et al. (2005, 2009) and Malhotra (2014).

Table 5
Structural model results

Structural Relationships	Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	P-value	Status
PS ⇒ L	H1 (+)	0,2374	0,000*	Supported
M ⇒ L	H2 (+)	0,2097	0,000*	Supported

Source: Research data (2022). Note. *p values < 0.05 (significant).

The results demonstrate that both relationships present significant p-values. The first hypothesis was supported by the existence of a positive association between the variables of Psychological Safety and LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership. The second hypothesis was also supported, since a positive association was predicted between the variables that represent the absence of Marginalization and the search for LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership positions. Thus, the model proposed in this study had all its hypotheses confirmed.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Our findings demonstrate that LGBTQIAPN+ workers participating in this research feel capable of being business leaders. By feeling psychologically safe, these workers demonstrate interest and confidence in occupying leadership positions. The presence of psychological safety allows them to be comfortable expressing themselves and taking interpersonal risks, without fear of being embarrassed, blamed, or ignored (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Singh et al. (2013) demonstrated that the relationship between diversity climate and employee performance, mediated by psychological safety, is stronger in non-hegemonic groups. Salvati et al. (2021) found that gay men, despite having internalized sexual stigmas, did not change their self-perception of leadership, considering themselves capable of being effective leaders.

Another relevant point is the competition for leadership positions, in which the majority of responding LGBTQIAPN+ workers indicated that they perceive themselves to compete equally with other non-LGBTQIAPN+ colleagues (Q15). Contrary to expectations, this result contradicts studies that pointed out unequal career opportunities for LGBTQIAPN+ workers (Fasoli & Hegarty, 2020; Kamasak et al., 2020; Salvati et al., 2021). Fasoli and Hegarty (2020) demonstrated that gender and sexual orientation intersect, producing discriminatory effects when hiring for leadership positions. In their study, the authors tested whether vocal cues for sexual orientation would provoke discrimination in heterosexual individuals when hiring leaders. The results revealed that discrimination occurred in subtle ways, such as when candidates sounded gay or lesbian. Wang et al. (2022) also highlighted in their experimental study that homosexual leaders were perceived as less effective and received less compliance from followers than heterosexual leaders, indicating that these leaders suffer discrimination when their sexual orientation becomes evident to followers, undermining their role as effective leaders.

Along these lines, the psychological safety factor revealed that LGBTQIAPN+ workers feel safe in the work environment and can be authentic. The feeling of being psychologically safe makes these individuals believe that they can bring their "true self" to their professional practice (Kožo et al., 2022). Edmondson (2003) demonstrated that psychological safety reduces barriers based on speaking power and team members feel more comfortable expressing themselves. McClintock and Fainstad (2022) found that psychologically safe environments have high-quality relationships, lack of social positioning and learning flexibility. By signaling that they are in a psychologically

safe environment, LGBTQIAPN+ workers demonstrate a propensity to voluntarily behave in innovative ways and challenge the status quo (Edmondson, 1999; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

The results also suggest, regarding the marginalization factor, that a representative part of the responding LGBTQIAPN+ workers do not feel harmed (Q8) nor suffer prejudice in the workplace (Q1). These findings are relevant in terms of the progression of coping strategies against LGBTQIAPN+ discrimination and marginalization in the workplace, as previous studies indicate that these workers still suffer in the workplace (Bryant-Lees & Kite, 2021; Mara et al., 2021). The absence of marginalization may be related to the implementation of some organizational strategies, such as creating a diverse, inclusive, and safe work environment; increasing awareness and promoting education on LGBTQIAPN+ issues; support groups for minority employees; and promoting employment policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Mara et al., 2021).

Regarding the LGBTQIAPN+ Leadership factor, our findings indicate that most respondents are not afraid to speak openly about their gender identity and/or sexuality and that being "themselves" positively influences their work. Gomes and Felix (2019) point out that many professionals choose to hide their sexual orientation at work, which leads to feelings of inauthenticity, depression, and low commitment. This decision is classified by the authors as a non-linear process with limited rationality, influenced by individual and contextual factors. Hoffman and Pryor (2023) revealed that transgender leaders face obstacles perpetuated by compulsory heterogeneity, which operates to make their trans identities invisible, and these leaders have needed to navigate institutional barriers to create more expansive LGBTQIAPN+ identity spaces.

The expression "coming out of the closet" is commonly used to refer to an LGBTQIAPN+ person who has made their sexual identity public (Barrantes & Eaton, 2018). Although there are some risks related to disclosure, such as microaggressions, stress, and marginalization in the workplace, some studies report positive rewards. For example, Goldberg (2016) showed that disclosing the LGBTQIAPN+ identity can contribute to greater satisfaction and organizational commitment, better relationships with co-workers and greater performance and career success. Bowring (2017) pointed out in his research that disclosing sexual orientation affects trust between leader and subordinate, mediating positive behaviors, such as work performance, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Our findings showed, through the first hypothesis tested (H1), that the presence of psychological safety in the workplace has a positive effect on the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions. This finding is in line with previous studies, such as Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), which demonstrated that psychological safety in teams predicts engagement in quality improvement work and mediates the relationship between inclusion and leader engagement. LGBTQIAPN+ workers who feel psychologically safe are more willing to take on leadership roles and feel able to perform the role, since psychologically safe environments allow individuals to feel comfortable taking interpersonal risks (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014) and present different behaviors in relation to their willingness to express themselves, learn and experience (McClintock & Fainstad, 2022).

We also discovered, through the second hypothesis tested (H2), that the absence of marginalization in the workplace has a positive effect on the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions. This finding is consistent with the literature, as studies indicate that the presence of marginalization has a negative impact on LGBTQIAPN+ workers (DeLeon & Brunner, 2013; Fassinger et al., 2010; Irigaray et al., 2010; Kamasak et al., 2020; Suriyasarn, 2016), which can hinder their

leadership self-efficacy and prevent LGBTQIAPN+ individuals from reaching leadership positions (Fassinger et al., 2010).

In work environments where marginalization is absent, the creation of a welcoming organizational climate for LGBTQIAPN+ (Fine, 2017) can occur, with an inclusive organizational culture that expands access and participation (Lee, 2021; Courtney, 2014). Niedlich and Steffens (2015), through an experiment, exemplified this context of lack of marginalization, pointing out that lesbians and gays were better evaluated for leadership positions in terms of competencies and social skills than their equally qualified heterosexual colleagues. Furthermore, DeLeon and Brunner (2013), in a study carried out with LGBTQIAPN+ educational leaders, demonstrated that, to suppress experiences of marginalization, it is necessary for LGBTQIAPN+ leaders to be able to create safe spaces to connect with other LGBTQIAPN+ leaders and with non-LGBTQIAPN+ allies , as well as getting involved in activities to defend the rights of the LGBTQIAPN+ community.

Finally, our findings point to results with positive effects that impact the rise of LGBTQIAPN+ to leadership positions and overcoming the "lavender ceiling". The term "lavender ceiling" is used to describe the tendency of organizations not to promote LGBTQIAPN+ people to positions of greater authority, power, or prestige, preventing their career mobility (Hill, 2009) and representing an impenetrable barrier on the path to senior positions and leadership (Englert, 2018). We emphasize that the "lavender ceiling" is a result of the discrimination and marginalization suffered by LGBTQIAPN+ people in corporate environments, limiting their professional progress and repressing diversity at higher organizational levels.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our findings demonstrated relevant results in terms of the progression of LGBTQIAPN+ workers to leadership positions. Considering the searches carried out in the national databases Scielo and Spell and in the international databases Scopus and Web of Science, this is the first study that verified the effect of psychological security and marginalization in the search for leadership positions of these workers in corporate environments, empirically testing some of the theoretical relationships proposed by Fassinger et al. (2010) in their multidimensional model of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership. This was the gap we sought to fill by providing empirical evidence on the factors that influence LGBTQIAPN+ leadership.

Some theoretical contributions to the literature can be highlighted. First, our results showed that the feeling of being psychologically safe in the work environment had a positive effect on the search for leadership positions. It is assumed that, for LGBTQIAPN+ workers, being in an environment that allows them to express "their true self", without having to hide their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, leads them to feel safe to take on leadership roles. This suggests that psychological safety helps to increase the leadership self-efficacy of these workers, that is, the confidence in their ability to lead, thus allowing them to feel able to take on leadership positions and more willing to face and break the lavender ceiling. .

Second, the absence of marginalization had a positive effect on the search for leadership positions. This result supports the notion that the absence of marginalization can contribute to leadership development, as when LGBTQIAPN+ individuals do not face barriers to accessing leadership opportunities, they are more likely to be able to reach their full potential, increase their self-efficacy and have better working relationships. The absence of LGBTQIAPN+ marginalization can also help build a more inclusive and collaborative work culture, in which people are valued and respected.

Third and finally, the positive results for the possibilities of advancement to leadership positions by LGBTQIAPN+ professionals stand out. Many of these professionals sacrifice and limit their gender identities and/or sexual orientations to minimize humiliation and discrimination. The factors emphasized by this research can contribute to the development of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership skills, making these professionals more confident to drive change and share experiences in the workplace.

Our study also provides practical and social implications, supporting SDG Goal 8, which aims to create safer and more secure working environments for all workers. Companies need to recognize the need to provide a psychologically safe environment for LGBTQIAPN+ workers, seeking organizational policies that protect, support, and allow them to be heard, in order to reduce marginalization and encourage appreciation so that they feel safe in truly being who they are. Managers should not underestimate the effects of psychological safety in their daily lives and in the search for leadership positions but should work on its importance for the professional development of their employees, especially non-hegemonic groups that are often neglected, silenced and ignored in organizational discourses.

In terms of limitations, gender identity and sexual orientation were not distinguished in the data collection instrument, which did not make it possible to carry out individual analyzes of different subgroups and verify differences in perceptions about the two concepts within the questions. This omission could represent different realities for respondents. We also add that the sample was mostly made up of male, cisgender, gay and white people. This profile can be explained by the fear that members of the LGBTQIAPN+ community have of exposing themselves, making it difficult to sample other subgroups in research (Ilac, 2021).

Another limitation is related to the lack of consideration of other factors that may influence the search for LGBTQIAPN+ leadership positions and that were not observed, such as questions about religion, company, social class, and place of residence of the respondents. These factors may play a role in participants' responses and influence their perceptions and experiences in the workplace. For example, religion and social class may be associated with cultural values and norms that affect the perception of LGBTQIAPN+ leadership and the experience of psychological safety and marginalization in the workplace. Furthermore, geographic location, going beyond the macroregion, can bring variations in social, political and cultural conditions that impact the experience of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals. The absence of this information can limit our understanding of the nuances that permeate the relationships of psychological safety, marginalization, and leadership.

As suggestions for future research, we propose the identification of other factors that interfere in the search for leadership positions by this group of workers, such as those mentioned previously. Research that focuses on the hindering and facilitating factors for developing LGBTQIAPN+ leadership in different corporate environments and in groups with gender identity (e.g., genderfluid, non-binary gender and gender variant) and specific sexual orientation (e.g., asexual, bisexual, pansexual, and sapiosexual) can provide valuable insights. Researchers can also carry out work with qualitative approaches to understand and deepen the effects identified in this article on psychological safety and marginalization. This more in-depth approach can bring a fuller and richer understanding of these workers' experiences in the workplace and the dynamics that influence their leadership aspirations.

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