

## Leadership and governance in rural populated centers

### Liderazgo y gobernabilidad en los centros poblados rurales

### Liderança e governabilidade em centros rurais povoados

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**Received:** 7/11/2020

**Accepted:** 4/01/2021

#### ABSTRACT

Leadership has been gaining importance and relevance in the contemporary context, as it is considered a key element for the survival of any organization from the legitimization of power and a source of creative potential for the political process. The purpose of this article was to reveal the influence of leadership on the governance of rural populated centers in the District of Huancané, Puno region, Peru. It was worked with a quantitative, non-experimental-transversal, correlational approach and employed theoretical and empirical methods. The study showed the coincidence in the perception of these authorities about the influence of interpersonal communication in political leadership, based on the level of knowledge that the leader had about his influence, an area where the authorities share thoughts, ideas and emotions to do something in common, for the benefit of the community. This showed that among the local authorities the criterion prevailed that the leader is the one, capable of harmoniously imposing his will on others, in a way that deserves their respect, trust and sincere cooperation, willing to be at the service of his community and ratifying the influence of leadership in democratic governance and the development of his community. Such conclusions ratified the need

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to design the Communications Development Plan, aimed at managing communication and information in all areas of the institution and creating the conditions for the effective integration and interactivity of each and every member of the community.

**Keywords:** leadership; governance; populated centers; communication; development

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## RESUMEN

El liderazgo ha ido ganando en importancia y relevancia en el contexto contemporáneo, en tanto se considera una pieza clave para la supervivencia de cualquier organización desde la legitimación del poder y fuente de potencial creativo para el proceso político. El presente artículo se propuso revelar la influencia del liderazgo en la gobernabilidad de los centros poblados rurales del Distrito de Huancané, región Puno, Perú. Se trabajó con un enfoque cuantitativo, no experimental-transversal, de alcance correlacional y se emplearon métodos de nivel teórico y empírico. El estudio arrojó la coincidencia en la percepción de estas autoridades acerca de la influencia de la comunicación interpersonal en el liderazgo político, a partir del nivel de conocimiento que tenía el líder sobre su influencia, ámbito donde las autoridades comparten pensamientos, ideas y emociones para hacer algo en común, en beneficio de la comunidad. Esto demostró que entre las autoridades locales prevaleció el criterio de que el líder es aquel, capaz de imponer armoniosamente su voluntad a los demás, de manera que merezca su respeto, confianza y sincera cooperación, dispuesto a estar al servicio de su comunidad y ratificar la influencia del liderazgo en la gobernabilidad democrática y el desarrollo de su comunidad. Tales conclusiones ratificaron la necesidad de diseñar el Plan de Desarrollo de Comunicaciones, dirigido a administrar la comunicación e información en todos los espacios de la institución y crear las condiciones para la integración e interactividad efectiva de todos y cada uno de los miembros de la comunidad.

**Palabras clave:** liderazgo; gobernabilidad; centros poblados; comunicación; desarrollo

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## RESUMO

A liderança tem vindo a ganhar importância e relevância no contexto contemporâneo, pois é considerada uma peça chave para a sobrevivência de qualquer organização a partir da legitimação do poder e fonte do potencial criativo para o processo político. O presente artigo pretende revelar a influência da liderança na governabilidade dos centros populacionais rurais no Distrito de Huancané, região de Puno, Peru. Trabalhámos com uma abordagem quantitativa, não-experimental-transversal, correlacional e utilizámos métodos teóricos e empíricos. O estudo mostrou a coincidência na percepção destas autoridades sobre a influência da comunicação interpessoal na liderança política, a partir do nível de conhecimento que o líder tinha sobre a sua influência, uma área onde as autoridades partilham pensamentos, ideias e emoções para fazer algo em comum, em benefício da comunidade. Isto mostrou que entre as autoridades locais prevaleceu o critério de que o líder é aquele capaz de impor harmoniosamente a sua vontade aos outros, de uma forma que merece o seu respeito, confiança e cooperação sincera, disposto a estar ao serviço da sua comunidade e a ratificar a influência da liderança na governação democrática e no desenvolvimento da sua comunidade. Tais conclusões ratificaram a necessidade de conceber o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Comunicação, destinado a gerir a comunicação e informação em todas as áreas da instituição e a criar condições para a integração e interatividade efetiva de cada um dos membros da comunidade.

**Palavras-chave:** liderança; governabilidade; centros povoados; comunicação; desenvolvimento

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## INTRODUCTION

Leadership has become an essential element in the legitimization of power structures and a source of creative potential for the political process in general. Although it has been revealed in all stages of human development, its study is a more recent phenomenon, which explains why it is considered by some authors that it is not possible to identify neither unique meanings nor approaches to the term. Leadership "Is the

ability to influence the behavior of others, formulate ways to reach those goals and some social norms in the group" (Purisaca Risco, 2011, p. 22).

Nowadays, leadership seems to be a new term, where almost everywhere and in public or private places it is used with the meaning of a way to achieve the objectives and goals of production, desiring the welfare of human beings and the whole world. Leadership is confused with the word leader and according to Robert Dilts (1998), as cited by Purisaca (2011, p. 24) in defining what effective leadership is, he argues that it is important to distinguish between: (a) a leader, (b) leadership and (c) leading. The leader position is a role in a particular system. The person is the formal role of the leader, may or may not possess leadership capabilities and may or may not be able to lead. Leader is the person who has followers and to have followers should use leadership, a fundamental tool in the pillar of a leader.

The consequences derived from the deepening of a leadership crisis rise, for some, to the rank of the threat of total destruction as a result of a nuclear accident, war, a global epidemic or an ecological catastrophe, which shows the importance of leadership in a person, in a leader with impeccable morals, who can assume the role of governing and leading change as a reference for others in the midst of a world in crisis, with an absence of leaders capable of governing wisely and providing unconditional service, unlike traditional politicians who promise things that they will not fulfill and have not fulfilled because of their particular interests and, even more, because of the corruption in which they are immersed.

According to Krames (2014, pp. 32-34), Pope Francis believes that authentic humility confers power to leaders like no other leadership quality and ratifies Francis "that no human being is superior to another... All possess virtues, qualities and greatness of their own". This approach confirms that to govern a people requires that humble condition, that quality of person, which favors governance and the management of development and citizen coexistence, where policies are adopted to generate favorable conditions of governance to initiate actions to strengthen leadership in all the inhabitants, not only in the leader of a population.

According to López Paniagua, Ayala Ortiz and Arellanes Cancino (2017, p. 4) "Governance not only comprises the governmental capacity for consensus building and attention to social demands with effectiveness and efficiency, but also encompasses the capacity to prevent and reverse environmental deterioration".

For Velit Granda (1999, p. 15) "...governance has a neutral dimension and means the exercise of authority, control or, more broadly, government. For its part, the term government is closely associated with governance; it can be defined as political direction and control, exercised over the actions of the members, citizens or inhabitants of communities, societies and states".

According to the National Directory of Populated Centers (INEI, 2018, p. 7), these entities in Peru "...are of great importance for the country, given that it is the minimum unit of disaggregation with respect to the geographic areas into which the national territory is divided." These populated centers are peasant communities that have a legal existence with legal status, where many families live throughout the Peruvian territory such as the highlands, coast and jungle and are led by leaders that they themselves elect annually. These leaders are named Lieutenant Governors and have the responsibility to represent and govern a rural community, as well as the power to administer, plan, organize, manage and make decisions for the benefit of their populated center.

Although the populated centers are places where peasant families live and require the exercise of a local government that leads to the development of a dignified life for each person, these communities are practically unknown by the powers of the State (executive power, legislative power, judicial power and other institutions), which do little or nothing to provide any alternative for the economic and social development of these places. At present, these communities are practically unknown by the powers of the State (executive power, legislative power, judicial power and other institutions) that do little or nothing to bring some alternative solution for the economic and social development of these forgotten places, which should be poles of development that contribute to sustainable growth so that the inhabitants do not migrate to other cities, but develop in their own community.

The authorities of the populated centers know and want the development of their community, but they often feel powerless in their management, since most of the efforts they make before the local, regional and national governments remain only promises. These peasant leaders, who do their best to generate income and manage the economy and social policies in their communities, are not far from knowing and applying leadership in governance or in the management of their community, although many of them exercise it intuitively.

In order to achieve the social development of the rural communities, the immediate participation of highly qualified professionals is required, in order to support the governance efforts and ensure that the laws that exist in favor and for the benefit of these populated centers are complied with and implemented. In addition, to make known their real situation, as well as to generate a new philosophy of leadership and the ability to govern with scientific knowledge, principles and values to give their place and respect to the people and generate an effective change in society, for the benefit of the majority.

There are several questions surrounding the relationship between leadership and governance, in terms of the development of these communities; therefore, this article reveals the influence of leadership on the governance of rural populated centers in the District of Huancané, Puno region, Peru.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Although the study was developed during 2017 in the peasant communities of the Ayllu Jurinsaya, located east of the Arapa lagoon, of the Province of Azángaro and the Ayllu Janansaya, located on the shores of Lake Titicaca in the District of Huancané region Puno, Peru, the causes and conditions that gave rise to the analysis and yielded the results described, remain at present.

The sample covered 100 % of the population that was constituted, previous consent and taking into account the ethical norms by all the authorities of the populated centers (104); 69 Lieutenant Governors of the Ayllu Jurinsaya and 35 Lieutenant Governors of the Ayllu Janansaya.

The research work had a quantitative, non-experimental-transversal approach, with a correlational level or scope.

In order to meet the research objective, theoretical and empirical methods were used. The researcher relied on documentary and bibliographic analysis and used observation, survey and interview as research techniques. The questionnaire and the interview form were used as instruments. The research instrument had 20 questions with Likert scale answers (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) that responded to the two variables of the work (leadership and governance); in addition, the interview form had six questions in correspondence with the dimensions of the variables. The research work considered a theory that argues the variables and dimensions of leadership such as: political leadership, effective leadership and the power of emotional intelligence. For the governance variable, the following theories were considered: economy and human development, local governance, human rights and democratic governance.

In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was used as a statistical test to validate the instrument, where a result or Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.816 was achieved, which demonstrated its high reliability.

To validate the research instrument, a pilot test was also carried out, with the judgment of three experts, who reviewed the reliability of the instrument and the construct of the research work, applying the expert judgment form.

The hypothesis was verified with Pearson's chi-square statistical test, where the alternative hypothesis was accepted because the significance level was less than 0.05; therefore, it was concluded that leadership influences the governance of populated centers (Luque Mendoza, 2018, p. 150).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to the data obtained in the study that covered 100 percent of the total political authorities of the populated centers of the District of Huancané-Puno (104), the Lieutenant Governors of the Ayllus Jurinsaya, who resided in the lower part of the shore of Lake Titicaca, represented 66.35% and were distinguished by wearing a red poncho

(huayruru). Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governors of the Ayllus Janansaya, who constituted 33.65% of the subjects studied, lived in the upper part of Lake Titicaca and wore a walnut-colored poncho. This demonstrated the existence of almost twice as many populated centers in the Jurinsaya area as in the Ayllus Janansaya.

Only 7.7% of the authorities of the populated centers belonged to the female gender, which demonstrates the prevalence of the male gender in these functions and the little consideration given to the potential of women to govern and lead a population.

Regarding the composition of the sample of Lieutenant Governors surveyed by age, the most representative group was concentrated in the 51 to 60 age group (44.2 %), followed by the 41 to 50 age group (34.5 %), data that corroborate the weight that experience had in the election of these authorities.

Of the lieutenant governors in these towns, 58.7% had secondary education, while 26.9% had primary education and 14.4% had higher education, so that the majority had secondary education, given the existence of primary and secondary schools in almost all of the towns and the limited access to higher education.

### **Importance of leadership in the governance of the populated centers**

The study of the leadership variable showed that the majority of the authorities of populated centers in the District of Huancané, Puno region, agreed that interpersonal communication influenced political leadership (56.7% agreed and 27.9% totally agreed), while 15.4% of the authorities of populated centers were neutral (neither agreed nor disagreed), based on the level of knowledge that the leader had about the influence of interpersonal communication, an area where authorities share thoughts, ideas and emotions to do something in common, for the benefit of the community, with the service experience they have gained in their relationship with the community.

This showed that in a high percentage of local authorities (46.2 % agree and 42.3 % totally agreed) prevailed the criterion that the leader is the one who is able to harmoniously impose his will on others, in such a way that he deserves their respect, trust and sincere cooperation, a person whose characteristics allow him to exert an influence in accordance with the achievement of group goals and, consequently, to be a



referent of his population since they put into practice their innate social skills, such as: respect, consideration for others and for themselves, as well as their willingness to be at the service of their community.

These skills are framed within communication, since it is not only a matter of speaking well, but the facts or the practice of skills speak louder than words and leave traces over time.

The 88% of the authorities of the populated centers of the District of Huancané agreed that leadership was the quality and capacity to influence the community, considering that a leader must possess many qualities to lead a human group, such as communication, self-knowledge and leadership itself. The leader must have self-confidence, since self-esteem, when one wants to do something with confidence and thinking of others, helps to achieve results.

A 60.6 % of the Lieutenant Governors in this area agreed with the phrase "To be a good leader, first you have to be a good subordinate, a good servant", which showed that, once upon a time, they were followers and/or subordinates and gained experience in the service to their community. According to Luque (2018, p. 157), the formation of a leader is not precisely in the classrooms of a higher education center but, as demonstrated in the research, it is in the experience gained from acting as a subordinate, a good servant, fulfilling tasks entrusted to him/her, with much efficiency and effectiveness and thinking of others.

Another aspect that achieved the approval of a high number of the authorities under research (61.65 % in agreement and 27.9 % totally in agreement), referred to the fact that the leader must openly express his ideas and feelings with the community to achieve the credibility of the population, which requires him to be prepared, expose his points of view and enable dialogue, in terms of teamwork.

Similarly, (42.2% agreed and 39.4% strongly agreed) agreed that the leader must develop his leadership and communication skills, expressed in skills associated with knowing how to speak and listen, since these are fundamental and important tools for interaction and relations with the community's inhabitants, as well as the need to foster solidarity and mutual support among his collaborators and the community, all actions

that require the development of the ability to listen, observe and then act, always for the benefit of others.

The 81% of authorities of populated centers agreed that emotional control is a basic and indispensable condition to exercise leadership, being able to recognize in others those feelings that can be violated or caressed by leaders, thus ratifying what Goleman (2013, p. 44) stated: "Recognition of others' emotions (or empathy): Social relationships are often based on knowing how to interpret signals that others emit unconsciously and that are often nonverbal.... 44) "Recognition of others' emotions (or empathy): Social relationships are often based on knowing how to interpret the signals that others emit unconsciously and that are often nonverbal... Not surprisingly, recognizing the emotions of others is the first step to understand them and identify with them".

Finally, two assertions received high levels of approval by the community leaders of this region: 80% stated that the leader must ensure that the goals and objectives set by the authority are accepted by the community, which revealed the value of emotional intelligence, and 96% recognized that the leader must be a person of solid principles and values to deal well with his collaborators and with the same population where he exercises leadership. The results obtained clearly reveal that almost all of the authorities stated that the essential leadership is in those people with solid principles and values to achieve human development, a dignified life or the well-being of a whole community that wishes to live in peace.

The previous results show that the authorities of the populated centers perceive that effective leadership influences governance, since they constantly share tasks and agreements with this interpersonal relationship among themselves, they make use of their capacity for frank and honest communication by knowing how to talk and listen, while practicing solidarity and mutual support, which is almost normal or natural among the natives of the populated centers. This information denotes a development of this leadership capacity.

It is considered that today's leaders must be able to maintain and improve the fundamental pillars of their management, such as: leadership, communication, self-knowledge and knowing how to govern. In addition, they must possess personal qualities

among which stand out: values, education, intellectual and emotional qualities; which together with the knowledge about the governance of a people that involves skills associated with how to lead, how to manage, how to deal with all the problems that society has, how to propose alternative solutions, how to coordinate and how to articulate the economy in the different contexts and governments (local, regional and national) will be the key to success.

The results obtained, regarding the general hypothesis of the study that proves the influence that leadership has on the governance of populated centers in the District of Huancané and the role of interpersonal communication in these results, have some points in agreement with what Mosqueira (2017, p. 170) found in his study, with workers of the MACSALUD clinic on the type of leadership developed by the clinic's management. In addition, he states that the managers, together with the workers, seek to strengthen teamwork, establishing common goals, which allows these goals to be achieved with the contribution of all their knowledge, capacities, skills and information.

The study conducted by Calvo (2017, p. 79) on leadership of the public policy of citizen security reveals a different edge of this problem, by noting the difference in the exercise of leadership in rural communities or rural populated centers and the leadership of an urban community, where political leaders, mayors supposedly with a lot of experience in leadership, are in charge. This study revealed that there is little or no leadership by the mayor, because he has not had a shared vision, has not promoted active participation, has not generated trust or achieved commitment from the members, and has not coordinated the teamwork of the District Committee for Citizen Security (CODISEC) to develop joint strategies and comprehensive plans for a citizen security policy.

It is agreed with Aníbal Coronel (2015, p. 210) in his thesis "Styles of democratic political leadership..." when he refers that although the phenomenon of political leadership is something that has manifested itself in all stages of humanity, today it has become a fundamental element in the legitimization of authority structures and also a huge source for the creative process as a whole.

In addition, it was possible to identify some points concordant with the results obtained by Atauje (2019, p. 77) in his research work, where he demonstrates that transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership styles have a determining influence on governance and the existence of deficiencies in the mastery of leadership styles and governance; findings that ratify the demonstrated hypothesis that leadership is present in governance because it is and should be a fundamental tool of a leader of any institution and organization, as an innate domain of the human being.

### **Perception of the governance context of the populated centers**

The analysis of the second variable, called governance of populated centers, revealed in its first indicator "Economy and human development" a high percentage of authorities of populated centers in the District of Huancané, Puno region (54.8% totally agree and 29.8% agree) were aware that in the country there was a bad distribution of wealth, which caused the abandonment by the governments in power of areas such as populated centers. Thus, they stated that in these areas there was a lot of poverty as a result of the economic inequality that reigned in the country and, even more so, in almost all of the populated centers of Huancané, where it seems that the governments in power did not attend to the needs of the people, because they dedicated themselves to more trivial matters.

They stated that this situation also manifested itself in the poor access to basic services or the total lack of them in some populated centers, as was the low quality of the educational system due to the fact that the Ministry of Education produces variations in the educational model, practically with each change of government, without considering that education is a fundamental and important tool to strengthen the capacities of an individual and the community in general and thus eradicate illiteracy.

Regarding the second indicator "Local governance", more than 62% of the populated center authorities of the District of Huancané affirmed that in their community, life and human dignity are respected because values are still cultivated in people. However, they identified that urban violence was manifested, essentially among the youth of their community, since they are becoming more and more dependent on material things and are not developing spiritually. They acknowledged that political mismanagement was

revealed in aspects of citizen security, which may be due to lack of knowledge of directives and norms on these issues. They also stated that local governments had legal and budgetary instruments that allowed them to act, but bureaucracy made procedures take longer and community problems could not be solved in the estimated time.

In the third and last indicator "Human rights and democratic local governance", most of the authorities (47.1 % agreed and 19.2 % totally agreed), stated that all economic benefits generated by the community should be distributed equitably among all; which indicates that they practiced the value of equity and justice. Likewise, they affirmed that human rights responded to the needs that people have in order to live with dignity, thus demonstrating their knowledge about this problem and the dignified life that human beings deserve to have, especially the population of their community.

Finally, in correspondence with López Paniagua, Ayala Ortiz and Arellanes Cancino (2017) in their studies on democratic governance and local development, stated that the Huancané District Mayor's Office was and should be responsible for formulating and executing the corresponding plans with the participation of the population, which evidenced the need to achieve greater coordination and articulation with the other authorities in the community.

### **The Communications Development Plan: a new commitment to leadership**

The results obtained with this study and the demonstration of the hypothesis that posed the influence of leadership in the governance of the rural populated centers (Ayllus Jurinsaya and Janansaya) of the District of Huancané, Puno region, pointed to the need to work towards its continuous improvement and favor the implementation of the Communications Development Plan, aimed at managing communication and information in all areas of the institution and creating the conditions for the effective integration and interactivity of each and every one of the members of the community.

The Communications Development Plan for these populated centers was conceived to be made feasible by the Board of Lieutenant Governors, social communicators, specialists and support staff.

It adopted the structure of a comprehensive work plan that involved communication activities of the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers, its Board of Directors, the Head of Communications and the members of the Board of Lieutenant Governors, together with the administrative staff, in interaction with external authorities and institutions.

The plan anticipated the use of immediate means, such as press releases, pamphlets and murals, as well as media, including newspapers, radio stations, television channels, the institutional magazine and video, and other collective publications.

It was determined that the communication management of the Board of Directors of the Lieutenant Governors would be responsible for promoting the conditions for the integration and effective interactivity of each and every one of the members of the institution that make up the social group, meeting the fair expectations and satisfaction of institutional interests, respecting the pluralism of their cultures, customs and ideology as long as these are compatible with the common good.

Its general objective was to strengthen the internal communication of the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the rural populated centers under study, starting with:

- Create, within one year, new internal communication channels that promote the exchange and knowledge among the members of the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers (Ayllus Jurinsaya and Janansaya) of the District of Huancané, Puno region
- Identify the causes for which the information does not circulate in time and form among the members of the Institution

The strategy proposed to work on the development of new internal communication tools to improve the relationship between the members of the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers and their level of information on the activities carried out with the use of different communication tools and activities with the aim of:

- Generate a biweekly meeting space for all the members of the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers (Ayllus Jurinsaya and Janansaya) of the District of Huancané, Puno region

- Design a virtual exchange space within the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers (Ayllus Jurinsaya and Janansaya) of the District of Huancané, Puno region
- Elaborate a newsletter to keep all members informed about changes and decisions taken

The plan identified the tools to be used for communication with stakeholders: bulletins or newsletter, magazines, letters, e-mail, intranet, bulletin board, induction manual, meetings, events, suggestion box, radio or television spots, press release, institutional brochure, website and blogs and other communication channels (text messages, phone calls, Facebook and Twitter).

The essence of its purpose is summarized in the key messages constructed "We all are and constitute the Board of Lieutenant Governors of the populated centers (Ayllus Jurinsaya and Janansaya) of the District of Huancané, Puno region" and, therefore, "it is important that we are informed and communicated".

The Communications Development Plan as a new commitment to leadership for the governance of rural populated centers, the object of study, constituted a valid and necessary experience and revealed the potential of the community itself to promote its development and reach higher stages.

The research carried out revealed the influence of leadership in the governance of rural populated centers in the District of Huancané, Puno region, Peru, by demonstrating its role in the legitimization of power and its potential for the development of the political process, while highlighting the influence of interpersonal communication and the need for a fluid dialogue with other community actors under the wise guidance of the leader.

The limitations of the study were marked by the remoteness of these rural communities, the ruggedness of the roads and the limited communications, which made it necessary to make repeated visits, given the interest in considering all the subjects in order to complete the research. Access to certain community activities was equally complex, given the cultural particularities of these communities, which are generally closed to external researchers and intrusions by nature.

Although this is a specific result, focused on these populated centers in the Puno region of Peru, the methodological approach and the instruments applied may serve as a starting point for future studies in this field, which is in urgent need of solutions to meet their urgent needs.

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**Conflict of interest:**

Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

**Authors' contribution:**

*Salvador Antonio Luque Mendoza* designed the study, analyzed the data and prepared the draft, was involved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data, reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approved the version finally submitted.



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