Art and Science in Leadership

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Abstract: *The year 2021 finds us in an area of leadership not only developed, but also extremely promoted at the level of society, public institutions or corporations; the title of leader is easily bestowed within them, and this aspect only cuts them off from the aura of the true leader. This paper presents the main traits a leader may have in order to obtain success, through some expert sources that were consulted, but also through a research study.*

1. Introduction

Leadership is the science that cannot exist without an art component, this is the idea that most people are fascinated and captivated about, because in all groups, whether we are talking about personal or professional organizations – either with the objective of profit or public-service organizations, this concept of leadership is essential to have expected the results.

Starting from this premise, the first question that may arise when you start a research is "why this topic?". In addition to the importance of the presence of a leader in the groups we belong to, as social animals if we think about the philosophy of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, around the leader there are some controversies - can leadership be framed as science? If so, what is the winning formula? What is the theory

that guarantees our success as leaders? Whether we are passionate about this area and study it, or we have only heard of this concept, there is no doubt that we cannot point out that generally valid theory, we cannot even say in unison what is the most important element in obtaining success as a leader. For this reason, the presence of "art" in addition to science is obvious. However, when does this art intervene? Is it an integral part of the leader's personality, can s/he be called that only if s/he has innate traits, or can the art of leadership be learnt and practiced over time?

These fascinating questions, which can lead in so many directions, are the topic of this paper, where the main answers or directions in finding success as a leader can be given. Going into the depths of the subject and looking at the socio-economic context of our country today, we can certainly place the two areas - the public and the private - in two completely different worlds. There is no need for elaborate sociological research to put next to the two environments some concepts that define them. When we think of the private sector, the world automatically goes with the thought of the area of meritocracy, of performance, of a clear and efficient way of working, of a transparent communication that supports the "light" of all processes and procedures. On the other hand, the public / administrative sector in Romania is linked in the minds of many of us to the stain of nepotism, a total lack of transparency, excessive bureaucracy that falls like a heavy cross on the shoulders of citizens, whose relationship with it is deficient, cumbersome, far behind current technological trends of time, energy and good efficiency. For this reason, due to this much too large gap between the two sectors of Romania in 2020-2021, the orientation of research towards the public environment seemed even more interesting and challenging.

Of course, a true leader to propose as an empirical study is hard to find, the true leader being in himself a special, particular character, singular in large groups of people.

Because in the last year we had local elections in Timisoara, a new figure, a new energy, a new name began to appear in the public space: Dominic Fritz. He will be the analyzed leader in this study in order to find out what elements he promoted in order to gain the sympathy and trust of the people of Timisoara.

2. Expert sources consulted

Having a view over more resources, it can be said that leadership can be analysed mainly from 3 points of view:

- **Successful communication as a leader**

Communication plays an essential role in acquiring the attribute of a leader, being indispensable in any area or professional or personal activity. We encounter it every day, we use it at every step, and precisely because of this, we tend to underestimate it and take it as a natural skill. In fact, communication is much more than the ability to create sounds, which we can turn into words and then into sentences. Scientific definitions, more precisely in Osgood's book (1957), quoted by Denis McQuail / Sven Windahl (1982), explain that ,, communication takes place whenever a system - source - influences another system - the recipient - by using the various symbols transmitted through the channel linking the two systems " (Bârgăoanu and Dobrescu, 2001, p. 12).

According to Gerbner, another simple definition of communication can be "social interaction through messages" (Bârgăoanu & Dobrescu, 2001, p. 12).

What is remarkable in both theories is that this process of communication is not only defined by the messages and the participants, but that through communication an influence takes place. With this element the art of leadership can be reached, an art which cannot exist without the part of social influence. However, one important area of communication in which a leader should excel is public speaking.

- **The leader as a motivational factor**

Motivation of employees or staff that the leader is surrounded by is an important element, it is part of his/her activity, regardless of the type of organization in which s/he operates, and if these elements do not naturally behave, s/he can use various motivational theories. developed over time. However, before moving on to explain some of them, some psychological elements that appear between the individual and the organization, or between the individual and the leader, a science that has been developed under the concept of organizational-managerial psychology will be presented. Starting from short definitions, organizational psychology is "the science that studies the relations between man and organization" (Mielu, 2008, p. 33). In the literature, more complex definitions can be found out, e.g. "the organization and the individual are linked in a complex set of interactions. The untying of threads in the case of these intertwined relationships is the object of organizational psychology" (Dunette & Kirchner, 1965, p. 182). Going into more detail, Mielu explains in his paper that "organizational-managerial psychology deals with the study of individual recruitment, selection and socialization in organizations, with the study of how people are rewarded and motivated, ways of structuring of the organization in groups, sections or teams, of the way in which leaders appear and manifest. It also examines how organizations influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of all people through the actual or imagined behavior of other members of the organization" (2008, p. 34).

In conclusion, the importance of motivation at work and the role that the leader has in this process, which is psychologically explained and intervenes at the level of each individual, need to be emphasised. A true leader must have as his/her main goal the human being, to care about the condition of his/her employees and to use all the methods at his/her disposal to improve it on every level of needs and desires.

- **The art in the leadership – psychological facts**

When we make decisions, the rational part and the emotional part intertwine, and what prevails in the end is given by the context - this is

where the true leader intervenes in my opinion; intervenes when it manages to persuade people to listen to it, to follow it, to support it, to vote for it (if we think of political leaders); when it actually manages to overcome the rational barriers of people and society and reaches the emotional side of people and thus manages to become, unconscious for those around them, their "intuition".

There are two main perspectives here. The first one is the perspective of self-image/ self-esteem. The importance of the image, in detail, is explained to us by Nicolae Valentin Vartan in his work Self-image: "[…] A good self-image cannot replace a professional qualification, but you have certainly noticed that sometimes there are unfulfilled careers, poor services, invisible performance, misunderstood speeches and all this because of personal image. The quality of an individual or a product is denied by the devaluing contradiction of appearances" (1999, p. 11). Therefore, the leader must pay attention to his/her general image, which includes behavior, non-verbal communication, manners and dress.

The second perspective is the perspective of intuition and unconsciousness that occurs whenever we choose to follow or not a certain leader. According to the most accessed and common site of definitions, www.dexonline.ro, intuition is an "ability of consciousness to perceive the essence of a phenomenon or an object spontaneously, without using reasoning" (accessed on 23.05.2021). What it can be noticed here is the mention of the recognition of a "phenomenon", not only the recognition of something real or palpable and also the lack of the service of previous objective reasoning or analysis. However, what should be mentioned here is that human intuition actually springs from our human desire or need to resemble or approach individuals who we think resemble us - we look for them in crowds, and to relate to the experiences of others based on their own experiences: "When we talk about man, everyone understands his ego - that is, his personal disposition, insofar as he is aware of it - and when we talk about others,

we assume that they have a fairly similar constitution with ours " (Jung, 1997, p. 85).

More information about this phenomenon can be found in the psychological field, but the focus of this paper is not on those elements. It is important to emphasise, as a conclusion, that leadership is a complex field and, based on the bibliography studied for this paper, it cannot be learned as an exact science, but also requires the integration of an "artistic" area in order to have applicability and success.

3. Research methods

The research has been conducted in two main directions – both of them focusing on the applicability of the theory in real life; for the first part, an analysis of the main actions of the chosen leader-model, in a specific period of time was made, while the second one tried to find out the way the public perceived all his actions in order to validate the leader's success.

The types of methods used for this research are content analysis and statistical analysis. They were combined in order to make a parallel analysis between the actual actions and the perception of the public about them.

4. Results

4.1. Content analysis

For a better understanding of why Dominic Fritz was validated by the public as being a leader (once he won the election for the role of mayor of Timisoara), the research was started by analyzing the main activities he did during his campaign, while finding some main components that defined his campaign such as:

• **Transparency**

The first element identified in the mode of communication and leadership style adopted by Dominic Fritz is transparency. Some actions that sustain this element are the ones described below.

As in any other political election, you may or may not agree with a particular candidate; you may or may not agree with a certain political plan; you may or may not support a certain ideology; all these decisions are subjective and are made based on several factors that are, to a larger extent, independent of external factors and, rather, dependent on us as individuals. However, regardless of where we are, we cannot say that any information about Dominic Fritz and the proposed projects could not have been found. The answers were collected from the website that was mentioned above to the direct discussions with the citizens, being accessible on all channels.

Of course, these things should be in the realm of normalcy, but back to our basic needs, our political shortcomings - throughout recent history, we have heard only demagogic plans, only goals that were outlined in the light years by the theory of SMART objectives, which at a simple reading could easily be identified as only electoral promises. Dominic Fritz came not only with a new approach, but with a professional and, ultimately, normal approach.

The website www.dominicprimar.ro (accessed on 06.03.2021 was accessed in order to exemplify all these arguments. No. 5 of the government plan, "Building a city for all generations", was taken as an example.

Fig. 1 – www.dominicprimar.ro

At the bottom of the page, there are smaller objectives behind it, i.e. the transparency of how this objective will be implemented.

• **<u>Authenticity</u>**

This element was the most visible in the way he managed the relations with the different stakeholders involved in the election process, e.g. volunteers, mass-media, citizens of Timisoara.

As an example, the main element, the most fertile ground in this campaign, which was managed in the same authentic way - Facebook. Impeccably adapted communication to the target audience, on a channel that came to support all his actions during the campaign, Facebook became the lait-reason for the candidate's communication, although, as presented above, it was certainly not the only channel that was used. Authentic here too, are answering to comments, interacting with people here, answering questions.

Fig. 2 www.facebook.com/dominic.fritz

• **<u>Social intelligence</u>**

Social intelligence is defined in the literature as the ability of a person not only to interact with others, but rather to become aware and adapt

to the conversational level and to the present context. Shortly, social intelligence is reflected when the person is able to fully understand social dynamics and act in such a way that interactions with others are positive (Kihlstrom et al., 2000, pp. 359–379).

Starting from this premise, two main points in the social relations that Dominic Fritz built in a way that reminds us of the social intelligence that was presented above came, of course, from his center of interest in the position of candidate for Timisoara City Hall, i.e. Timisoara's electorate. He successfully reached it and created with them social relations in two ways:

- o Directly - by interacting with them
- ♣ This part was achieved through his promoted visits to neighborhoods
- o Indirectly - through the media
- ♣ Needing the support of this essential part of the society, he created a very good relationship, through various actions

4.2. Statistical analysis

For this analysis, an online survey, on a public of 97 participants between 19 and 79 years old was used, the diversity being visible also as far as the jobs were concerned. Thus, it can be said that this occupational and age diversity covers the characteristics of the citizens of Timisoara, and the results of the questionnaire can be extrapolated to the level of local elections in September 2020.

The questionnaire was structured according to the model of the normal pyramid, starting from questions of general interest, going to the particular. The first questions were intended to help us outline the general profile of the respondent, to see if the answers can be considered as revealed in this analysis. During this analysis, the questions were created to find out if the elements identified during the content analysis were also perceived in the same way by the public.

In the content analysis not only the social media part, which was the core of the candidate's campaign, was discussed, but also the fact

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that the impeccable communication was the source from which all the other characteristics attributed to him emerged. This idea is confirmed, once again, by the question number 12 - If we were to refer to the electoral campaign led by the candidate Dominic Fritz, which were the elements that you liked / attracted your attention in his personal approach?

His way of communicating was among the most appreciated elements, a respondent considering that through his "different" way of communicating, he manages to give the feeling that he is close to the citizens. On the other hand, these elements also aroused negative reactions among the respondents ("the way he manipulated the young electorate").
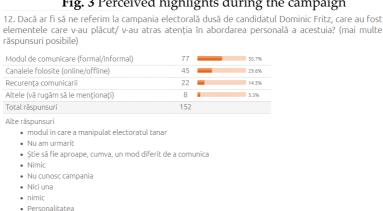
Fig. 3 Perceived highlights during the campaign

12. Dacă ar fi să ne referim la campania electorală dusă de candidatul Dominic Fritz, care au fost elementele care v-au plăcut/ v-au atras atenția în abordarea personală a acestuia? (mai multe răspunsuri posibile)

Modul de comunicare (formal/informal)	77	50.7%
Canalele folosite (online/offline)	45	29.6%
Recurența comunicarii	22	14.5%
Altele (vă rugăm să le menționați)	8	5.3%
Total răspunsuri	152	

Alte răspunsuri
- modul in care a manipulat electoratul tanar
- Nu am urmarit
- Ştie să fie aproape, cumva, un mod diferit de a comunica
- Nimic
- Nu cunosc campania
- Nici una
- nimic
- Personalitatea

Openness and transparency are two elements that not only Dominic promoted, but were also the elements that formed the basis of the party he belongs to; more than elements of communication, they come as a promise made to the electorate – in the same way the campaign was approached, the party promised to carry out the activity in the same open and transparent way, a way that was also observed by voters in its way of communication. Almost 64% of the responses consider openness as a feature of communication to a large and very large extent, and as regards transparency, the percentage towards these responses is about 54%.
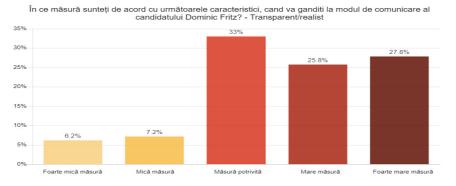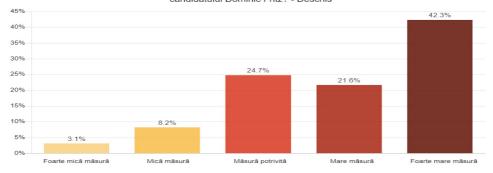
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Fig. 4 Communication type – Transparency

În ce măsură sunteţi de acord cu următoarele caracteristici, cand va ganditi la modul de comunicare al candidatului Dominic Fritz? - Transparent/realist

Fig. 5 Communication type – Openness

În ce măsură sunteţi de acord cu următoarele caracteristici, cand va ganditi la modul de comunicare al candidatului Dominic Fritz? - Deschis

From the voters' perspective, collected through the above questionnaire, the portrait of candidate and leader Dominic Fritz is built around the notions of authenticity, sincerity, professionalism, originality, transparency, elements that were also mentioned in the content analysis.

Conclusion

The year 2021 finds us in an area of leadership not only developed, but also extremely promoted at the level of society, public institutions or corporations; the title of leader is easily bestowed within them, and this aspect only cuts them off from the aura of the true leader. We end up with false leaders, false values, false examples that we take as landmarks; we come to consider that being a leader is something we can all do, something we can easily replace without too much effort. Without

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having a negative tone, even the well-known theory, in all its complexity, is just a starting point in this journey of a leader. The biggest challenges for him/her appear when s/he not only has to implement them, systematically or mathematically, but s/he must be able to rally the theory to the context in which it is, to the needs of the people around him/her, to the specifics of the society and of the community.

Of course, the first step in standing out as a leader is his/her ability to gather people around him/her, people who support his/her values and ideas, who trust him/her and who follow him/her. Regarding the case study, which analyses a current leader, through his experience, the qualities, the components that a leader must have to receive, in the first phase, this title - authenticity, sincerity, originality, professionalism - can be observed.

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