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Features of Leadership in Cultural Institutions. Case Study: Arges County Museums

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Abstract

The leadership has become, increasingly, a concept that combines all the tools, necessary to succeed, for an organization members. Studies have shown a direct relationship between leadership and performance of an organization and demonstrated that the efficacious leaders are those who lead people to a better job building a consensus around a common goal.
The purpose of this article is to identify the leadership styles from cultural institutions and highlighting how these influence the organizational performance. The research method used consists of content analysis of literature and quantitative research based on questionnaires, applied among the employees of Arges county's museums.

Keywords: *styles of leadership, vision, efficient leader, cultural institutions.*

1. Introduction

In the last decade, leadership has emerged as a major component of leadership efficiency, showing a particular specificity and showing a major, often decisive, influence on organizations' performance.

Leadership is presented by specialists as the ability of a manager to get the actual involvement of some people in implementing a particular course of action. [7]

Another specialist, John Kotter, stated that leadership is a process of guiding a group or groups of people through mainly non-coercive means. [1]

Of course, in literature, we also encounter other points of view. For example, Jacques Clement sees leadership as the process by which a person

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sets a goal or direction for one or more people that leads them to act together with competence and discipline to achieve them. Hence an interesting idea, namely that the basis of leadership is the team spirit, which is the result of the integration of four processes: building trust between the persons involved; Setting up a clear mission and goals to which people join; The development of participatory decision-making processes; Strong, individual and group motivation to help achieve common goals. [2]

Leadership has several semantic meanings: taking responsibility, teamwork, transparency, communication, culture of positive error. To achieve effective results, it is recommended to apply the following leadership principles [4]:

• technical and tactical competence;
• self-knowledge and continuous personal improvement;
• employee knowledge and care for their well-being;
• constantly informing employees;
• promoting a behavior that is an example for employees;
• ensuring that tasks are understood, supervised / monitored and executed;
• training of employees as members of the working teams;
• making well-founded decisions at the right time;
• developing a sense of responsibility;
• using the team in accordance with specific capabilities;
• seeking and assuming responsibilities.

Leaders are the ones who have to create, develop and implement a successful vision, which, through the strategies and policies developed, leads to the development of the companies they represent. [5]

A leader is a role model. He or she is measured only by their words and actions. The only tools that a leader has are his or her communication skills.

Leaders play an important role in setting an example for all those values, behaviors and considerations expected from employees. Leaders have to achieve that changes in an organization are accepted and implemented in a way resulting not only in better job performance but also in general understanding and satisfaction of all.

High – quality leadership enables others to flourish, it creates engagement, inspires and stimulates discretionary effort, influences and motivates those within the leader's organization and beyond it and take results to a higher level – sustainably. [9]

2. Problem Statement

Leadership is understood in organizations, influenced by a wide variety of factors, most important being linked to the leader's personality and characteristics of his supporters and the specificity of the context in which he evolves. [5]

Challenges in the cultural field bring a significant increase in the need of leadership performance.

With the premises of a substantial change in culture, new training regulations are not the only standards: leaders need to demonstrate leadership skills, paying particular attention to changes in the work environment and promoting a new culture of training based on innovative concepts. As emerges from the Sectoral Strategy on National Culture and Heritage for the 2014-2020 period, the principles that will necessarily have to underpin a state policy of culture are the following:

1. Superior creative culture cannot be separated from the culture of the people.

2. Culture cannot be imposed from above; being a personal business, she must therefore live in an atmosphere of freedom, spontaneity and national specificity.

3. Culture must be built on the national specificity, which must be researched by the sociological monograph.

4. State institutions that assume responsibility for the organization of national culture will have to have as much autonomy as possible.

5. Such institutions cannot aim to create culture but only to create favorable conditions for its development by discovering, stimulating and organizing the collaboration of all the cultural elements of the country [...] (6)."

According to the Leading the Future of Museum Education Report, issued in 2015, museum specialists feel the need for strong leadership in this sector. [3]

Leading the cultural sector is practiced in two different ways. First, it concerns competently managing the organisations of the cultural sector, ensuring that they are financially viable, legal and with well-organised staff. Second, it means leading culture itself - making work, productions and projects which show different ways of thinking, feeling and experiencing the world - bringing dynamism to the economy and wider society. [8]

Cultural leadership is the act of leading the cultural sector. Like culture itself, it comes from many different people and can be practiced in many different ways. It concerns senior managers and directors in subsidized cultural institutions; public officials developing and implementing policy for the cultural

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sector. In the cultural world, nobody has a monopoly on leadership. We consider that it is necessary a "rethinking leadership development" in the context of today's rapidly changing and uncertain environment.

Leadership skills are the tools, behaviors, and capabilities that a person needs in order to be successful at motivating and directing others. Yet true leadership skills involve something more; the ability to help people grow in their own abilities. It can be said that the most successful leaders are those that drive others to achieve their own success.

3. Research Methods

In order to meet the established objectives, we used as a method of research the quantitative questionnaire analysis, which was applied from April 10th to April 25th 2017 among the employees of the museums in Arges County.

The questionnaire used aims to collect information based on the experience and perception of respondents about the importance of performing leaders in cultural institutions and identifying the qualities of an efficient leader. 68 questionnaires were completed and returned, of which 60 were valid, 70% from museum A and 30% from museum B, the main two museums in Argeş County.

4. Findings

The sample structure is as follows: 67% of respondents are women and 33% are male, 80% have higher education, 13% have high school education and 7% have secondary education. The hierarchical position of the respondents was as follows: 7% occupy a top-management position, 13% are middle managers and 80% do not hold management positions. Thus, we appreciate that the sample is representative for the researched population.

A first aspect of the research was the identification of respondents' opinion on the need for cultural institutions to be run by people with leadership skills. 73% of respondents believe that managers of cultural institutions must have leadership skills and only 7% consider these qualities unnecessary.

Answers to another question (Chart 1) have shown that about 90% of study participants appreciate that there is a leader in the institutions they work in, but, as can be seen from the following graph, fewer than half of respondents believe that the leader is an example for employees.

Chart 1
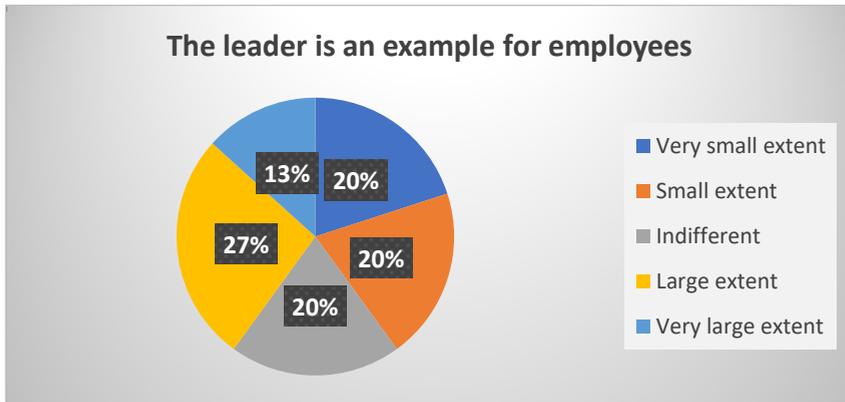
Source: Authors

According to Chart no. 2, the leaders of the two culture institutions analyzed define and follow the organizational vision, aiming at reaching the set objectives and increasing the performance.

Chart 2
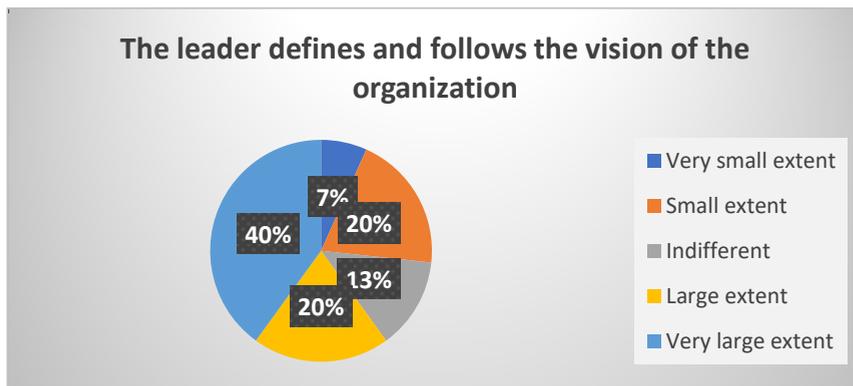
Source: Authors

In order to achieve the objectives we have aimed at identifying the main tools and methods by which leaders can contribute to increasing performance in cultural institutions. In the opinion of 80% of the respondents, the leaders in the analyzed cultural institutions encourage teamwork to achieve the proposed objectives. (Chart 3)

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Chart 3
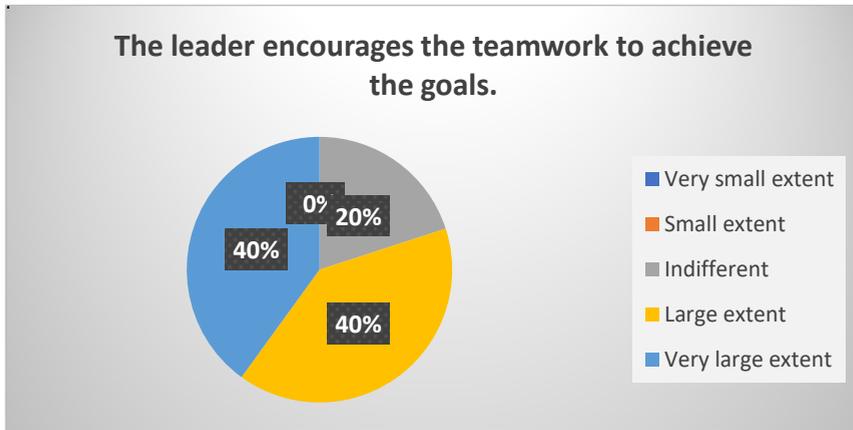
The leader encourages the teamwork to achieve the goals.

- Very small extent
- Small extent
- Indifferent
- Large extent
- Very large extent

0% | 20% | 40% | 40%

Source: Authors

Leaders recognize the role and importance of human resources in enhancing the performance of cultural institutions and, as a result, greatly encourage employee creativity, as stated by 60% of respondents (Chart 4).

It should also be noted that over 85% of study participants said leaders provide support to their employees to further develop their professional skills. (Chart 5)

Chart 4

The leader encourages employees' initiative

- Very small extent
- Small extent
- Indifferent
- Large extent
- Very large extent

0% | 20% | 20% | 40% | 20%

Source: Authors

Chart 5

The leader supports his employees in the continuous development of their professional performances

- Very small extent
- Small extent
- Indifferent
- Large extent
- Very large extent
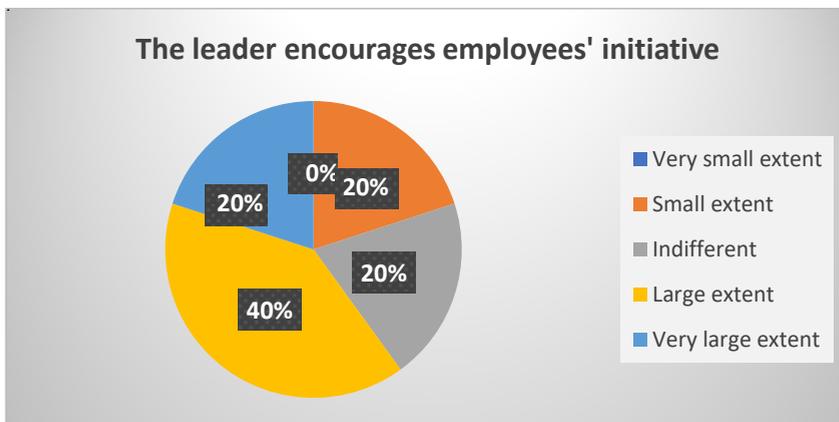
Source: Authors

The role of leaders is also to inspire common values and objectives for the members of the institution and, equally, to keep the team together. As can be seen from Chart no. 6, over 65% of respondents appreciate that leaders manage to effectively manage conflicts through communication and engagement.
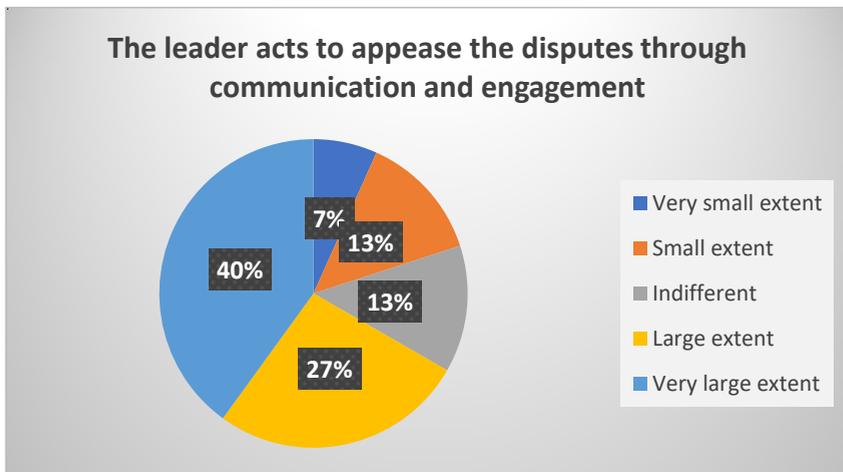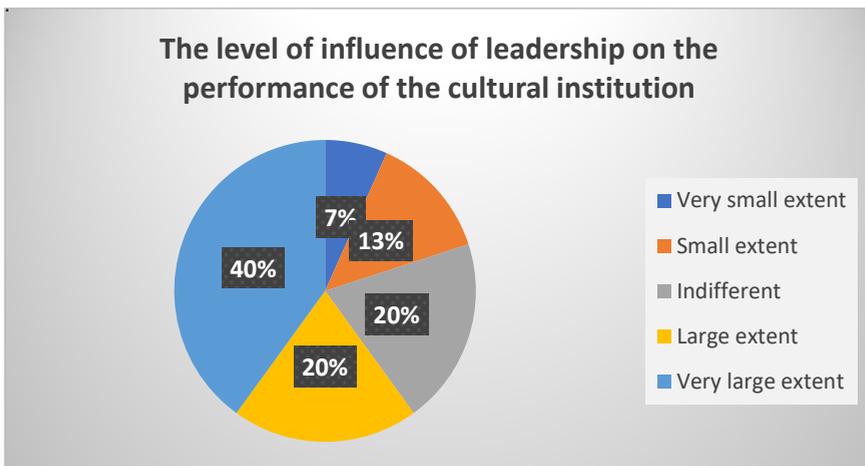
Chart 6

The leader acts to appease the disputes through communication and engagement

- Very small extent
- Small extent
- Indifferent
- Large extent
- Very large extent

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Chart 7

Which of the following statements do you think it suits for the leader of your institution ?

- stimulates the imagination of those he leads — 26%
- guides individual desires to organizational goals — 7%
- creates harmony through the interrelation of people — 33%
- capitalizes people's inputs and creates engagements through participation — 6%
- sets distinct and captivating goals — 1%
- 27%

Source: Authors

We consider a positive fact that 60% of the respondents believe that the leaders influence greatly and greatly the performances of the analyzed cultural institutions, according to Chart no. 8.

Chart 8

The level of influence of leadership on the performance of the cultural institution

- Very small extent — 7%
- Small extent — 13%
- Indifferent — 20%
- Large extent — 20%
- Very large extent — 40%

Source: Authors

Following the interpretations of the respondents' answers, it emerged that the most important features for a high-performance leader are the following:

- Self-aware - 73% of the answers

- Credible, Honest, Informed, Motivator, Intuitive, Participatory, Positive and Concerned about excellence - 67%
- Convincing, Coordinator, Involved, Competent - 60%
- Tolerant, Expeditious, Independent – 27%.

5. Conclusions

Leadership means vision, trust, enthusiasm, charisma, power of persuasion, involvement, and the desire to succeed. Leaders work to support a group to achieve their goals, highlighting the skills and qualities of each member.

Successful museum leaders are not the ones with the greatest longevity or reputation, but those leaders who realize that in order to generate a relevant change in the institution in which they work, they must bring with them a very diverse set of skills, giving birth in this way to a leadership style that works both professionally and personally.

We appreciate that the quality required for an efficient leader is its narrative intelligence, with which the transmitted message is easily understood and assimilated by the members of the organization. Also narrative intelligence makes the leader to be trusted by others, convincing and involved.

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