

Scouting Leadership in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

This case study deals with the head of the scout group leadership. The objectives of this investigation are, first, to understand if the head of the group is a leader and what kind of leadership he practices. Secondly, to know if this leadership is confirmed through elements of the team he leads. Data collection was carried out through a semi-structured interview, which was applied to the leader and the group to obtain information about leadership from the perspective of both. The interviews were carried out online via Zoom due to the pandemic context. As for the results, it was found that the leadership relationship is positive, which shows leadership characteristics that all board members appreciate. Considering the type of organization (scouting), we can conclude that the motivation of the group's members is influenced by values present in the institution, values defended and represented by the leader.

Keywords: Leadership, motivation, pandemic, scouts.

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I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Leadership

First, it is essential to understand that the theme “leadership” is increasingly addressed, which has led to the emergence of more and more definitions. However, according to Reis (2020), there are five aspects that they all identify: the group, the influence, the communication, the situation, and the objectives to be achieved. Reis (2020) identifies leadership as an agent of change, considering that it concerns an influence on an individual or group, provided by specific skills that allow transforming knowledge into behaviors, thus allowing to achieve defined objectives and promoting performance quality. The author states that leadership must be characterized by dynamism and innovation, requiring a permanent analysis and monitoring of the employees' conditions and their personal, group, and organizational experience.

According to Teixeira (2022), leadership can be formal and informal. This depends on the context and the purpose for which it takes place. Formal leadership is exercised by individuals chosen to occupy positions of authority; leadership is formally established in organizations. Informal leadership is characterized by the spontaneity of the abilities present in individuals, which presupposes a greater influence of these people on others and the organization.

In line with what Reis (2020) defines, Chiavenato (2014) identifies three leadership styles: autocratic, liberal, and democratic. According to the author, the leader concentrates all decisions on himself in autocratic leadership. The followers do not have an active voice or the possibility of choice, limiting themselves to obeying orders and the team being affected by a climate of tension. Liberal leadership consists of the freedom given by the leader so that all can make decisions in organizations, which can lead to strong individualism, lack of consistency, and dissatisfaction among all stakeholders. Democratic leadership consists of encouraging the team by the leader, who motivates the team, who communicates in the most appropriate way with those being led, who collaborates in solving problems, who encourages everyone to participate in the execution of tasks, contributing to a satisfactory climate, marked by equality, commitment, and responsibility within the group.

Reis (2020) also identifies other styles of leadership, namely, charismatic, transactional, and transformational leadership. According to Reis (2022), it is understood that both leadership and those who lead have a crucial role in the functioning of a team/organization, assuming its role essentially about the team organization, the analysis and planning of tasks, the employees' motivation as well as the monitoring of them and their performance and rewards for their efficiency. Their role is also essential regarding the ability to be focused on achieving a certain objective, inspire confidence, have the ability to establish and promote good relationships and be creative, innovative, and flexible. On the other hand, it is also important to mention the relevance of emotional skills, namely, the ability to control people's emotions within teams.

Several authors approach characteristics that must be inherent to the leader. According to Teixeira (2022), these characteristics are essential for exercising effective leadership. Allport's Trait Theory is one of the oldest theories that attempts to identify the traits that should characterize a leader's personality.

According to this theory, the leader must present intrinsic characteristics that allow us to deduce that a leader is born as such. These traits were organized into three categories: cardinal traits, central traits, and secondary traits. Cardinal traits can be defined as dominant aspects that allow individuals to be identified immediately, and these traits are rarer and more striking. The central traits refer to general characteristics that form the basis of the personality of individuals, such as “calm” or “nervous.” Finally, secondary traits are the most difficult to perceive, appearing only in specific contexts.

Teixeira (2022) highlights as important skills of a promising leader the interpretation of objectives and missions, the ability to establish priorities, plan and schedule activities, solve problems and conflicts, supervise and guide individuals, and delegate responsibilities. “Leadership as a management process is the manager's ability to influence, motivate, and promote the commitment of others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of organizations” (Carvalho, 2019, p.169). Thus, talking about motivation is talking about what is the essence of leadership; that is, there is no leadership without the motivation of those who are led through the influence of leaders.

For some authors, motivating people involves good communication. For Mações (2017, p. 83), a relationship of trust and collaboration is constructed through dialogue, which is a process of group communication to establish a culture based on collaboration, trust, and involvement of common goals. In the same perspective, Tavares (2019, p.75) understands that communication “is an important influence instrument through which we want to lead our interlocutor to adopt our perspective, opinion or belief, acting in line with them.”

Rego (2017) emphasizes authentic leadership. For the author, the behavior of an authentic leader lies in relational transparency. Authenticity combined with a high ethical level, strong self-knowledge of weaknesses and strengths, and ability to listen to different perspectives generate several positive effects on employees, such as: “identification with the organization and the leader, more positive emotions, greater optimism, greater commitment, and higher levels of creativity and performance” (Rego, 2017, p.39). Carvalho (2019) defines motivation as “a psychological process that, through internal and contextual stimuli, leads to the change of some individuals' behaviors to satisfy needs” (p. 181).

Reis (2020, p.175) defines motivation as “the desire to perform high levels of effort towards certain goals, being related to several factors, such as the goal, which represents the direction of behavior; the effort, which will be the intensity of the behavior; necessity, which establishes the persistence of behavior.”

Thus, leadership will only be effective when the organization's objectives do not collide with the objectives of each group member. In this way, the leader has the responsibility of formally or informally knowing the team you work with; that is, you must understand that individual team members have perspectives, goals, and needs differentiated and that, in turn, the degree of motivation to perform the proposed tasks will be conditioned by these premises. Reis (2020) states that “motivating teams always presupposes leading effectively and efficiently, influencing them and leading them in a certain direction to achieve previously established goals” (p. 200).

The need is one of the aspects that appears in many studies as a fundamental element to drive behaviors; that is, there is a need that promotes an action to achieve the objective to satisfy these needs. Thus, to motivate the team, a leader must possess certain characteristics or qualities and consider aspects related to the characteristics of the followers (and all that this implies), situational factors, and the type of leadership to adopt.

Thus, different leaders adopt different techniques to motivate their subordinates, either using incentives or rewards through the establishment of objectives or by inspiring employees through vision, values, or ideas, valuing and involving employees in a spirit of personal growth. In this way, they reach the need for self-worth (Mações, 2017).

B. Scouting

Scouting worldwide has more than 40 million young people, organized in 164 national organizations, represented in more than 224 countries (CNE, n.d.). The Scout Movement World Organization manages worldwide Scouting. It is a voluntary movement for young people who strive for openness to all origins, races, or creeds without any distinction of gender. Through non-formal education, scouting is committed to the integral development of young people, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, to play an active role in their local, national, and international communities (Secretaria Nacional Pedagógica, 2010).

Its mission is to be able to contribute to an education carried out by a system of values that is based on the promise and the law of the scout. Through this contribution, scouting seeks to build a better world where people feel fulfilled and perform well at a social level. This mission was developed and adopted at the 35th World Scout Conference in South Africa. Scouting promotes peace and solidarity between countries, accepting existing cultural differences (CNE, n.d.).

Scouting in Portugal was founded on May 27, 1923, in Braga. The movement quickly expanded from north to south of Portugal, forming new groups until the present day, always keeping up to date. There are three scout organizations in Portugal: the National Scout Corps (Corpo Nacional de Escutas-CNE), the

Guias de Portugal Association, and the Portuguese Scout Association (Corpo Nacional de Escutas).

The CNE is the largest youth organization in Portugal. It is a movement of the Catholic Church in which the integral formation of young people is carried out through informal education. Using a self-education system based on the methods and principles created by BP, a set of values and principles are incorporated through activities to develop themselves at a physical, affective, character, spiritual, intellectual, and social level. The CNE comprises a national, regional, core, and local structure. The groupings are the local representation of scouting. Its objective is to develop the scouting spirit among young people and to be able to develop an educational project. The grouping consists of the grouping council, direction, and sections. The group's main responsibilities are to guarantee the quality of scouting and the presence and growth of scouting (CNE-Secretaria Nacional Pedagógica, 2010).

The CNE groups are organized into four sections divided by age. Within each section, the scouts are organized into small groups where each member has a specific role. Section I comprises young people from six to ten years old. These elements are called small wolves and are divided into small groups, the bands. The pack is called the pack, with a yellow scarf bordered by white. Section II comprises young people from ten to fourteen years old. These elements are called explorers, and the patrols are divided into small groups. The group of patrols is called Expedition, with a green scarf bordered by white. Section III comprises young people from fourteen to eighteen years old. These elements are called Pioneers, and the teams are divided into small groups. The group of teams is called Comunidade, and it has a blue scarf bordered by white. Section IV consists of young adults from eighteen to twenty-two years old. These elements are called Walkers, and the teams are divided into small groups. The group of teams is called Clã, which has a red scarf bordered by white (CNE-Secretaria Nacional Pedagógica, 2010).

Through the patrol system created by Baden-Powell (2011), small groups are created that have their own identity and leadership and organize themselves among themselves. In patrols, young people, through the leadership of one of them, establish connections to carry out common tasks, thus developing their co-responsibility, solidarity, democracy, and understanding of the importance of the role of leadership, in teamwork, the role of the guide is very important not only in the leadership of the team but also in its articulation with other teams in the section.

Due to the system of learning through the game, young people are free to develop some skills, which would not be possible in formal training. Making mistakes without being promptly criticized leads to developing some natural leadership skills in certain areas, which can only be detected through trying new things without fear of failure (CNE-Secretaria Nacional Pedagógica, 2010).

II. METHODOLOGY

In the present work, a case study was carried out on the leadership of the head of a group. The starting question was whether the head of the group would be a leader. This question was attempted to be answered by outlining two objectives. The first one understood if the head of the group was a leader and what kind of leadership he practiced within scouting. The second one was understanding whether this leadership was confirmed through elements of the team he leads.

A qualitative methodology, a semi-structured interview, was chosen for data collection (Reis, 2022). The interview was first applied to the head of the group to understand his perspective regarding his leadership in the scouting movement. Second, we interviewed the cluster secretary and the head of the clan of the cluster, both led by the leader, to obtain information about the leadership.

The choice of the interview as a data collection instrument, considering that it is an effective way to obtain relevant information and allows understanding of facts related to the particularities of a leader, as characteristics are sought subjective feelings of the leader that only he knows or the people who work with him know. Through the interview, it was possible to obtain much information in a short space of time, as well as the possibility of intervening whenever doubts arose, managing to as soon as they were surpassed. Conducting the interviews online via Zoom was a very important factor in terms of security due to the pandemic and the greater speed and ease of scheduling. It also allowed evaluating the interviewees' oral and physical expressions.

Through the semi-structured interview, it was possible to lower the degree of ambiguity of the answers by preparing a set of questions to which one intends to obtain answers. Whenever an interviewee deviated from the subject, a concrete question was asked, and an attempt was made to guide the interview to answer the previously thought-provoking questions relevant to the investigation.

As for the form of the interview, it was carried out by videoconference through the Zoom platform, as already mentioned, and recorded so that it could be worked on in full. This recording was requested from all interviewees.

A. Sample Characterization

The group, founded in 1935, is one of the oldest groups in Lisbon. During the revolution of April 25,

1974, a clash with the parish members led to the suspension of the group for a certain period. The group only reopened in 1985, and the leader only entered scouting. In the same year, the group reopened with three sections, and it was only five years later, Section IV reopened.

The group has always had many elements, having needed to create a waiting list at some point. This situation no longer exists, given that responding to these expectations has become increasingly difficult.

In terms of personnel, there was a year when there were 170 elements, representing a very high number for a Scout Group. Currently, the first three sections have around 35 elements each. The Clã, Section IV, comprises about 20 elements, and at the level of leaders, there are about 25. On average, there are always about 150 elements, which places the group above most of the city of Lisbon. Another important factor is that the cluster has managed to maintain this number over time, while some clusters occasionally reach a high number of elements. Still, after a short time, they drop again.

One of the functions of the group leader is to ensure the dynamism of the sections and the entry of new elements. At an economic level, the group is in an upper-middle-class area for the most part. However, the group, complying with the principle of inclusion, assumes responsibility for paying the quota and other expenses associated with activities when an element cannot afford these expenses.

According to the leader, in the first period and after 1985, this has always been one of the largest groups in Lisbon, with a wide variety of activities and active participation. According to him, it was always a group that could train leaders who performed functions at the Regional and National levels.

III. RESULTS

A. Leadership from the Leader's Perspective

Through the interview with the Head of the Group, it was possible to verify that the leadership style practiced in scouting is mainly a mixed leadership, although the democratic style was highlighted. The leader naturally leads the group, and the permanence over the years makes him an experienced leader.

From his perspective, he considers that he has the characteristics of an innate leader, but that over time, he has developed and learned other characteristics. So, for him, leadership is getting the team to define tasks, involve everyone in common goals, coordinate the execution of tasks, and put some limits on some situations that are not clear and, in a front, to explain some less understood situations:

“Being a leader is knowing how to manage conflicts, define clear rules, be persuasive without being imposing, be empathetic, be inspiring to other people, know how to communicate and listen, know that people review in her role and in what she wants to convey.” (the Head of the Group)

Thus, for the leader, knowing how to communicate is explaining to others the idea you want to convey, and knowing how to listen is extremely important because listening to the ideas of others and including them at different times is when we prepare an activity. It's not just his idea. It's a set of ideas from the whole team. Having empathy among the team to obtain good results is equally important to have the ability to resolve conflicts. For example, the Grouping Council at the beginning of the year, where all the leaders and walkers meet and decide on the goals for that year, generally comprises a group of 25 adults. And the leader explains that *“Each person is a person; each person thinks differently, reacts differently.”*

The leader considers emotional intelligence important to manage feelings and emotions and maintain balance, knowing what people feel in certain situations and how they react to them. However, there are times when he must be able to say no to certain subjects. As for situations of change, the leader considers that there is always an increased risk, although it is often necessary to make decisions with which they disagree but are in the group's interest. For him, involving the whole group in this decision is important.

When we ask, *“Faced with change if the result obtained is not what was expected or is negative, how would you react?”* the answer is that such a situation has never occurred. For the leader, being able to adapt and having a certain ease helps in this aspect, as being conciliatory and being able to aggregate is a great help. According to him, when the result is not what we expect, we must be mentally available to adapt to the new situation. In that case, we must adjust and sometimes even compromise.

The leader says that the division of tasks is natural in the Scout movement; each has a task. From an early age, the importance of the part to the whole is instilled in the elements. Even within the sections, the Band, the patrols, and the teams have their roles. When there is an activity, each one knows what the task to perform is. In the management meetings, which comprise the group leader, treasurer, secretary, and head of each section and which are held every 15 days, the various scheduled activities are discussed and worked on.

Scouting, as a movement linked to religion, is regulated by Christian values of tolerance, responsibility, freedom, autonomy, humility, and values of truth. The connection to nature makes its members aware of environmental education. And finally, the values of education for citizenship so that the members are good

citizens. Thus, the group leader passes these values on to the section heads, who, in turn, pass them on to the members of their teams.

B. Leadership from the Group's Perspective

In the second part of the interview, we spoke with the group secretary and the head of the IV Section. Both belong to the group's management and work directly with the leader. The interview aims to confirm the characteristics that define him as a leader as head of the group.

When you ask yourself, "*How important is the leader in the group?*" our interviewees start by confirming that the leader was head of the group and of them for a few years and that for them, he is a hardworking person who manages to manage a team, instills values, is careful with everything he does, and is concerned with team cohesion for everyone to work together. Our interlocutors mention that the leader is a diplomat at the group level and abroad, thus considering it one of his greatest qualities. He is the one who knows how to reach all the unit heads, as he knows them well and recognizes their potential. Therefore, he knows how they can contribute to these abilities.

The team feels involved in the objectives outlined, and despite some disagreements, there is always an attempt to reach a consensus. Also, they add that the leader takes care to make everyone feel comfortable with the decisions he makes. For example, often, when the leader has an idea, but it can be changed together, he listens to all parties and tries to find a balance so that all accept the idea. In short, it changes itself, seeking unanimity.

Thus, it is confirmed that scouting works in teams, so decisions are made in the directions, always looking for consensus, and the leader as leader assumes a very important role. In cases of need for change, the interviewees state that the leader could plan and define strategies when changes need to be made. When it comes to more practical matters, there are other leaders with more aptitude for more practical matters. Yet, at the management level, the leader has the most capacity to make these changes, as he is extremely organized and manages to prepare things meticulously.

As for the division of tasks, the interviewees confirm that the definition of tasks is fair and readily accepted by everyone, and if someone does not feel very good about finishing the task, an effort is made to fit in and find a task that suits them and makes them feel more comfortable. They also mention a great feeling of motivation, cooperation, and union between all the elements.

As for the leadership style, the interlocutors say he is very pragmatic. He always guides them, and leadership is seen within him. They confirm that he is a leader because he leads by example, which is very important, and because she manages to establish consensus and balance among everyone. In moments of crisis, he manages to overcome difficulties and communicates assertively. For example, he never leaves anything unsaid, even if the person doesn't like it. He says what he feels, always in a constructive way and not destructive, but with frontality and honesty.

The leader's posture has been constant and consistent even in times of crisis. With the COVID-19 situation, there were times when it was necessary to work online, and even having had complicated moments at a professional and personal level, the leader always maintained his leadership style and supported the group, even when suffering. They also mention that this attitude is a bit like a feeling of mission; although everyone has this feeling, in his case, it is different.

One of our interviewees also mentioned that scouting is a kind of world apart, despite not living apart from society. The way to function in scouting involves much teamwork. For them, there are several levels of leadership; although the leader's leadership stands out, the various leaders work through the capabilities of each one, looking for the best they can add. They believe they are not all born leaders but are not set aside, always working as a team, and the leader is the motivator of this work.

IV. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we have seen during the research, leadership is a subject that has been extensively studied by several authors, who have focused on aspects related to the figure of an individual who stands out among others, either through the influence he emits on other people to follow him or through behaviors and procedures that motivate the group or teams to perform a certain function. The case study led us to this figure, which the leader represents. So, the study proved that firm and constant leadership that acts and reacts to situations is more relevant to achieving common goals regardless of the type of organization or institution.

The leader is diplomatic, pragmatic, hardworking, motivating, conciliatory, conflict manager, assertive, empathetic, consistent, a good listener, organized, crisis manager. These are some of the adjectives attributed to the leader by the interviewees. From this perspective, it can be concluded that the objectives of this work were achieved, as the leader is framed in one of the profiles traced by the theories researched from the characteristics presented and the role he plays in the group. The leadership style falls between the Counselor Style, which relates people's desires with the organization's goals, helping your team members to be more efficient, improving their capabilities in the long term; the Relational Style, which creates

harmony, improving the relationship between people, resolving conflicts, motivating in a crisis phase and improving the relationships of team members; and finally, the Democratic Style that values the contribution of each member, respecting the ideas of others, thus contributing to active participation and, in this way, obtaining group adhesion and consensus (Crespo, 2013).

From the semi-structured interview with the collaborators, it is concluded that the relationship of leadership exercised by the head of the group is positive, which shows leadership characteristics that all members appreciate. Considering the type of organization (scouting), we can conclude that the motivation of the group's members is influenced by the values present in the institution. These values are defended and represented by the leader.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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