Leadership and Social Media or About Hubs and Connectors: Useful Information and Meanings in the Selection Process of Potential Leaders

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Abstract. Social media and social network sites (SNSs) in particular are a response to the ever-changing, increasingly connected world – a world that needs more and more learning and collaboration to solve complex problems. In this context, the role played by leaders in organizations also changes. Despite the many studies published about leaderships, too little is known about the way we can use social networks in discovering/identifying potential leaders. So far we have been able to classify networks (Borgatti and Foster 2003; Plastrik and Taylor 2006), to define leadership networks and to see how they work (Hoppe and Reinelt 2010), to discuss about the social influence of leaders on followers, as well as the active way in which the followers, in their turn, influence leaders, particularly their behavior (Burak and Bashshur 2013). Much has been discussed about the skills leaders need to have (Mumford et al. 2007) on various hierarchical levels within the organization, but there is still no study on how we could identify these leadership skills by using social network sites (SNSs).

Our research is qualitative. We aim to analyze the skills leaders need – cognitive, interpersonal, entrepreneurial and strategic skills – and the way these can be identified in social networking, mainly using observation and surveys as methods of research. The paper is organized as follows: in the first part we discuss the basic concepts of the network theory (Barabasi 2002), leadership (Maxwell 1991), skills (Mumford et al. 2007) and influence (Cocheci 2017). In the second part, we present four concrete cases of identifying leadership skills within and with the help of social network sites, namely of the information gathered and interpreted by us, according to the specialized literature. The subjects we chose are leaders of four large companies in Romania who allowed us to access their SNSs and answered our questions during interviews organized on this occasion. The purpose of these interviews was to outline some types of desirable/undesirable behaviors in specific situations (access to and distribution of information; direct or indirect interaction with third parties; attract material and/or financial resources; formulate a vision; identify problems and consequences, objective assessment of situations and people).

The outcome of the whole work could be a model that can form the basis of a useful methodology for human resource departments, as well as for the head-hunting companies interested in finding people with leadership skills and potential.

1   Introduction

Why is the digital world a new context, with implications on leadership?

There is neither a definition of globalization in a universally accepted form, nor a definitive one probably. The reason resides in the fact that globalization sub-includes a multitude of complex processes with variable dynamics, reaching a variety of fields in society. It can be a phenomenon, an ideology, a strategy and all of these at the same time (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalizare).

A key aspect in globalization is the change in technology and innovation. The occurrence of digital technologies is one of the biggest challenges the companies have to fight today. There is no organization that is immune to the assault of the digital. However, the question that is asked is how companies should use digital transformation and how they can make a competitive advantage out of it. If they want to progress, companies must think of strategies that take into consideration the opportunities offered by the new technologies and their applications. Whereas the transformation is not only digital, it cannot take place without the digital (Capgemini Consulting 2011).

On the other hand, the digital world models the battlefields in all sectors. Data show a widening of the gap between innovative companies that quickly learn how to use the tools of digital technology and those that choose not to do so. The more a company bases on the digital, the bigger the gap that separates it from the rest of the competitors. However, the digital phenomenon does not stop at the gates of traditional sectors. The digital technology permits a better targeted approach to business, a process that is more scientifically oriented by taking decisions and a new type of relations with the customers. Therefore, the companies that are part of all sectors of activity have to master the digital tools.

This assault of the digital revolution on companies and people does not diminish the importance of human initiative and responsibility, but on the contrary: it is more important than it has ever been to acquire the necessary abilities and to place them strategically to support transformation programs of the companies.

In this new context (globalization and digitalization), recruitment and the selection of leaders can often become a difficult task. According to May et al. (2003), when economy goes well, almost every type of leader is perceived as being good/efficient. In reality, the truly good/efficient leaders are rare, and the identification of a right leader for a company may be a long and expensive process. In order for the organizations to remain competitive, they need leaders and superior leadership. During hard times, a great leader can make the difference between the significant economic increase and downturn (the loss of a part of the market share). Because of this, identifying potentially talented leaders becomes the equivalent of having a key to success – for the organizations that wish to remain relevant on the market. However, research shows that only 30% of the employees with high performance have increased potential for leadership, and 90% of these people will encounter the problem at the next level once they are promoted (Balan 2017). What is interesting is that specialists involved in the evaluation process of talents (high potentials) perceive the process of their identification as having a

success prediction rate of only 50%. The problem resides in the fact that the personal ability of ascending quickly on the hierarchic scale does not always predict the performance in the new role of leadership. In this case, performance is more about establishing and maintaining motivated and efficient teams, with an optimal/high level of engagement and productivity, rather than about the abilities a leader should possess.

Some of the most advanced techniques of recruitment available for professionals in human resources for identification, recruitment and selection of leaders include the recommendations of candidates (made by colleagues or directors), professional societies in which they operate, but also social networks. The use of social networks for recruitment and the selection of human resources constitute a relatively recent trend. For instance, a study from 2013 showed that 20% of the organizations that were part of the study used SNSs for the screening of candidates, whereas 12% of these planned on using SNSs for screening (Matei 2014). In 2017, 41% of women-leaders and 46% of men-leaders used SNSs for professional purposes (Roseti 2017).

It seems that employers notice quickly enough the SNSs potential as a monitoring tool of less "orthodox" behaviors in potential candidates. As monitoring becomes increasingly common, questions about the type of candidate the employer looks for start to appear when he/she eliminates right from the beginning those candidates that show an undesirable/inacceptable behavior on social networks.

The aim of the present study is that of researching whether critical abilities of leadership (Mumford et al. 2017), the way of thinking, attitudes, behaviors and an individual's actions may be captured on SNSs, and of analyzing to what extent these abilities (older and newer) are a precious indicator in the process of recruitment and selection of people with potential leadership skills. For this, we try to answer the following questions: why should we use social networks to identify potential leaders? What does leadership mean on SNSs? What are the older and the newer abilities of potential leaders, identifiable by using SNS? In the second section of the paper, we present the research methodology we used, the outcomes of our analysis being then discussed into detail. The model we propose at the end of the paper is meant to highlight a new perspective on the new model in which we should look at the potential leaders – as people being in a process of transformation of their cognitive, behavioral and emotional processes – this process being carried out with and through the use of SNSs.

2   Why Should We Use Social Networks to Identify Potential Leaders? A Literature Review

Maxwell (2002): "spread through all sectors of life…there is a handful of people with an extraordinary ability of making new friends and meeting new people. They are the connectors". The connectors are an extremely important part in our social network. They launch trends and fashion, have important business affairs, they create an uproar or help in launching a restaurant. They are the binding agents of society, who with disarming ease manage to bring together various groups, people with different origins and levels of education. The connectors – the nodes/the people – with an abnormal number of connections, from the economy to the cell; they present a fundamental

feature in the majority of networks, a fact that arouses scientists' curiosity in various disciplines: the capacity of creating connections.

Cybernetics permits, among others, the freedom of extreme/total expression. Some like it; some feel threatened, but the content of a web page is difficult to be censured. Once posted, the message becomes accessible for hundreds of million people. This right of expression without precedent, together with the costs of a reduced publication, turns the web network into the supreme forum of democracy: everyone's voices can be heard and everyone's chances are equal. The logical question that may be asked is: if you put information on the network, will someone notice it?

In order to be read, you need visibility. On the network, the measure of visibility is given by the number of connections. The more input connections you have to your page, the more visible it will be. If every document on the network had a connection towards my page, everybody would know what I have to say in a short time. However, in reality, the possibility for a typical document to send to my page is almost non-existent.

Likewise, in society where some connectors know an abnormal number of people, the global architecture of the network is dominated by several nodes with a great number of connections: the so-called hubs. The hubs, like Yahoo or Amazon are extremely visible. No matter where you are navigating on the internet, you will find a connection towards them. In the network behind www, there are a lot of unpopular or rarely noticed nodes, with a small number of connections that are kept together with these pages that are very connected (Barabasi 2002).

On a smaller scale, we may say that hubs like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn are created somehow in a collective way, by all the people who create an account on the mentioned networks. These are special and function like some miniature worlds. The hubs are those that create shortcuts between any two nodes from the system. Therefore, even if the average distance between two randomly chosen people on Earth is of 6 steps, the distance between anybody and a connector is the address of only one or two steps. On the social networks – that we consider real hubs, there are people who play the role of connectors, that is, they have an extremely great number of connections with people from the most various fields, with different levels of education and different origins. Many of these connector-people exercise a particular influence on the social networks, through the messages they post, through the content they publish and through the actions they undertake and in which they manage to involve an impressive number of people, mainly due to the visibility they enjoy. In this paper, we will try to demonstrate that these connector-people are people with leadership features and abilities whom organizations should take into consideration for recruitment and selection for one's employment in a leading position.

2.1   What Does Leadership of Social Networks Mean?

A study carried out in 2016 shows that over half (53%) of the leaders of Romanian companies are present on SNSs. The most popular social network for these people is LinkedIn (67% of the respondents), followed by Facebook (61%) and then, at a considerable distance, Twitter (16%). The respondents give higher credibility to CEO's comments quoted online by the media (38%) and CEO's posts on the company's

website (35%). Among the main audiences for the CEO's posts on networks, the majority are customers (74%), investors (44%), general public (43%) and their own employees (43%). 61% of the respondents have declared that the leaders post on the networks contents related to business issues (sales problems, management, HR, feedback, investment opportunities), 48% say that the leaders post information related to the company, and 33% state that the leaders post leadership content (https://rbd.doingbusiness.ro/).

Therefore, we may say that social networks help leaders in at least 3 ways: to accumulate and filter information; to communicate better/more efficiently; to organize activities faster.

The power and influence in leadership have always been seen as central elements (Maxwell 1991). The power is a fundamental force both in formal and social relations. Nevertheless, the digitizing and social media change the balance between leader-follower from the point of view of leadership development. Thus, an essential question occurs: how does the leader exercise their influence in the digital era?

In 2013, Bennis said that, if leaders at every level do not understand how to use the digital world and …" if they do not understand the power that it has in their relationships with their stakeholders, then they will seriously be left behind" (p. 7).

The (apparent) loss of power and influence can be re-established by using social media where the quality of interactions and the reach of the message transcend time and space. Deiser and Newton (2013) stated this thing in an expressive way in a McKinsey article, showing that: "social media encourages horizontal collaboration and unscripted conversations that travel random paths across management hierarchies. It thereby short-circuits established power dynamics and traditional lines of communication". This thing was fully demonstrated at the presidential elections in the USA, when president Trump favorably avoided social media on the purpose of not delivering his message directly to all the Americans.

Many platforms on social media, especially Twitter, give access for users to actively listen to everything followers, employees, customers, as well as the competitors have to say about products, services and the leadership of their own companies or the leadership within their country/nation. Therefore, leaders need to actively hire these stakeholders and to establish a communication network interwoven with them in order to influence conversations/discussions, to extend their social power and to build/to consolidate trust.

The requests concerning leadership in a digital world bring new challenges whereas actual approaches offer only fragmented explanations. A relatively recent approach of leadership, that has not received sufficient attention yet, is the one based on the L-A-P model (leader-as-practice). In 2016, Hibbert and Cunliffe stated in their paper that practitioners/exercise leaders want to gain an (a more) intimate awareness of their practice/experience on the purpose of browsing better in the future. From this results that the (experience) practice of the individual will dictate the type of leader he will become, and the interactions of the persons with the other people will shape his leadership style. The L-A-P model integrates theory with practice within a holistic framework of leadership and learning. Using social media for its own advantage, the different relationship between power and follower may be established on the basis of

active listening, engagement and reciprocal trust regarding collaborative learning and personal development (Hibbert and Cunliffe 2016).

Leadership in the digital era has acquired dimensions that have not been sufficiently studied or understood yet. In the new context, the well-known leadership models seem to be old-fashioned and/or inappropriate today.

A new species of leaders is necessary in order to deal with a future where digitizing, continuous learning and change, critical and creative thinking, adaptability – will be the key attributes for the management of a diverse and complicated reality.

Actual leadership studies offer various "recipes" and approaches in order to become a successful leader: we talk about transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic and ethical leadership, contingency leadership, etc. – all of these models start from an approach of leadership based on either behaviors or values (Griffith et al. 2015; Keller 2006; Marta et al. 2005).

The notion of power acquires a particular connotation in the digital world, governed by networks in which social platforms (SNSs) get all the attention. Power, in the new context, seems to migrate towards the extremes, i.e. in the direction of the one who knows how to operate with knowledge/information/cognition and towards the consumer. This made the occurrence of a more "agile" and flexible organization possible.

2.2   What Are the Necessary Abilities for Leaders? Older and Newer Abilities

Previous research concerning leadership abilities (Minzberg 1973; Zaccaro 2001); Mumford et al. 2001) classify them in 4 large categories: (1) cognitive abilities; (2) interpersonal abilities; (3) business (entrepreneurial) abilities; (4) strategic abilities. We will present them briefly:

(1) **Cognitive abilities – are considered to be basic leadership abilities.** They refer essentially to: collect, process and disseminate information (Zaccaro 2001) and to the capacity of learning (Mahoney and Barthel 1965).

An important cognitive ability is also the capacity of adaptation. This is favored by the existence of active learning abilities, skills that allow leaders to work with new information and to notice the implications of the newly appeared information. Thus, leaders can adapt their behaviors and strategies in order to deal with dynamic and/or unusual elements that appear within their job (Kanungo and Misra 1992).

Critical thinking is also part of the cognitive abilities category (Gillen and Carroll 1985) – extremely important for leaders that have to use their logic in order to analyze strong and weak points of various variants/scenarios of work.

(2) **Interpersonal abilities.** These refer to interpersonal and social abilities necessary for a leader in order to interact with other people and influence them (Mumford et al. 2000). Part of this category is social receptivity (Yukl 1989) that allows the leader to realize the reactions of the others and to understand the reasons why they react in the way they do.

Also part of the category of interpersonal abilities are the following: abilities of coordinating one's personal actions and the actions of the others (Mumford et al. 2000); negotiation abilities – for the reconciliation of the differences between individuals (Minzberg 1973); and persuasion abilities – to influence the others to achieve their objectives proposed at the level of the organization (Yukl 1989).

(3) **Business (entrepreneurial) abilities.** These refer to the abilities that contribute to the creation of the context in which the leaders work (Connelly et al. 2000). These include: abilities of material resource management – important for the management of the patrimony and technology the organization has at its disposal (Katz 1974); human resource management – for individuals' identification, motivation and promotion at their job (Kristof 1996).

(4) **Strategic abilities.** These are necessary for a leader because they allow him to understand the complexity and the ambiguity of the system/organization and to exercise his influence (Zaccaro 2001). Part of the strategic abilities category are: the abilities of systemic perception and formulation of a vision (Mumford 2000) supposing that the leader knows how to articulate an image of the environment in which the system/organization should advance, to decide if it is necessary (or not) to make changes in the organization and when these should be made.

The systemic perception and the capacity of creating a vision are connected to the ability to identify causes and consequences of an action (Mumford et al. 2000). According to specialized literature (Yukl 1989), the identification of causal connections between events allows the leader to build a sort of mental map of events and relations between them in the interior and exterior of the organization. The identification of the components of the mental map helps the leader recognize the relation between the identified problem and the possible solution/opportunity and to project an appropriate strategy in order to solve the problem.

Hence, strategic abilities also include an important component on solving problems. Therefore, leaders must possess the capacity of identifying and solving problems (Yukl 1989), but also abilities of (objective) evaluation of the variants on how a problem can be solved. (Mumford et al. 2000).

2.3 Specific Abilities for the New Context

A leader in the digital world always has in mind the overview, but at the same time, he can clearly see the steps necessary to be taken so that he carries out the objectives of the organization. The leader knows that the whole activity is not only a final point/an objective that needs to be achieved, but also a journey from which he has to learn continuously (Dicu 2015).

The authentic leader primarily thinks about the people he works with. He has the capacity to channel energy, by using positive emotions like trust and gratitude to his or the team's advantage. He creates an environment of acceptance and listens to the other people's opinion, (almost) all the time and everywhere (face-to-face or online). An authentic leader directs on the wish of serving the others. The authentic leader treats crises that appear as opportunities, learning primarily from mistakes (his personal mistakes or the other people's). In situations of crises, by adopting an open attitude, he

transmits the message that every problem has solutions, and these can be discovered by using a common effort.

On Responsibility. The word "responsibility" is used in various situations with different meanings. We may use the word in order to assign an event to a cause or to assign a task to a certain role (acquired by a person). Responsibility has also been associated with: duty (towards someone), moral obligations, trust and support (Winter 1992). The most common meaning to responsibility, derived from legislation, is based on the model provided by Young (2011) according to which "a person assigns responsibility to individual entities that prove to be causally connected to the circumstances for which they look for responsibility" (p. 97).

The theory of responsibility, like social connection, assumes that the agents can be made responsible for their actions not only in the case when a direct causal connection between an action and a result can be established, but also in the case when connections/liaisons are indirect. As Young shows (2011), those who "contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices" (p. 137). In other words, Young asks the individuals/agents who have the resources and the power to correct social injustices, to assume their responsibility for these. Supporting the same idea, Maak and Pless (2009) showed that leaders from the business world have a higher responsibility (than common people) to involve in solving social and environmental problems because they were privileged: they have the power and the potential to make changes.

Even if Young's perspective, when he defines responsibility – is a global one – we believe that the elements identified by him as being essential for the concept of responsibility – can also be transferred to the microeconomic level of leadership, namely: (1) the leader's responsibility (in the digital world) is not about him acting in an isolated manner (on his own); (2) responsibility means that the leader critically evaluates the norms and the basic regulation and knows the people's opinions that are situated at a distance of one or two clicks; (3) the leader's responsibility marks the fact that he looks ahead (long term) rather than back (short/past term); (4) the leader's responsibility in the digital world is divide (between him and the others) and needs collective actions when it comes to solving problem(s).

The integration of responsibility in the concept of leadership has important implications. Solving problems becomes, hence, a problematic based on the dialogue with the stakeholders. In this sense, assuming responsibility does not become visible until the moment when the leader of the company and the stakeholders do not begin to communicate with one another. Especially when they try to solve some serious social problems (pollution, poverty, health), the stakeholders can also contribute with their knowledge and specific skills, assuming therefore, roles of leadership.

For instance, the NGO representative can operate as expert whereas the leader of the company can be the initiator or moderator of the dialogue with the expert, but with other stakeholders, as well. The leader, thus, goes from the exclusive quality of "leader" to divided leadership, that is, a process of (management) and sharing of meaning between the actors (Tourish 2014).

On Wisdom. Wisdom supposes taking informed decisions, thinking at the consequences on both short and long terms of each follower and stakeholder. Rooney et al. (2010) have

articulated the concept of vision and long term perspective that incorporate objectives of prolonged impact. This type of perspective can be contradicted with the notion of efficient leadership that is based on objective measurements and tangible benefits.

Wisdom entails to get over the level of the proper decisions and to reach higher ideals of improvement and support of the human condition, to protect resources and environment. Wisdom also marks the understanding of how complex systems work, permanently looking for that knowledge that can help you distinguish important problems and act on them. Likewise, wisdom entails the ability to unify various interesting parts (in finding solutions for a problem) – in a winning coalition (Krahnke et al. 2014).

What is to be noticed is that specialized literature does not make any expressive reference to the fact that context changes also impose changes at the level of leader's abilities. Moreover, specialized studies do not mention personal and professional transformations that the leader experiments with the help of social media, and in some cases, even because of it. Hence, I started from the idea that especially SNSs can represent a valuable tool when attempting to highlight these transformations. Briefly, we try to demonstrate that the potential of leadership can be identified and tested by using networks.

3 Methodology

We chose to present four concrete cases of identifying leadership skills within and with the help of social network sites, namely of the information gathered and interpreted by us, according to the specialized literature. Our subjects (**to see Appendix**) are leaders of four large companies in Romania who allowed us to access their SNSs and answered our questions during interviews organized on this occasion. The purpose of these interviews was to outline some types of desirable behaviors in specific situations (access to and distribution of information; direct or indirect interaction with third parties; attract material and/or financial resources; formulate a vision; identify problems and consequences, objective assessment of situations and people).

For this, we used a questionnaire with questions meant to highlight the leaders' activity on social networks. Then, the four leaders granted us an interview based on the observations formulated by us, followed by the analysis of the answers to the questions on the questionnaire. What must be mentioned is that, during this whole process (interview), we had access to the open accounts of these people of SNSs, so we could directly identify the type of interactions these leaders had with the people in their contact list.

Also, we must highlight the fact that the four leaders work in "critical" domains in Romania: health and culture. The reasons we have chosen these two fields are the following:

(1) In Romania, we talk a lot about health, but we do too little. The last Report of the European Commission (Neagu 2017) places Romania on the last place in the EU from the point of view of the "performance" of the system, namely: we have the worst infrastructure in the EU (poor/inappropriate equipment in the medical system), the worst health services in the EU (because of the corruption), as well as a high rate of mortality and morbidity increased by cancers, hurt and lung diseases.

Also, we talk a lot about culture, field in which we do too little, again. Therefore, Romania can be "proud" of: a cultural heritage that is in an advanced degradation state; buildings – historic monuments restoration projects that take a very long time, sometimes even 10 years; high risk of alteration/demolition/destruction of buildings which are part of our cultural heritage because they are situated on attractive terrains from the point of view of real estates. What is to be mentioned is that both activity sectors are underfinanced by the state.

(2) In education and culture, especially, we need leadership because "without a sane and educated person, you cannot build the Romania of tomorrow" (Manoilescu 1933). Both fields contribute to the outline of people's identity – physical and mental. Furthermore, health and culture have been characterized through often changes at the top of the hierarchy, many hospitals and cultural institutions getting no benefits from professionals/skilled people in the field.

Given the transformations through which mankind faces – globalization and digitalization – we believe that this new context needs, more than ever, new people with abilities that permit them to cope with revolutions they confront at both macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. Thus, we tried to identify what are the abilities that had recommended our respondents to occupy their present jobs and to obtain great results.

Studying the way our respondents use social networks to reach other people, we tried to look for the motivation behind the connection/connections (attitudes and thinking), the identified problems and the ways of finding a solution (behavior and actions), as well as the way they react on the emotional plan (expressed feelings, empathy, solidarity, etc.) when it comes to challenges.

We mention that our respondents work both in the public sector (2) and the state sector (2), and they are between 37 and 60 years old. Every person selected has a vast experience in their field activity and has, at least, 10 years of leadership.

4   Results and Discussion

On the question about the networks on which they created accounts, the responses were, in 3 cases, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Only one respondent declared that he created accounts on Google+ and Instagram, as well. Moreover, the companies they direct have accounts on the same SNSs.

We wanted to observe if our respondents make the distinction between the personal and professional networks. All the respondents expressed themselves in the sense that, from their point of view, Facebook and Twitter are both personal and professional networks. This things has two possible meanings: (1) in the digital world, the leaders consider that there is no boundary between public and private; (2) the leaders think that the personal and the professional plans interweave or, as one of them said: "It does not matter what network you use as long as you can achieve your purpose".

To test the respondents' familiarity degree with SNSs, we asked them what methods they used when they applied for the current position. Two of the respondents mentioned the professional sites (LinkedIn) and/or the employer's web page, and the

other two mentioned the predecessor's death, respectively the previous collaborations with the organization.

All the respondents post content on the SNSs, and their reasons for doing so are the following (in the order of importance): they want to express their point of view regarded what is right/wrong in the society; they want to bring into attention a certain problem; they want to mobilize people in a cause in which they believe. One respondent placed on the first place (main reason) the need to generate a current of favorable/unfavorable opinion among consumers.

This hierarchy of responses demonstrates that the leaders are responsible people, involved in problems appeared at the level of organization and/or community (local or national). Given the big number of friends (Facebook), followers (Twitter) or contacts (LinkedIn) that these people have on their SNSs, their opinions, comments, posted and shared articles on the network have a high potential of exercising a meaningful influence on perception, attitudes, and behaviors for those present in the virtual environment. One of the respondents mentioned that: "The article I wrote some time ago on the increasing incidence of mental disorders because of poverty in my community generated stormy discussions concerning the causes that can provoke these diseases. Then, the idea of building a hospital/a community center for treating patients with these diseases, coming from poor environments, was born."

The social networks are, for all respondents, useful tools that they use both in professional purposes and as employers. Hence, 3 out of 4 respondents have stated that they use SNSs to get in touch with professionals from their activity fields and to discuss certain tendencies, and a respondent indicated the taking of the pulse of the economic market and finding details about the important names in the field as aims they follow when they create connections in the virtual environment. From our point of view, reporting to other professionals in the field indicates, at least, the following: (1) the respondents want to learn from those who are authorized in the field; (2) they try to be as well informed as possible regarding novelties; (3) they gain visibility in their field and increase their chances of being perceived as skilled creative people, oriented towards performance.

As employers, the respondents have stated that they find it normal to use SNSs in order to check the applicants' profile. What 3 out of 4 respondents look for within the process of recruitment and selection of new candidates is: (1) the candidate's profile on SNSs; (2) the résumé and the life experience; (3) critical thinking. However, one of the respondents mentioned that he was interested in the way the candidate spent his free time, his critical thinking and his IQ. According to specialized literature, responsibility, but also wisdom is associated with a higher experience (Mumford et al. 2017), which is mutually available. Then, we can suppose that, if by checking the candidates' profiles on SNSs, the employers look for: (1) attitudes; (2) behaviors; (3) language, etc., by analyzing the résumé and life experience, they want to find out what is relevant for an individual from a professional and human point of view. Hence, one of the respondents made the following remark: "Of course, the candidate can show a certain behavior on the SNSs that has no link with what we can find written in his résumé. This thing automatically disqualifies him from the competition of getting the job. Or, it can show a false profile. Or, he can lie about his abilities. This is still a lie. Everything is uncovered

at the interview. The good part is that you are prepared for this in the moment you view the profile and then, you meet the person face-to-face…".

According to specialized literature (Mumford et al. 2000), the leaders operate with determination in order to achieve their proposed aims and to transpose their vision into reality. Observing the action taken by our respondents on SNSs, we concluded the following: (1) they defend their position on SNSs when their right as consumers are violated; (2) two of the respondents are coordinators of some NGO; (3) all respondents are actively involved as volunteers in actions happening at a local or national level, using SNSs for these. In other words, they act and react differently towards ordinary people, being real connectors, and the hubs created by them (NGOs) include an impressive number of volunteer-participants in the most various activities: environment protection, fundraising for a social cause; education, etc.

Maxwell (1991) says that leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less, highlighting the fact that, if you want to test a person's leadership abilities, all you have to do is to tell him to found and direct an NGO. If he manages to do this, then he is a leader in the true sense of the word. Why? Simply because at your job people follow you as the leader because "they must". In the case of an NGO, people follow you because they want and because they feel that you care. They follow you because they believe in you and they respect you. In this context, our respondents demonstrate that they are true leaders. Moreover, the actions undertaken by them emanate optimism, positivity, responsibility, faith that they can change the world, and by changing the world, they change themselves. Therefore, the leaders also go through a process of transformation and personal development, ceaselessly learning (from their mistakes and from the other people's), accumulating knowledge, experience and wisdom. It is a long term process that supposes a strategy. By paraphrasing Ma (2018), the founder of Alibaba, a good leader knows how the world will look in 50 years and he knows, at the same time, what he DOES NOT want to do – a dimension of strategic management that all the successful leaders possess.

Through the following 3 questions we wanted to identify cognitive abilities (the capacity of judging in an objective manner a person/situation; the capacity of defining the problem, of analyzing the objectives, the constraints and risks); creative thinking (the capacity of recognizing and evaluating valuable ideas); strategic abilities (the capacity of formulating a vision and giving sense to actions); interpersonal abilities (to listen and understand the other; to recognize the validity of another point of view when it is the case). Thus, the respondents appreciated that: (1) they try to be objective and they are willing to openly recognize when the interlocutor has a different opinion from theirs; (2) at the end of every year they usually make the lucid analysis of the causes of the present situation, of the constraints that have generated it; (3) they present their vision without diminishing the risks, considering that the elaboration of the vision regarding the organization is very important; (4) when they discover a valuable idea, they make efforts to put it into work for the benefit of the organization, even if they are or not the authors of the idea; (5) they usually talk about achievements at first and make optimistic projects regarding their future.

A prominent figure in the business world has compared management with the conducting a symphonic orchestra, and leadership, with conducting a jazz band. We have also asked our leaders if they associate the directing of an organization with

conducting a symphonic or a jazz orchestra. The answer was: "jazz orchestra", and by making this, they consider themselves free to manifest their entrepreneurial abilities. Jazz is a form of "chaos" with structure (even if it might seem contradictory) whereas the interpretation of a symphony can only succeed if every musician perfectly knows his orchestral part and executes it flawlessly. However, even in Jazz, there is a melody that is apparently insane. Leadership, like Jazz, can be studied, refined, aside the inborn qualities (sometimes in spite of these). "Champions do not become champions in the arena – they only get the recognition there", says an old dictum. Even if a person has inborn talent, he or she still has to prepare and exercise in order to be successful. Leadership is developed and requires perseverance.

One of the 21 rules of leadership (Maxwell 1991) says: "people buy into the leader, and then the vision". In other words, the followers appreciate the human being/the leader at first; afterwards, his vision. According to Maxwell, good leaders see the problems, build a strategy in order to solve them, appreciate the diversity (of people, of opinions and ideas) and schedule thoroughly the way they have to take. The perspective is, in all cases, on a long term.

In Fig. 1, we tried to highlight leadership as a process, as a result to cognitive, behavioral and emotional transformations imposed by the new context of globalization and digitalization.
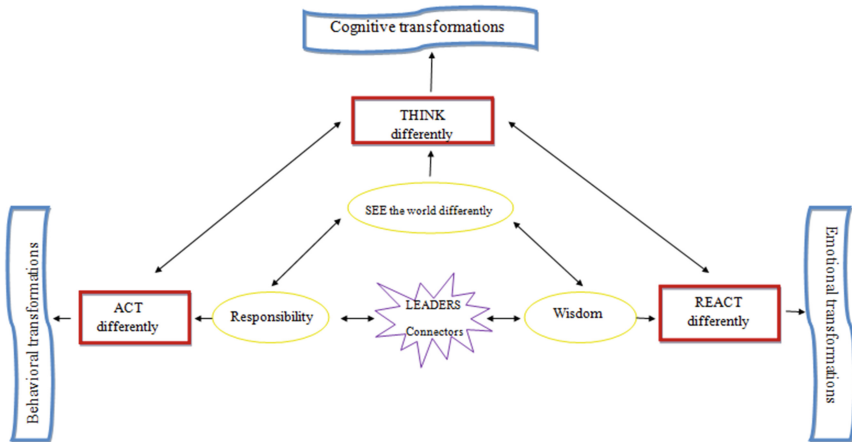

Fig. 1. Leaders in a digital world (new context)

The model proposed by us sends to the older and newer abilities every leader should possess in the digital world. The leaders should operate as connectors, that is, by means of digital tools, to be able to create connections with a number of people as many as possible. The leader needs information and can take good decisions, even in the conditions in which the information is not complete or is not sufficient – this is why they have to keep in touch with everyone that can help them with information in due time.

Leaders See the (Digital) World in a Different Way Than the Others. They have the capacity of seeing the world in its assembly (at a high scale), they can observe the world within perspective (long term) and because they have access to information, they know how the world will look in 50 years and they prepare for it. The leaders have the capacity of seeing the world in a different way and thus, they can also see it on a microeconomic level (organizational level). Because they know to define problems, to analyze causes, to analyze objectives (and to select only the relevant ones for the organization), but also constraints, they manage to infer possibilities where common people only see "a problem to be solved". These are all the old abilities, but they are also the ones that – if valorized in the next context of the digital world – allow leaders to manipulate complexity, based not only on instinct, but also on the identification of new ways of doing things. It is about inborn cognitive abilities (the instinct) and acquired cognitive abilities (through continuous learning and training) that transform into mental models under the impact of contact and (almost) permanent communication with professionals from the field, with people having the experience and with those having the ideas. Cognitive transformations and mental models lead to an unconventional thinking, a more agile one, more sensitive and more connected to changes of substance, but also of nuance in the exterior and interior environment of the organization.

Leaders Operate/Act in a Different Way in the Digital World. They use informational technologies in order to get involved in the identification of new solutions for old problems, such as: poverty, health, culture and environment. Their behaviors are different from those of common managers because leaders know how to easily collaborate with various teams; they hire more intelligent people than them and give these people the power to take important decisions; the leaders value the contribution of new partners (experts, NGO directors or other stakeholders) because they are aware of the fact that solving some complex problems requires a common effort; they invest time and energy in order to make things right and they learn from their mistakes; they plan and forecast on long terms, thinking thoroughly, at the same time, on the paces they have to take/on the details. Every taken decision is a manifestation of responsibility: responsibility towards followers and their future, responsibility towards resources that the leaders administer, ad everything they do is in accordance with the system of values on the basis of which they build their vision. Their different behavior, in their case, marks briefly the idea that you should let yourself guided by responsibility and you should attribute a sense to every operation you undertake.

Leaders React in a Different Way in the Digital World. Beyond the emotional abilities Goleman talks about, and those that determine him to report them to the people around in terms of empathy and preoccupation for the human being, the leader in the digital world discovers better and more practical solutions due to the easy access to information. He is convinced that he can change the world and, because of this, he involves himself in volunteer operations. Furthermore, he founds NGOs in which he attracts people with passions and beliefs similar to those that he has. These poles of action, often born by using SNSs, get to grow in time when more and more people resonate with the mission/purpose/operation taken into account. Leaders' opinions and comments can bring birth to passions, and passions can also transform in ideals. According

to specialized literature, the leader's wisdom is associated to some social judgments: he wants to change the world not because this must be changed, but because he feels that he can do it; he believes in himself and in his own life experience; he sees the world within perspective and always thinks on long terms; he believes in his power of creating alliances to achieve a superior purpose.

5   Conclusions

The development – hard to foresee two or less than two decades ago – of channels and ways of communication at a global level, took to an explosion of information dissemination in all the areas of human activity and all social strata.

General and immediate access to information smoothed many subjective bumps and oiled the wheels of all processes, taking to their acceleration without precedent. This meant a powerful development and significant, fundamental change. Highly important changes in both areas of knowledge and economy impose serious changes of mentality and behavior at the leadership level. The assault of digital revolution on companies and people does not diminish the importance of human initiative and responsibility, but on the contrary: it is more important than ever to acquire the necessary abilities and to place them strategically in order to support transformation programs of companies.

Leadership is both a process and a property. As a process – focusing on what leaders actually do – leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to shape the group or organization's goals, motivate behavior toward the achievement of those goals, and help define group or organization culture. As a property, leadership is the set of characteristics attributed to individuals who are perceived to be leaders (Griffin 2006). In addition – almost all the qualities and features might help, but what really matters is the way they combine together in order to efficiently answer the requirements of the situation in which he has to operate as the leader. In order to truly become the leader of a nation or of a company, you must understand the personal and emotional concerns and the preoccupations of the others, entering, thus, in the personal world of those people (Garelli 2017). Ideally, a manager whom people must follow should have the talent of making people want to follow him. Force someone to get out of his comfort zone and you will get a rebel.

The limits of our study refer to several important elements, namely: the small number of participants/leaders, respondents of our questions; the specific fields of their activity; the impossibility of mathematically quantifying the abilities we analyzed in the present paper. Nonetheless, we hope that the our proposed model open a new research field to those who look for talented people, with leadership potential, by using for this, as a complementary tool, social networks.

Appendix

A. M. is the director of the Bucharest Municipality Museum – an institution that has under its control 12 museums and memorial houses. He is a historian, anthropologist, journalist and associated professor for two higher education institutions. Under his control, the Bucharest Municipality Museum has continuously prospered with newer and newer exhibitions, as well as with a multitude of programs and educations activities destined both for children and adults.

I. M. N. is a film critic, a radio and television show producer with a vast journalistic and translator activity (during the communist era, she was the voice of over 3000 movies on video tapes she had translated). She was part of SOROS Foundation Board of Directors in Romania. She is the honorific president of Vodafone Foundation today.

A. P. is a specialist psychiatrist and Ph.D. in Medical Sciences. He had the Psychiatrist Hospital in Campulung Moldovenesc in his charge, and today he owns a private mini clinic. He is the president of Social Psychiatry Association in Romania, affiliated to the World Association of Social Psychiatry, representing an active presence in the Romanian and international psychiatry field.

C. T. is a physician specialized in kidney diseases. He worked as a specialist physician at Fundeni Hospital in Bucharest. Today, he is the director of a private clinic, branch of a company that owes specialized companies in a number of countries all around the world.

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