

UNVEILING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EU CHARISMATIC LEADERS USING PIPRECIA-S METHOD

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Abstract: One of the popular leadership styles in politics is charismatic leadership, which implies that leaders possess unique qualities that set them apart from others, enabling them to mobilise the masses, gain support, win elections, and inspire them towards a common goal. Although many important studies have been undertaken regarding leaders and evaluating leadership qualities, there is a particular gap regarding examining charismatic leadership competencies using MDCM (Multiple-Criteria Decision-Making) methods. This paper aims to fill the scientific gap and provide a different insight into leadership competencies by evaluating the characteristics of the EU charismatic leaders in the 21st century using the PIPRECIA-S method. Drawing on previous research, this article provides a more fine-grained perspective of the literature on leadership competencies and using PIPRECIA-S method to rank charismatic leadership competencies of EU leaders, and provide insights into European Union leaders' qualities, focusing on their strengths and areas for development. The findings highlight the importance of specific competencies in effective leadership, such as stability, discernment, education, analytical thinking, and learning from mistakes. This article also displays the effectiveness of MDCM methods in evaluating leadership competencies, providing a robust framework for estimating leadership in political and other contexts. The findings have implications for policymakers, organizations, and individuals seeking to develop leadership competencies in the European Union, candidate countries and beyond.

Keywords: Charismatic leadership, analysis, evaluation framework, MDCM methods, PIPRECIA-S.

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the European Union (EU) has faced challenges requiring strong and effective leadership. The composition of the EU has significantly changed in this century by gaining 13 new member states. The first expansion of the EU was in 2004, when Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined the

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EU. Bulgaria and Romania began the year 2007 by becoming member states, and Croatia joined them in 2013. That was followed by Brexit and the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union in 2020.

A myriad of economic, legal, social, and political challenges exist in the EU, and new ones occur constantly. All EU member states felt the influence of the global financial and economic crisis, more recently the COVID-19 pandemic, but also different crises, wars, and migrations throughout Europe and their direct and indirect, current and extended impacts. The European Commission surveyed EU citizens by conducting 26,514 interviews across the EU (Europa, 2023). Respondents were interviewed about EU challenges and priorities in the past year, and 86% of them believed that it was crucial to implement actions at the European level to mitigate the immediate effects of increasing energy prices on consumers and businesses. Additionally, 86% of EU citizens support ensuring adequate gas supplies to avoid shortage risks for the upcoming winter. All mentioned challenges for the EU are calls for effective leadership. One of the leadership styles which draws the attention of scholars and practitioners is charismatic leadership (Banks et al., 2017). Since the introduction of charismatic leadership (House, 1977), many authors have analysed this type of leadership and found myriad advantages. Lowe et al. (1996) discovered that charismatic leadership positively impacts leader effectiveness, while Wowak et al. (2016) found a link between charismatic leadership and organisational performance. Yukl (2006) point out that charismatic leaders can project an impression of exceptional competence. Similarly, other authors (Bass & Avolio, 1993) point out that these leaders can create a favourable impression that their objectives and missions are extraordinary. One of the essential characteristics of leaders that impacts team performance is charisma (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Banks et al., 2017; Nassif et al., 2021). Charismatic leaders articulate and help build a positive vision for the future (Eman et al., 2024). House and Baetz (1979) emphasised that charismatic leaders possess the capability to exert a profound impact on organisations. There are different constructs of charismatic leadership in the literature. For example, Antonakis et al. (2016) define charisma as a “values-based, symbolic, and emotion-laden leader signalling” (p. 304), underlying the idea that charismatic signals are rooted in values, symbols, and emotions. This approach differs from the study undertaken by Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013), which stated that individual perceptions can create an endogeneity problem because of the influence of both predictors and effects of leadership.

Despite the numerous studies conducted so far, there is a research gap regarding measuring the charismatic leadership competencies of EU leaders using the MDCM (Multi-Criteria Decision-Making) methods. Gul and Uludag (2016) are pioneers in estimating charismatic leader competencies and ranking the selected Turkish leaders according to them. This paper inspired our research, which aims to measure the charismatic leadership competencies of EU leaders and rank the necessary skills leaders need to possess to drive the EU and their countries towards a prosperous future. The findings of this article shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of EU leaders in terms of charismatic leadership, ranking them from best to worst using the PIPRECIA-S method, a novel approach to measuring charismatic leadership competencies. The paper is structured as follows, containing four chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. The introduction provides background information regarding the challenges in the European Union, elucidates the need for effective leadership, justifies charismatic leadership as an adequate leadership style for politics, and proposes using the PIPRECIA-S method to rank charismatic leadership competencies of EU leaders. The subsequent chapter discusses the examination of the competencies of EU leaders using the MCDM (Multiple-Criteria Decision-Making) methods. The penultimate chapter applies the PIPRECIA-S method to analyze the competencies of charismatic European Union leaders in the 21st century. It presents and discusses the results of evaluating the charismatic leadership competencies essential for an effective EU leader. Finally, the

conclusion summarises the findings, emphasizing areas for further development, implications for policymakers, organizations, and individuals, and proposing directions for future research.

2. Analysis of charismatic leadership competencies using MCDM methods

The multiple-criteria framework has been used in the human resources field to estimate different aspects of personnel as well as their adequacy for fulfillment of a business position within an organization (Priyadharshini et al., 2020; Kilic et al., 2020; Krishankumar et al., 2020; Popović, 2021; Ozgormus et al., 2021; Danişan et al., 2022). Besides, the MCDM approach has been used to analyze the essential competencies a successful leader should have. For example, Mirhosseini et al. (2020) applied the fuzzy DEMATEL-ANP approach to detect the key competencies important for successful BIM implementation and to define the bonds among these competencies. The results indicate that the intellectual group of competencies influences the managerial and emotional groups. Hadadian et al. (2020) proposed combining the AHP and GRA methods to evaluate and select the optimal leader. They used the AHP method to define the significance of the perceived competencies, while the final ranking of candidates was performed using the GRA method. The proposed approach is beneficial when the decision-makers do not have accurate and complete information. The fuzzy TOPSIS method was used for the selection of the team leader in the software industry (Kumar & Kaur, 2022). In this case, the reason for applying the MCDM approach is to provide a ranking index that will facilitate the selection process. The hybrid MCDM approach based on the Fuzzy AHP and PROMETHEE II methods was used to assess and select the university leader (Ahmed & Kamel, 2023). According to the results, the approach used contributed to the efficiency and reliability of the selection process. Gul and Uludag (2016) performed a selection of the most charismatic leaders using the AHP and fuzzy TOPSIS methods. The obtained results outlined effective communication as the most important competence of a charismatic leader.

Possessing traits that characterize a charismatic person is vital for political leaders. However, what traits are pivotal for the political leader of the 21st century? To answer that question, we used the PIPRECIA-S (Stanujkić et al., 2021). This method originates from the PIPRECIA method (Stanujkić et al., 2017) which computational aspects improves. Namely, opposite to the PIPRECIA method, the comparison in the PIPRECIA-S method is performed only relative to the first criterion, facilitating the decision process. As the PIPRECIA method, the PIPRECIA-S does not require the presorting of the criteria according to the expected significance, making it convenient for applying in the group decision environment. Until now, the PIPRECIA-S was used for defining the criteria weights and resolving the decision problems in various business fields (Aytekin, 2022; Sulistiani et al., 2023; Mladenović et al., 2023; Setiawansyah et al., 2024).

The computing procedure of the PIPRECIA-S method could be illustrated using a particular series of steps that rely on the one presented in the paper by Stanujkić et al. (2021).

Step 1. Defining a set of assessment criteria.

Step 2. Computing the relative significance s_j of each criterion, excepting the first, as follows:

$$s_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } c_j > c_1 \\ 1 & \text{if } c_j = 1, \\ 1 & \text{if } c_j < 1 \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

where $j \neq 1$. As in the PIPRECIA method, the value of s_1 is set to 1. Values of s_j belong to the interval $(1, 1.9]$ when $c_1 > c_j$, and the interval $[0.1, 1)$ when $c_1 < c_j$.

Step 3. Determining the value of coefficient k_j in the following way:

$$k_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } j = 1 \\ 1 - s_j & \text{if } j > 1 \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Step 4. Computing the recalculated weight q_j as follows:

$$q_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } j = 1 \\ \frac{1}{k_j} & \text{if } j > 1 \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

Step 5. Defining the relative weights of the criteria in the following way:

$$q_j = \frac{q_j}{\sum_{k=1}^n q_k} \quad (4)$$

Step 6. In the case of group decision-making, the overall weighting coefficient for each criterion is determined using the following Eqs.:

$$GM_j = \left(\prod_{k=1}^K w_j^k \right)^{1/K}, \quad (5)$$

$$w_j = GM_j / \sum_{l=1}^n GM_l, \quad (6)$$

where GM_j is the geometric mean of the weighting coefficients obtained from the decision-makers involved in the evaluation of the criterion j , w_j denotes the weighting coefficient of the criterion j , and K is the number of the decision-makers.

3. Evaluating charismatic leaders characteristics using the PIPRECIA-S method

This section presents the results of the evaluation of the competencies important for a successful charismatic political European leader. Competencies can be described as a set of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that enable a person to fulfill job roles successfully. Competencies are part of the theories examining leadership effectiveness (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Seiler & Pfister, 2009). Mirčetić et al. (2024) analysed different respectable studies in the context of different characteristics and competencies that can be important for a leader. Despite the numerous essential findings, the main aspects and characteristics submitted under the assessment were defined based on the research conducted by Gul and Uludag (2016) (Table 1).

Table 1. Charismatic leader characteristics

	Aspects		Characteristics
D	Demographic	D ₁	Age
		D ₂	Gender
		D ₃	Marital status
		D ₄	Education
		D ₅	Physical appearance
P	Personal	P ₁	Reliability
		P ₂	Risk - taker
		P ₃	Stability
		P ₄	Self-confidence
		P ₅	Learning from mistakes
		P ₆	Attracting the vast masses of people
M	Mental	M ₁	Intelligence
		M ₂	Creativity

		M ₃	Analytical thinking
		M ₄	Discernment
		M ₅	Cultural consciousness
C	Communi- cation	C ₁	Persuasiveness
		C ₂	Expressiveness
		C ₃	Empathy
		C ₄	Effective communication
		C ₅	Appropriate language consonant with social structure
A	Administrative	A ₁	Service-oriented or not
		A ₂	Determination and expression of vision
		A ₃	Sensitivity to the needs of followers
		A ₄	Not continuing with the status quo
		A ₅	Aptitude for teamwork
		A ₆	Support the professional development of employees

Source: Gul and Uludag (2016)

Three respondents (R_1, R_2, R_3) from academia were involved in the evaluation process. They gave their opinions regarding the main aspects of charismatic leaders and the particular characteristics connected to the leading aspects. Using equations (1)-(6), the local significance regarding each respondent and the overall significance is calculated.

Table 2 presents the local significance of the aspects of the charismatic leader.

Table 2. Local significance of the charismatic leader aspects

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
<i>D</i>	0.0992	0.1835	0.1967	0.1548
<i>P</i>	0.3306	0.2622	0.2459	0.2805
<i>M</i>	0.2479	0.2039	0.1967	0.2176
<i>C</i>	0.1983	0.1835	0.1967	0.1950
<i>A</i>	0.1240	0.1668	0.1639	0.1520

Source: Authors' calculation

Table 2 shows that the most significant aspect, according to all three respondents, is the *P* – *Personal aspect*, which is confirmed by the overall significance. In second place is the *M* – *Mental aspect*, followed by the *C* – *Communication aspect* and the *D* – *Demographic aspect*. The least significant aspect is the *A* – *Administrative aspect*, which is in the last position.

The local significance of the demographic characteristics is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Local significance of the demographic characteristics

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
D_1	0.1868	0.1833	0.1988	0.1895
D_2	0.1437	0.1666	0.1656	0.1583
D_3	0.1246	0.1410	0.1529	0.1390
D_4	0.3114	0.3055	0.2839	0.3000
D_5	0.2335	0.2036	0.1988	0.2114

Source: Authors' calculation

From a demographic perspective, the notably highest significance has the characteristic D_4 – *Education*. It is followed by the characteristic D_5 – *Physical appearance*, while the characteristic D_3 – *Marital status* has the lowest score.

Table 4 represents the results regarding the significance of personal characteristics.

Table 4. Local significance of the personal characteristics

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
P_1	0.1183	0.1348	0.1413	0.1311
P_2	0.0910	0.1124	0.1010	0.1011
P_3	0.1972	0.1498	0.1767	0.1735
P_4	0.1479	0.1685	0.1413	0.1522
P_5	0.1690	0.1348	0.1570	0.1530
P_6	0.1690	0.1498	0.1413	0.1530
P_7	0.1076	0.1498	0.1413	0.1316

Source: Authors' calculation

In this case, the characteristic P_3 – *Stability* is considered the most essential trait which characterize a charismatic leader. The second place is shared by the characteristics P_5 – *Learning from mistakes* and P_6 – *Attracting the vast masses of people*. The performed analysis outlined the characteristic P_2 – *Risk-taker* as the least influential.

The results regarding the importance of the mental characteristics are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Local significance of the mental characteristics

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
M_1	0.2014	0.1949	0.1905	0.1955
M_2	0.1679	0.1772	0.1905	0.1783
M_3	0.2238	0.2165	0.1905	0.2098
M_4	0.2238	0.1949	0.2381	0.2182
M_5	0.1831	0.2165	0.1905	0.1962

Source: Authors' calculation

The obtained results emphasize the characteristic M_4 – *Discernment* as pivotal, followed by the characteristic M_3 – *Analytical thinking*. It is surprising that characteristic M_2 – *Creativity* is denoted as the least important.

Table 6 contains the results concerning the characteristics of communication.

Table 6. Local significance of the communication characteristics

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
C_1	0.1778	0.1897	0.1915	0.1863
C_2	0.2223	0.1725	0.2128	0.2013
C_3	0.1482	0.1897	0.1915	0.1753
C_4	0.2541	0.2372	0.2128	0.2340
C_5	0.1976	0.2108	0.1915	0.1998

Source: Authors' calculation

In this group, the highest overall weighting coefficient has the characteristic C_4 – *Effective communication*, which immediately follows the characteristic C_2 – *Expressiveness*. Results revealed that the characteristic C_3 – *Empathy* is not a significant trait for a leader.

Table 7 presents the results regarding the administrative characteristics.

Table 7. Local significance of the administrative characteristics

	R_1	R_2	R_3	Overall significance
A_1	0.1413	0.1534	0.1602	0.1531
A_2	0.2827	0.1917	0.1780	0.2152
A_3	0.1413	0.1534	0.1780	0.1586
A_4	0.1010	0.1917	0.1602	0.1474
A_5	0.1570	0.1394	0.1456	0.1488
A_6	0.1767	0.1704	0.1780	0.1769

Source: Authors' calculation

In this regard, the most significant is characteristic A_2 – *Determination and expression of vision*, while in the last place is characteristic A_4 – *Not continuing with the status quo*.

Table 8 presents ranking order for the local and global significance of the characteristics.

Table 8. The global significance of the considered characteristics of charismatic leaders

Aspect	Loc. significance	Characteristics	Loc. significance	Global significance	Rank
D	0.1548	D_1	0.1895	0.0294	20
		D_2	0.1583	0.0246	23
		D_3	0.1390	0.0216	28
		D_4	0.3000	0.0466	3
		D_5	0.2114	0.0328	18
P	0.2805	P_1	0.1311	0.0369	16
		P_2	0.1011	0.0284	21
		P_3	0.1735	0.0488	1
		P_4	0.1522	0.0428	8
		P_5	0.1530	0.0430	5
		P_6	0.1530	0.0430	6
		P_7	0.1316	0.0370	15
M	0.2176	M_1	0.1955	0.0427	10
		M_2	0.1783	0.0389	12
		M_3	0.2098	0.0458	4
		M_4	0.2182	0.0476	2
		M_5	0.1962	0.0428	7
C	0.1950	C_1	0.1863	0.0382	14
		C_2	0.2013	0.0349	17
		C_3	0.1753	0.0410	11
		C_4	0.2340	0.0427	9
		C_5	0.1998	0.0384	13
A	0.1520	A_1	0.1531	0.0233	25
		A_2	0.2152	0.0328	19
		A_3	0.1586	0.0242	24
		A_4	0.1474	0.0225	27

		A ₅	0.1488	0.0227	26
		A ₆	0.1769	0.0270	22

Source: Authors' calculation

The final results show that the trait that is immanent to the charismatic leader is *Stability* ($P_3 - 0.0488$). The second place belongs to the characteristic $M_4 - \text{Discernment}$ (0.0476), followed by *Education* ($D_4 - 0.0466$), *Analytical thinking* ($M_3 - 0.0458$), and *Learning from mistakes* ($P_5 - 0.0430$). It can be concluded that the most essential features of the charismatic leader belong to the mental, personal, and demographic aspects. Conversely, the administrative aspects occupy the last position as the characteristics that are not prerogative for the successful charismatic leader. However, the last place belongs to the characteristic $D_3 - \text{Marital status}$ (0.0216), which indicates that relationship status neither contributes to nor detracts from the leader's charisma.

Table 9 shows top ten charismatic leadership characteristics EU leaders.

Table 9. Top ten charismatic leadership characteristics EU leaders

Rank	Characteristic	Aspect
1	Stability	Personal
2	Discernment	Mental
3	Education	Demographic
4	Analytical thinking	Mental
5	Learning from mistakes	Personal
6	Attracting the vast masses of people	Personal
7	Cultural consciousness	Mental
8	Self-confidence	Personal
9	Effective communication	Communication
10	Intelligence	Mental

Source: Authors' calculation

3. Conclusion

In 21st century EU faced a myriad of economic, legal, social, and political challenges, and new challenges occur constantly. This uncertain political environment requires effective leaders. The exploration of the competencies that define the charismatic EU leader of the 21st century is a topic that warrants more attention in the literature. This article takes a unique approach, using a multiple-criteria PIPRECIA-S method, to uncover the most crucial characteristics of the charismatic leader. This research fills a gap in the existing literature and calls for further investigation and refinement of these competencies.

The research disclosed that the most important aspect of considering a leader as charismatic is the personal aspect. Following that, the most influential competence of the charismatic leader is stability, which belongs to the personality aspect. In people nature is striving for stability, so it is not surprising that this characteristic is the leading characteristic of a charismatic leader.

The second significant competence of the charismatic leader is discernment from the mental group of personality traits. The ability to correctly perceive the situation and make justified and adequate decisions is crucial for a successful leader.

Education, the demographic aspect, is in third place. Education is an inevitable and pivotal component of a person with integrity, who has a strong theoretical background and the ability to use it to respond to practical challenges.

Besides, the charismatic leader should be an excellent analytical thinker and should have the capacity to learn from mistakes. He/she should be able to attract an immense mass of people and be culturally conscious to acknowledge differences.

Finally, the successful charismatic leader should be self-confident, capable of effective communication, and intelligent.

The results of Gul and Uludag (2016) emphasized the administrative aspect as the most important. Furthermore, according to them, the five most significant characteristics are education, analytical thinking, sensitivity to the needs of followers, effective communication, and discernment. As can be seen, there are some differences between the most important traits that a charismatic leader should have. The study by Gul and Uludag (2016) outlined education as the first-ranked, analytical thinking as the second most important, and discernment as the fifth which is relatively in accordance with the results that we obtained. Nevertheless, Gul and Uludag (2016) also accentuated the sensitivity to the needs of followers and communication. These characteristics are not placed in the first ten positions in our research. The explanation for this difference can be found in fact that the study of Gul and Uludag (2016) was directed at the estimation of charismatic leaders in Turkey. We have the broader picture in mind and want to define the competencies that characterize EU charismatic leaders.

Although the proposed research has enabled the definition of the crucial competencies of charismatic leaders, it also has particular limitations. The methodological approach is based on the PIPRECIA-S method, which does not require the examination of the consistency of the results. Furthermore, this method applies crisp numbers that cannot appreciate the vagueness of the decision environment and decision-makers' hesitation.

The list of the aspects and characteristics of the charismatic leader was retrieved from the literature, and it is limited in that way. Further, only three respondents from the academia were involved in the estimation procedure. The reliability of the results would be improved if a more significant number of respondents from political, business, and academic structures were involved in the assessment.

These limitations call for further research and improvements of the current study. The model and the results would be more reliable if the used method predicts the reliability checking and if the list of the competences is examined and extended. Introducing the fuzzy, grey, or neutrosophic extensions of the selection method would increase the involvement of uncertainty in the assessment process. Despite the mentioned limitations, it should be concluded that this study achieved the goal and successfully defined the crucial characteristics of the charismatic EU leader of the 21st century with the help of the PIPRECIA-S method.

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