

## Conference Paper

# A. R. Luria and Scenario Management

Diana Bekoeva

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

## Abstract

On the basis of the analysis of A. R. Luria's biography, the article discusses the issue of leadership thinking in science and life scenario management. The article shows that the main parameter of the scenario thinking of successful people when resolving unexpectedly occurring problems with a great measure of uncertainty is the vision of purpose and future perspectives. The main conclusion lies in the fact that in teaching university students, life-scenario development must be started with the purpose vision and technologies of mental imaging. Managing your leadership capital, possessing the ability to understand new things, applying them into the new life scenario in conditions changed are activated by purpose vision.

Corresponding Author:

Diana Bekoeva  
bekoeva@mail.ru

Received: 25 July 2018

Accepted: 9 August 2018

Published: 1 November 2018

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

© Diana Bekoeva. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the Fifth International Luria Memorial Congress Conference Committee.

**Keywords:** leader, biography, teaching, life scenario, self-management, scenario management

## 1. Introduction

A lot of things have been said about A. R. Luria as a scholar, scores of books and articles have been published (which are predominantly dedicated to his scientific activity), among which it's impossible not to note the significant works of his student and co-worker, MSU professor, M. D. Homskaya, whose endowment into science he highly appreciated [1].

What is A. R. Luria's success conditioned by? What kind of scenario management determined this success? In his book «Making of Mind» he told what kind of actions and events had formed his personality, how he determined the scenario of his life [2]. This book is the psycho-biographical investigation of a person's own life track based on imagining the psychological time from the past to the present and the future which allows tracing the process of socialization of this prominent personality and its influence on forming the future scenario.

In management, biography is used to investigate life scenarios of separate individuals or the whole groups of people, and also when making projects regarding an individual's life perspectives in professionally-orientated consultations.

### OPEN ACCESS

If we analyze the biography of A. R. Luria, who was among prominent people of the XX century, in terms of scenario management elements, we will be able to highlight his leadership capital, leadership conditions, and leadership thinking, which determined Alexander Romanovich's achievements.

In the leadership capital of A. R. Luria we can highlight such characteristics as high level of professionalism, proactivity, and exceptional kindness and decency. He was eminent with many abilities, but we will emphasize the one related to being able to know several foreign languages – German, English, French, and Uzbek, – and also the ability for fast decision-making, and a very active character.

In personal conditions of A. R. Luria there always dominated the influence of external factors with high level of uncertainty and uneasiness. Along with this, personal attitudes of A. R. Luria were always marked by optimism and the ability to act. The influence of external conditions of uncertainty can be divided into three periods with respect to his life scenario: pre-War, during the War, post-War.

In A. R. Luria's life it was the time of many changes in career which put obstacles before him, but didn't change the pace of the scenario movement toward reaching the goal. One can't agree more with Professor V. P. Zinchenko: 'A. R. Luria is the 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World' [3].

A. R. Luria can be acknowledged the 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World according to manifold factors: according to the volume and number of empirical researches (more than 500 researches that he implemented or initiated); according to the number of people he helped in the beginning of their career; according to exceptional humanity and the ability to recognize those among his students who were orientated toward research activities; according to the fact that to any uncertainty of the destiny he responded with new plots and achievements; according to the ability to manage and create new scenarios in conditions of uncertainty.

**In the first period** of his life path, being a student, he organized a psychoanalysis group, got in touch with Z. Freud, and received from him the written license to publish the translation of his book. In 1921, after he had finished the university, he got involved into studying experimental psychology, and investigated the influence of the verbal instruction on the reaction time of the smelter workers in the Institute of Scientific Work Organization in Kazan'. In order to publish the results of psycho-physiological research of labor, he organized the issue of the journal 'The Problems of labor psychophysiology'.

In 1923 he moved to Moscow with his wife where he was invited to the position of the academic secretary of the Institute of psychology, and became the chairman of Russian Psychoanalytic society.

In 1924, on the psycho-neurological conference, A. R. Luria met L. S. Vygotsky, whom he invited to work to the Institute of Psychology. The productivity of L. S. Vygotsky's activity became a reason to offer him to head the 'creative three' of the psychologists, which included A. R. Luria, A. N. Leontiev and Vygotsky himself. This team started to work actively on new ideas in psychology, and actively interact with international scientific societies. In 1929 A. R. Luria made 2 reports (one of which in co-authorship with Vygotsky) on the IX International Congress of Psychology, held in Yale University in the US [4].

After having divorced his first wife, who preferred her theatrical counterpart to him, in 1930 A. R. Luria went on an expedition to the Middle Asia [5]. Basing himself on the materials of the researches from these expeditions, he showed that the structure of the cognitive processes such as perception, memorizing, and logical comprehension, etc., is connected with social and cultural environment. It was empirically proved that cognitive processes in different groups of the population of Uzbekistan manifested differently.

After the second expedition in 1932 there appeared a control committee in the Institute of Psychology: "I was accused in all the deadly sins, up to racism, and I had to leave the Institute of Psychology," wrote Luria. He moved to Kharkov, Ukraine.

In 1935, inspired by the cinematographic experiments of K. Levin, who, being in Moscow in 1933, demonstrated movies about his work on a studio, A. R. Luria launched active movement toward creation of International Cinematographic Association for the worldwide exchange of movies.

In July 1936, there followed a succession of highly critical articles against geneticists and psychologists. A. R. Luria had to quit his job at the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine and in the Medical and Genetics Institute of, becoming a regular medical student. It saved him, to some extent, because after the arrest of his sister and her husband, he expected to be arrested too.

After the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in July 1941, A. R. Luria became a member of the neurological clinic of the Institute of Experimental Medicine.

**The second period** with respect to the leadership conditions of A. R. Luria is connected with the War period, the task of helping the front and with his new life scenario.

In accordance with wartime, A. R. Luria was appointed as ahead of a hospital in Kisegach and organized a group of thirty people who created new methods in vocational counseling which significantly decreased the convalescence of the wounded.

Having returned to Moscow, he started working in two places simultaneously: at the Neurology Institute and the Neurosurgery Institute. At this time he summarized his long-term research in two books that brought him worldwide fame: 'Traumatic Aphasia' and 'Restoration of Brain Functions after War Trauma'.

**The third period** (After the War) is characterized by social changes, which required A. R. Luria to evince his creative and organization abilities as a leader in new conditions, depending on the purpose of restoration of national economy.

In 1966 A. R. Luria together with A. N. Leontiev promoted the opening of the Faculty of Psychology in Lomonosov MSU and the department of neuro- and pathopsychology, which he headed till the end of his life (1977). He also promoted the organization of the World Psychological Congress in Moscow.

In his scientific autobiography he wrote: "We can characterize our previous approach to brain study as 'horizontal', e.g. directed toward studying the processes, flowing predominantly on the cortex level. The new wave of research drew our attention to the 'vertical' connection between the brain structures, both deep and surface. We got interested, first of all, in those processes, with help of which the brain realizes and controls the level of its own activation".

A. R. Luria combined high scientific authority and outstanding teaching abilities, qualities of a caring friend and those of a youth leader. He was eminent with such features as respectful attitude to students, for whom he organized 'Professorial Wednesdays' in his house. After discussing psychology problems at this event, A. R. Luria would always make a tea-party with a lot of sandwiches for his students. Afterward, A. R. Luria, his students, and other guests would listen to the classical music performed by famous pianists or violinists; he recorded specially for the students at the concerts, which he visited. Sometimes A. R. Luria presented the paintings of famous artists from his home library to the students. He also was the head of the commemorative club of Lev Vygotsky, made meetings with foreign students in the living-room of the dormitory in the main building of the MSU of M. V. Lomonosov, and helped those students who didn't receive scholarship with his own money. He was able to support the students warmly and tactfully, attract them to scientific work, be generous in terms of sharing new ideas – that's why he was always surrounded by a collective of co-workers and students.

He had a special ability to instantly generalize experimental facts, broadly realize their significance, create beautiful concepts, and impart them to his students.

Here's one episode of our relationship. In the beginning of June 1977 Alexander Romanovich called me at 7 a. m., asking if I was still sleeping, and strictly told me to come to his house with all materials of my dissertation in order to look through them before the academic department session, which he scheduled for 10 a.m. Having listened to my report, he rapidly grasped the results of my work with 100 patients with different cerebral localization of damage who were examined in the clinic of N. N. Burdenko; he instantly summarized everything, told me what I was supposed to include into the materials of my PhD dissertation, and what I should leave for my doctoral one, and for the following internship with doctor K. Pribram [6]. The members of the academic department, having the materials of my work on the round table, smiled, knowing that A. R. Luria was an early riser and bothered all the co-workers with early calls which is mentioned by professor B. M. Velichkovsky: "When I became his assistant my relatives and I were risen up from our beds by his calls at around 7 a.m.: 'Borya, are you still asleep?'" High level of responsibility, kind-heartedness, punctuality, and sympathy of A. R. Luria were good examples for everyone who surrounded him: "He's never forgotten anything – he just never had time to forget things, because he never put them off for another day, furthermore – for a long term." [3]

According to the style of his scientific work, 'Alexander Romanovich wasn't a scholar of the narrow-field type, but that of the broad-field one (synthetic) in the mould of the scholars of the Renaissance', used to note E. D. Homskaya, who worked with Luria for 40 years. A. R. Luria is the founder of neuropsychology of new type. The novelty and originality of the neuropsychology of Luria lies in the fact that it, being synthesis of three sciences (psychology, medicine, physiology), is, above all, a branch of the science of psychology, immediately connected with the common psychological ideas of A. R. Luria.

It may seem, that the plotline of the life of A. R. Luria, the leader of a new scientific field, – neuropsychology – was always interwoven with the impact of external conditions, uncertainty of ambient, and huge personal potential. In fact, all of these ever-changing conditions always induced A. R. Luria to his own free choice of new purposes and scenarios for successful implementation of personal and organizational plans, which let him to make a contribution into the development of psychological science in general. The scenario of A. R. Luria's life started with seeing the purpose and the basic images, from which he chose the general plot. That's why teaching the young generation the scenario management and the development of successful life

scenario in conditions of uncertainty must start with the technologies of intention to purpose and those of the creation of strong mental images. The main stages of life scenario in the biography of A. R. Luria as one of the leaders of the psychological science can be an example of determining and choosing the strategy of thinking and seeing the future for management students. Social activity and basic values of A. R. Luria, which determined the life scenario choice and its flexibility according to new conditions of uncertainty in order to reach the strategic goals, let us understand that scenario development in the conditions of uncertainty is carried out on the basis of the interaction of previous and new scenarios, and furthers strengthening of the leadership capital of a person.

## References

- [1] Homskaya, E. D. (1997). Neiropsikhologicheskaya shkola A. R. Luria [The neuropsychological school of A. R. Luria]. *Voprosy psikhologii*. [ *Questions of psychology*], no. 6.
- [2] Luria, A. R. (1979). *Making of Mind: A Personal Account of Soviet Psychology*. Harvard University Press.
- [3] Zinchenko, V. P. (1997). Uchastnost' v bytii (K 95-ti letiu so dnia rozhdenia A. R. Luria) [Participation in being [For 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary from A. R. Luria's birthday]. *Voprosy psikhologii* [ *Questions of psychology*], no. 5, pp. 72–78.
- [4] Luria, E. A. (1996). *Moy otets Alexandr Luria* [ *My father, Alexander Luria*]. Moscow, Gnosis.
- [5] Luria, A. R. (1974). *Ob istoricheskom razvitii poznavatelnyh protsessov* [ *About the historical development of cognitive processes*]. Moscow, Nauka.
- [6] Bekoeva, D. Professorskie sredi v MGU [ *Professorial Wednesdays at MSU*]. "Moskovsky Universitet" [ *Moscow University*], no. 5. (4110). MSU.