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Examination of crisis situations related to leadership identity development

Theses of the doctoral thesis

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1. Theoretical considerations

The majority of leadership theories expressly or indirectly seek answers to the question of what good leaders are like and how to lead well, thus there is a rich literature on leadership effectiveness research (House and Podsakoff, 2013; Newstead et al., 2021). Compared to this, the less normative questioning of how this affects the individual who leads, how he relates to driving as an activity, and through which processes his attitudes are formed, appeared to a small extent and only recently. This question appears in studies of leadership identity development and implicit leadership theories. A possible interpretive framework for leadership identity development is the identity work (IW) approach, according to which an individual can actively develop, maintain and shape multiple identities if the context so requires (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

In addition to the scientific definitions, leadership and leader can be understood as a cognitive category: it originates from the leader - non-leader classification (Lord et al., 1986), based on which people have ordinary beliefs and ideas about leadership and leaders. Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT) (Lord et al., 2016) are ordinary, i.e. lay or naive, ideas that individuals generally hold about leaders. Implicit leadership theories can influence the development of leadership identity (for an overview, see Zheng and Muir 2015): the individual's theories influence the role he/she tries to fulfill as a leader, and the social environment, especially the implicit leadership image of followers/subordinates, the acceptance of the individual as a leader.

In their review, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) identified conflict situations in the interaction of the individual and the environment as the most important triggers of identity development. Based on this, the development of identity can be interpreted as a series of successful solutions to these situations. This is consistent with Lanka et al.'s (2020) findings that critical events are important catalysts for becoming a leader. The theoretical roots of this approach go back to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial development theory, which perceives identity development over the course of life as solutions to a series of normative crises. In their pioneering work on leadership identity development, Komives et al. (2005, 2006, 2009) applied the Grounded Theory approach and identified six phases of leadership identity development, which can be grouped into the three stages of awareness, discovery and identification with the leadership role.

A successful solution to crises can be considered to be effective functioning in a leadership role, which can also be examined with the help of leadership styles, competencies and functional leadership roles. The role of personal (e.g. gender, personality characteristics) and contextual factors (e.g. cultural, organizational, situational) also arises from the point of view of constructs related to effectiveness, which are also decisive from the point of view of identity development as a process realized during interactions with the environment.

2. Proposing research questions and hypotheses

In this dissertation, we present the results of six empirical studies.

In the *first questionnaire study*, we aimed to explore the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees. The significance of the objective is that the study, based on a small number of topics, examined implicit leadership theories in Hungary in a quantitative approach, in comparison with the cultural dimensions of the GLOBE project (Bauer, 2015; Den Hartog et al., 1999; Konrad, 2000). As a related goal, we also set the implicit theories about becoming a leader, the exploration of the cognitive and affective dimensions of the experience, which represents an additional point of view for understanding the implicit leadership image. Among the previous, also not very numerous, research related to the experience of becoming a leader (Lanka et al., 2020; London and Sherman, 2021; Turner and Mavin, 2008), we did not find any that examined the implicit mapping of the process. In addition, we also examined the managers' experiences related to their own managerial career path, thereby supplementing the above with the behavioral dimension. The test methods for the above objectives related to the implicit leadership image were tested during a preliminary study, which will be presented briefly.

An additional objective of the first study was to compare the behavioral characteristics of the implicit leadership image with scientific leadership theories. The novelty of this objective is that the few studies on a similar topic and not based on a Hungarian sample (Verlage et al., 2012) carried out the comparison using trait lists and not behavioral descriptions. We also aimed to compare the implicit leadership image with the assessment of the current leader and one's own leadership functioning, which complemented previous research comparing the assessment of the ideal and current leader (e.g. Fein et al., 2015) with the aspect of the assessment of one's own functioning in the Hungarian context.

Based on these, we formulated the following research questions:

RQ1. How can the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees be characterized?

RQ2. What is the relationship between the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees and the behavioral characteristics of scientific management theories?

RQ3. What is the relationship between the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees, the perceived behavior of their current leader, and – if they are leaders – their own perceived leadership behavior?

The *second study* focused on the experience and difficulties of becoming a leader and advancing in the hierarchy during a managerial career through Hungarian women, since for them this process presumably represents a series of difficulties, taking into account the nature of the Hungarian organizational culture that favors masculine stereotypes (Nagy and Vicsek, 2014). We sought the answer to the question, what personality preferences are necessary for success in this context with a masculine organizational culture? Do they have to conform to stereotypes of female leaders? Alternatively, should they display male characteristics traditionally associated with leadership? Or, as a third option, "should they be 'feminine' and tough at the same time", as Nagy (2012, p. 240) puts it, creating double expectations for female leaders?

For this purpose, we analyzed the cross-sectional questionnaire data of Hungarian female and male employees in order to examine the differences between the Jungian personality preferences of female and male subordinates (non-managers), middle managers and senior managers. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no study with such a focus before. We address the following research questions: (1) Do the personality preferences of successful women and men (that is, women and men in senior management positions) differ from the personality preferences of female and male middle managers and non-managerial employees, and (2) do the personality preferences of successful women differ from successful men? In connection with these, we formulated the following hypothesis and research question:

H1. Jungian personality preferences differ by hierarchy level: higher levels of organizational hierarchy are associated with higher levels of extraversion, thinking, judgment and calmness, as well as lower levels of tension among Hungarian employees.

RQ1. Do the personality preferences and personality types of Hungarian female and male senior managers differ? Do successful women have to fit into the female leadership stereotype, show a masculine leadership style, or a mix of the two (feminine and tough at the same time)?

The purpose of the *third study* was to examine the interpretation of organizational failure as a difficult managerial situation. To do this, we analyzed the narrative accounts of leaders of unsuccessful startup teams in order to reveal and identify the leaders' opinions about the competence deficits that played a role in the failure. We used a qualitative approach, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) method (Flanagan, 1954). To the best of our knowledge, no research has so far systematically examined the role of core competencies in the failure of startups from the point of view of managers. We chose Spencer's competency model as the analytical framework (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). Considering this, our research questions were the following:

RQ1. Is it possible to identify the lack of certain basic competencies in the opinion of managers as the cause of startup failures?

RQ2. Which core competencies are most often mentioned in the narrative accounts of startup leaders as the cause of failure?

The purpose of our *fourth, questionnaire study* was to examine the impact of sudden and unexpected environmental factors-induced interruption (forced break) or closure as a difficult leadership situation on the leaders of psychodrama groups, as well as the role and crisis management strategy of the leaders. The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which provided an opportunity for investigation, placed increased burdens on managers in general. Our study is unique in that research on effective management crisis management was mainly conducted in a business environment (e.g. Hadley et al., 2011), in the special organizational context of leading a therapeutic or self-awareness group, the studies with a different focus, adequate in times of crisis they were born from the point of view of therapeutic interventions (e.g. Drakulic and Radman, 2020). Based on all this, we formulated the following two research questions:

RQ1. What are the effects of the forced interruption and reunification of the relationship between the leader and the led on the leaders of the psychodrama groups in Hungary?

RQ2. What is the role of the leader in situations of forced interruption and reunification in terms of maintaining group functioning in the case of Hungarian psychodrama groups?

In our *fifth study,* taking advantage of the possibility of the Covid-19 pandemic as a protracted and difficult situation, we examined the related managerial experiences and adaptation with a structured interview and questionnaire method.

Several research support that leaders play a key role in adapting to organizational crisis situations (Mumford et al., 2007), and especially transformational leadership seems to be the most effective in different organizational cultures (Bowers et al., 2017; Pillai, 2013). In addition, the effectiveness of managers' crisis management is also an important factor (Hadley et al., 2011). The shift from face-to-face to virtual relationships affects organizational trust (Breuer et al., 2020; Fiol and O'Connor, 2005), which is related to effective crisis management (Mishra, 1996), and mediates transformational leadership and between organizational performance (Katou, 2015).

Taking into account the above, our research using questionnaires and structured interviews examined what leadership challenges arose from the decrease in the ratio of personal contact between managers and subordinate colleagues, and how they were related to organizational trust, the effectiveness of management crisis management and the transformational leadership style in different types of organizations and organizational in cultures. Our research questions and hypotheses were as follows:

RQ1. What are the effects of reduced personal contact during the period of Covid-19 on the daily work of the leaders of organizations of different types and cultures in Hungary? We assume that:

H1. There are differences in the effects between organizations in the public sector, the private sector and the non-profit sector.

H2. There are also differences in these effects from the point of view of organizational culture: in favor of clan-type cultures (Cameron and Quinn, 1988, 1999, 2011; Cameron et al., 2022), which place more emphasis on flexibility and attention to the members of the organization.

RQ2. How are these effects related to organizational trust, managerial crisis management effectiveness, and transformational leadership style in different organizational cultures? We assume that:

H3: A higher level of organizational trust, effective crisis management and transformational leadership result in more positive effects in all cultures.

In our *sixth study,* we examined managerial adaptation to the "new normal" after the Covid situation, characterized by new global crises, as a difficult situation with a structured interview and questionnaire method. We started from the assumption that since the ratio of personal contact between the previous leader and subordinate did not return after the Covid situation, and that people's relationship to work and the workplace is also changing (Delany, 2022; Vyas, 2022), this affects the daily work of managers, it also affects their leadership roles. We searched for an answer to the question of how the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of individual leadership roles develop in this post-Covid-19 "new normal" from the perspective of leaders and their subordinates, and how they are related to leadership style and organizational trust . Our research questions were:

RQ1. Can the leadership roles defined before the Covid-19 pandemic (Mintzberg, 2013) be applied to characterize the activities of Hungarian leaders in the "new normal" immediately following the pandemic?

RQ2. How will the global challenges immediately following the pandemic affect the roles of Hungarian leaders in 2022-2023?

RQ3. How can the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of individual leadership roles be characterized in relation to the global challenges immediately following the pandemic?

RQ4. What is the relationship between the perceptions of Hungarian managers and their subordinates about individual leadership roles, how do subordinates judge the leader's effectiveness in each role?

RQ5. How are individual leadership roles related to leadership style and organizational trust?

3. Implicit and academic leadership theories – first study

3.1. Method

In our study, we recruited employees of Hungarian organizations between February and December 2019 via online and personal channels, using convenience sampling. 57%

of the 498 participants were women, 43% were men, their average age was 38 years (standard deviation 13 years). 62% of respondents worked in the private sector, 30% in the public sector, and 8% in the non-profit sector during the survey. Among them, 64%, i.e. 318 people, held non-managerial positions, 9% were lower-level managers, 15% were middle managers, and 9% were senior managers, which represented a total of 180 managers in the sample. The managers had an average of 11 years of managerial experience at the time of data collection, with a standard deviation of 9 years.

By applying open-ended questions, we asked the participants to describe the three most important things that come to mind in relation to an "effective, good leader" (implicit leader image). In addition, we asked them to formulate the following as a metaphor: "Becoming a leader affects a person like …… because ....". We asked the participants working in managerial positions to describe the evolution of their managerial performance over time by choosing from six diagrams. The figures showed the following six narrative types: progressive, regressive, stable, comedy, tragedy, romantic legend (Gergen and Gergen, 2001). After that, they could describe their direct manager, the "effective, good manager" and, if relevant, themselves as a manager on a 10-point Likert scale along 21 behavioral descriptions. We have selected the behavioral descriptions from the items of the measurement tools of the most significant and nowadays most relevant management theories: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, autocratic, democratic, authentic, humble, servant, paternalistic.

3.2. Main results and discussions presented by methods

3.2.1. Associations

The respondents formulated a total of 1,475 associations to the term "effective, good leader", i.e. to their implicit leadership image. During the thematic analysis process of the associations, the following seven categories emerged: (1) Operational control, accountability, expectations, decision, decisiveness, planning, goals (or lack thereof), (2) Friendship, support, good social relations, good atmosphere (absence), (3) Consistency, correctness, honesty, security (absence), (4) Internal motivators, recognition (absence), (5) Aptitude, knowledge, ability, experience (absence), (6) Responsibility, reliability, trust (absence), (7) Dominance, position of power, hierarchy (absence). Mann-Whitney tests were used to examine how the associations characterizing the respondent's implicit leadership image and the scores assigned to each leadership style are related to each other.

Most correlations were found along the Consistency, correctness, honesty, safety (lack of) category: transactional (z = 3.622, p < 0.001), laissez-faire (z = 2.475, p = 0.013), preference for authentic (z = 2.667, p = 0.008) and servant (z = 2.024, p = 0.043) leadership styles than those who did not mention an association in this category.

The behavioral categories created during the analysis of the associations can be linked to most of the trait factors created by Epitropaki and Martin (2004) to characterize the implicit leader image. Among the prototypical leadership qualities, Operative control, accountability, expectations, decision, decisiveness, planning, goals (absence) with Dynamism, Friendship, support, good social relations, good atmosphere (absence) with Sensitivity, Internal motivators with Devotion and enthusiasm , recognition (lack thereof), and Intelligence means Aptitude, knowledge, ability, experience (lack thereof). Among the antiprototypical leadership trait factors, Dominance over others and the Dominance, position of power, hierarchy (lack of) behavioral scale are related to each other.

On the other hand, two categories, Consistency, correctness, honesty, security (absence) and Responsibility, reliability, trust (absence) cannot be directly linked to the factors of Epitropaki and Martin (2004) or Offermann et al. (1994), the model's predecessor. Although these two categories are not directly related to the cultural characteristics revealed in previous studies about Hungary (Nagy and Vicsek, 2014), further cross-cultural studies can shed light on the question of whether the prominence of these two categories can be a culture-specific characteristic.

3.2.2. Metaphors

When coding a total of 391 metaphors, we worked with the semantic, i.e. obvious, sense-perceivable content of the metaphors (e.g. a metaphor related to people, a metaphor related to machines or vehicles, a metaphor containing food, drink, drugs or other substances entering the body), and the latent or conceptual content of the metaphors. also with its content (e.g. responsibility, change, novelty). Among the nine semantic content codes, the most common were metaphors related to People (34.78% of responses), Objects (16.11%) and Bodily experiences (15.86%). Among the twenty latent content codes, the most frequent were Temporary effect (46.55%), Responsibility (36.57%) and Permanent change (30.43%).

Following the method of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021), the themes Transformation, Unknown, Accomplishment, Feedback, Obstacle, Self-reflection, and

Impact on others emerged when examining the relationships between latent content codes. The codes related to the topics and the topic map are displayed in Figure 1.
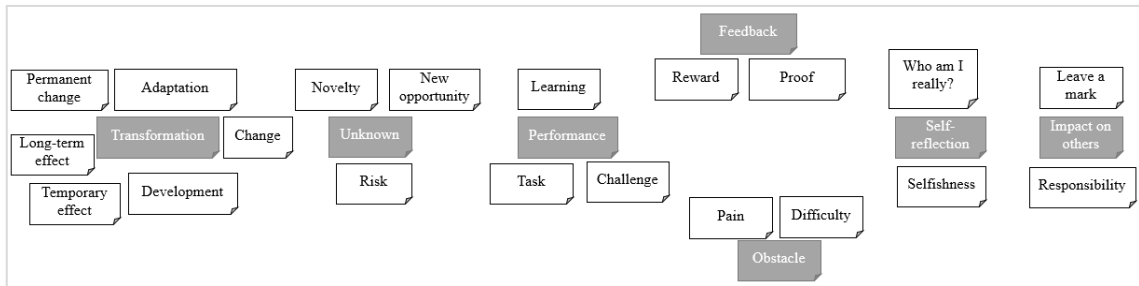
Figure 1

Thematic map of latent codes of metaphors

The thematic codes are visible on a white background, the topics are visible on a gray background.

In the next step, examining the interrelationship of the topics, one main topic emerged: the successful trial, or development crisis. This is the narrative to which all themes can be strung, and Figure 1 shows the chronological unfolding of the development crisis narrative by reading the themes from left to right.

The developmental crisis narrative that unfolds as a result of the metaphor analysis confirms the identity theoretical approach to the experience of becoming a leader, which sees it as the acquisition and internalization of a new role (Lührmann and Eberl, 2007, Maurer and London, 2015). The crisis narrative is also related to the results of Lanka et al. (2020), according to which becoming a leader is facilitated, among other things, by experiencing critical events. The findings of this research are also related to the results of Bokor and Radácsi (2006a, 2006b).

3.2.3. Visual narratives

The overwhelming majority of responding managers characterized the evolution of their own operations with one of two diagrams showing development trends: 41.6% chose the progressive narrative, 32.2% the comedy narrative. This was followed in frequency by stable (8.3%), romantic legend (7.8%), regressive (1.1%) and tragedy (1.1%) narratives (7.8%).

The chosen narrative types showed a correlation with the overall assessment of their own leadership effectiveness at one point: based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, those who

chose the progressive narrative rated their effectiveness higher than those who chose the stable narrative (H(5) = 17.511, p = 0.004), the progressive and the Bonferroni-corrected significance level of the difference between those who chose a stable narrative is p = 0.029 ($Mdn_{progressive}$ = 8, Mdn_{stable} = 7).

The most common narrative types indicate that leaders experience their leadership career as a developmental process, which is also confirmed by the fact that those who choose a progressive narrative experience their leadership functioning as more effective than those who choose a stable narrative. This is related to the approach emphasizing role internalization in leadership identity development (Lührmann and Eberl, 2007). In addition, the experiences of those who experienced ups and downs (comedy, tragedy and romantic legend narratives, 41% of the respondents in total) can be considered as different outcomes of coping with a crisis (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Robinson and Smith, 2010). According to our results, the role of the developmental crisis is the facilitation of development as a leader, in line with the positive psychological approach that is increasingly widely used in organizational psychology (Alexander et al., 2020; Donaldson and Donaldson, 2019).

3.2.4. Implicit vs. actual vs. own leadership

The leadership styles most characteristic of the implicit leadership image are democratic (M = 8.759, SD = 1.512), humble (M = 8.640, SD = 1.248), serving (M = 8.352, SD = 0.960) and transformational styles (M = 8.341, SD = 1.171), measured on a 10-point Likert scale. The paternalistic style was the least characteristic of the respondents' ideal leader (M = 6.984, SD = 2.232). Unlike the above, the current leader is most characterized by the autocratic (M = 6.904, SD = 2.349) and transactional style (M = 6.747, SD = 1.753), and the least by the paternalistic (M = 5.349, SD = 2.527), laissez-faire (M = 6.156, SD = 2.680) and transformational styles (M = 6.186, SD = 2.101). The characterization of one's own leadership function among the profiles of the current and ideal leader shows greater similarity with the ideal one: the highest mean values were achieved by humble (M = 8.155, SD = 1.425), democratic (M = 7.957, SD = 1.598) and serving styles (M = 7.803, SD = 1.182), while laissez-faire (M = 6.412, SD = 2.656) and paternalistic styles are the least characteristic (M = 6.684, SD = 1.944).

A comparison of the profiles of the implicit leadership image, the current leader, and the profiles of one's own leadership functioning characterized by leadership styles is included in Figure 2.
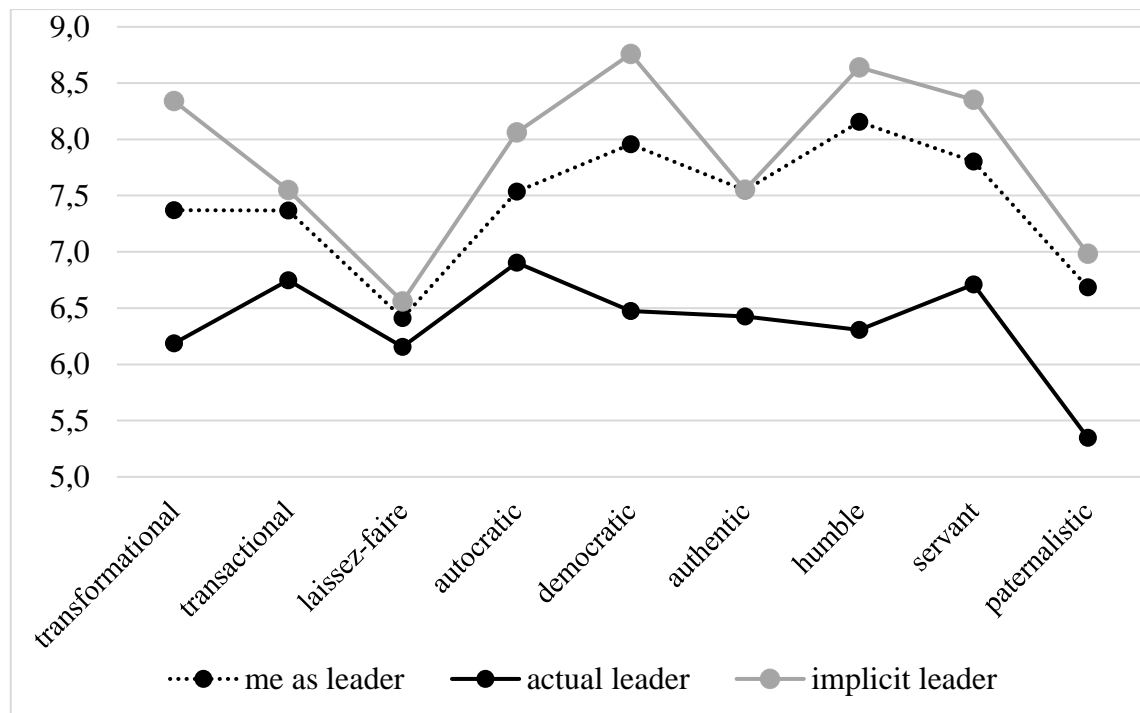
Figure 2

Representation of the average values of each leadership style scale to characterize "Me as a leader", the current leader and the implicit leadership image (N=498)

In the case of all leadership styles, we found a significant relationship with the perceived effectiveness of the leader and satisfaction with the leader, in the case of transformational and servant leadership, strong correlations were found with both perceived leadership effectiveness (r_s = -0.667, $p < 0.001$ and r_s = - 0.647, $p < 0.001$ respectively), both with satisfaction with the leader (r_s = -0.669, $p < 0.001$ and r_s = -0.649, $p < 0.001$ respectively).

The close relationship between the difference between the ideal-actual leader and the assessment of the effectiveness of the current leader and the satisfaction with him is a new result, but it is also consistent with the results of Epitropaki and Martin (2005), who found the relationship between the difference between the ideal-actual leader and workplace commitment, they found a correlation between satisfaction and the well-being of employees. Based on the results of previous studies, there is a positive relationship between satisfaction with the manager and job satisfaction (Amundsen and Martinsen,

2014; Menon, 2014; Specchia et al., 2021). Possible explanations for the more favorable assessment of one's own leadership performance than the current leader's performance, as well as the pattern more similar to the ideal leader, are social desirability bias (Krumpal, 2011) and actor-observer bias (Martinko and Gardner, 1987).

4. The difficult normative crisis of becoming a leader: personality preferences of Hungarian female leaders - second study

4.1. Method

In our survey, we analyzed 5,376 responses from 5,282 different participants. 50.2% of the participants were men, 49.8% were women, their age was between 18 and 88 years, the average was 36 years (standard deviation 9 years). Approximately half of the respondents (52%, 2781 responses) were subordinates (i.e. non-managers), of whom 39.4% were men and 60.5% were women, 37% (1968 responses) were middle managers (60% male and 40% female), and 12% (627 responses) were in senior management positions (69.7% male and 30.3% female).

Jungian personality preferences were measured using the online version of the Golden Profiler of Personality (GPOP; Golden, 2010). The GPOP is a 126-item self-report personality questionnaire that combines Jung's theory of psychological types and the Big Five personality model. The GPOP measures five global scales and ten subscales (Source of Energy: Extraversion vs. Introversion; Perception: Sensing vs. Intuition; Decision Making: Thinking vs. Feeling; Lifestyle: Judging vs. Perceiving; Stress: Tense vs. Calm).

4.2. Main results

The main effect of hierarchy level was significant for all personality preferences, except for the Judgment subscale (the value obtained for this variable did not reach the Bonferroni-corrected significance level of 0.0017). Pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni test) showed that top managers scored significantly higher on the Extraversion, Thinking, Calm, Intuition and Perception subscales and lower on Perception and Judging than middle managers and non-managers. Middle managers scored significantly higher on the Extraversion, Thinking, and Calm subscales than non-managers. Both senior and middle managers scored lower on the Introversion, Feeling, and Tense subscales than non-leaders, but there was no significant difference between the two leadership levels. The p-

values are below 0.001, except for the differences between the Thinking scores (p = 0.03) and Judging scores (p = 0.011) of senior managers and middle managers.

The examination of interaction effects between gender and hierarchy level did not yield significant results (p-values were between 0.03 and 0.74, while Bonferroni-corrected p-value < 0.0017). These results partially confirmed the relevant hypothesis: personality preferences differed by hierarchy level, and the differences were mostly in the expected direction. Senior managers scored higher on Extraversion, Thinking, and Calm preferences and lower on Tense preference than respondents at the other two hierarchy levels. Contrary to expectations, their Judgment scores were lower compared to the other two groups.

The result of the chi-square test was significant at all hierarchy levels and for the entire sample: $\chi2$ (15) = 486.944, p < 0.001 among non-managers, $\chi2$ (15) = 263.577, p < 0.001 for middle managers, $\chi2$ (15) = 73.338, p < 0.001 for senior managers and $\chi2$ (15) = 878.208, p < 0.001 for the entire sample. These results indicate gender differences in personality preferences regardless of hierarchy level (which we examined using two-way ANOVAs), and also indicate gender differences between successful men and women (i.e., senior managers).

4.3. Discussion

Our study aimed to explore the differences in Jungian personality preferences between men and women, as well as between different levels of organizational hierarchy. We found significant differences between people working at different levels of the hierarchy. Senior managers scored higher on Extraversion, Intuition, Thinking, Perceiving, and Calm than middle managers and non-managers. Contrary to our expectations, the Perceived preference showed the highest value among middle managers, but we found no difference between the values of non-managers and senior managers. These results are largely consistent with previous research (Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Moutafi et al., 2007), except in the case of Judgment (see Gardner & Martinko, 1996).

Another goal of the study was to identify gender preference differences among managers in Hungary. The typically masculine culture of Hungarian organizations combined with strongly conservative gender role attitudes (e.g. Nagy and Vicsek, 2014; Scharle, 2015) makes it particularly difficult for women to succeed in becoming managers

and in their managerial careers. On the one hand, we found that the proportion of female managers is significantly lower than that of male managers. This was expected based on the literature showing the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions (Nagy, 2012; Nagy et al., 2022). On the other hand, we found that women are more likely to succeed if they exhibit personality preferences (Extraversion, Intuition, and Sensing) that are somewhat stereotypically considered feminine leadership (Saint-Michel, 2018). Men are more likely to move up the corporate ladder and seem to have more flexible paths to the top of the hierarchy. For example, female participants with an introverted preference were almost completely absent from the senior management group (only 30 female senior managers were introverted), while 94 men could become leaders with this preference.

Female and male participants' Thinking and Feeling scores also differed at each hierarchy level. Previous studies of leaders (see Gardner & Martinko, 1996 for a review) concluded that the Thinking preference was more characteristic of female leaders than of women in general. In the present study, female senior managers indeed achieved slightly higher Thinking and slightly lower Feeling scores than female middle managers and non-managers, however, the pattern of gender differences persisted at this hierarchy level as well. This result suggests that women in Hungary overall have higher Feeling and lower Thinking preference values, and the correlation is also true for senior managers.

The contribution of our study to the research of the topic is the finding that very similar dilemmas arise with regard to leadership and gender in the little-studied Central and Eastern European context to those presented more widely in the literature in the Western context (Barkhuizen et al., 2022; Hideg and Shen, 2019; Seo et al., 2017). There is an ongoing debate about whether or not female leaders have a distinct female leadership style. This feminine leadership style is characterized by greater inclusion, team orientation, and a transformative style. However, cross-cultural studies on this topic are currently lacking (House et al., 2013).

5. Unsuccessful resolution of crisis: leaders' interpretation of the failure of their startups along competence deficits - third study

5.1. Method

In our research, we analyzed startup failure stories written and published by managers, a total of 50 stories. We searched the internet for stories using the search terms

"startup + failure" and "startup + post-mortem". In the majority of the stories, the leader was a man (88%), in one case the leadership position was shared between a man and a woman, and in 10% of the sample, the leader was a woman. The examined startups operated in 23 different countries, in the following geographic regions: 20% in California, which region played a dominant role in the startup ecosystem at the time of the investigation. 28% in additional North American states, 26% in Europe, 22% in Asia and the Pacific, and 2% in Central and South America. In one case, it was not possible to determine the geographic region. 56% of the organizations in the sample provided products or services to individual customers (business-to-customer, B2C), 34% to business customers (business-to-business, B2B), and 10% targeted both customer groups.

To analyze the stories, we used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT, Flanagan, 1954), which was originally created for job competency analysis and is widely used (Koch et al., 2009).

Based on Spencer's competency model (Spencer and Spencer, 1993), we looked for the core competencies in each story, the lack of which, according to the leader, played a role in the downfall. In the first round, we used the Spencer model for the test coding of the competencies. During the trial coding, the competency definitions were supplemented with startup-specific behavioral descriptions using an inductive approach, which was necessary for 13 competency descriptions. After that, three coders familiar with the startup context coded the stories using the supplemented competency descriptions as a codebook. A total of 166 competency gaps were coded in the stories (an average of 3.3 competencies per story).

5.2. Main results

In the sample, two competence deficits stood out among the failure factors: Information search and Customer orientation, which appeared in 35 and 33 stories, respectively. Notably, 27 stories (54% of the sample) contained both. Furthermore, in 19 stories, a lack of expertise was identified as a failure factor. In 18 stories, the lack of Analytical thinking contributed to the failure of the startup, and in 18 stories, the lack of Flexibility was a key factor. Lack of five competencies did not appear as a reason for failure in any of the stories: Performance Orientation, Initiative, Conceptual Thinking, Organizational Awareness, and Developing Others.

In order to identify possible relationships between the occurrence of competence deficits, chi-square tests were performed for all possible pairs of competencies. In cases where the chi-square test was not applicable due to the low number of items, Fisher's exact test was used. We found a positive significant relationship between Customer Orientation and Information Search: χ^2 (1, N = 50) = 6.455, p = 0.01, i.e. the co-occurrence of the two competence deficits was more likely than chance. A negative significant relationship, i.e. a lower than chance probability of the co-occurrence of competence deficits, was found between Information search and Flexibility (χ^2 (1, N = 50) = 5.357, p = 0.02) and Flexibility and Self-control competence deficits (Fisher- kind's exact test p = 0.04).

5.3. Discussion

Our study showed that the lack of certain core competencies is related to the failure of the startup according to the narrative accounts of the managers. Failed startup managers mostly cited the lack of Information Search and Customer Orientation as the reason for their failure. In other words, the majority of startups failed, on the one hand, as a result of their leaders searching for data and information less consciously to make business decisions: they did not start and stop data collection at the right time, they did not choose the right information sources and data collection methods. On the other hand, in their case, there was a lack of prioritization of customer needs and problems as opposed to a focus on technological solutions. Lack of Expertise, Analytical thinking, and Flexibility are also mentioned as significant failure factors in the examined reports. In addition, we found that having the Resilience competency reduces the chance of information-seeking gaps. In other words, the flexibility of startup managers can help them avoid the trap of insufficient focus on external information.

Since we did not find a correlation between the industry, B2B/B2C characteristics, and competence gaps, this suggests that these factors, at least according to the results of this study, do not influence the extent to which competence gaps play a role in failure. Based on this, our results and the startup-specific competency descriptions can be applied to actors in several startup industries and customer sectors.

Examining our results from the point of view of the failure of the startup as an unsuccessful organizational and managerial crisis solution, we consider it important to emphasize that even in connection with this unfavorable outcome, the managers were

able to formulate lessons for the future from a competence point of view, which is related to the positive psychological approach to crises in organizations (Alexander et al., 2020; Donaldson and Donaldson, 2019).

6. Experiences related to an accidental leadership crisis: the experiences of leaders of psychodrama groups in relation to the forced interruption and reunion caused by the Covid-19 epidemic situation - fourth study

6.1. Method

We carried out our questionnaire survey with the participation of leaders of psychodrama groups, adapting to the waves of restrictions related to the Covid-19 epidemic situation. We collected data at two times, in August-September 2020, i.e. after the first wave, with the participation of 23 people leading 29 different groups, and in December 2020, i.e. during the second wave, with the participation of 20 people leading 23 different groups. Each group had 10-16 participants, their duration was between 40 and 250 hours (i.e. they lasted from a few months to three years), the number of hours already realized at the beginning of the first restrictions ranged from 8 to 242 hours (i.e. they were forced to take a break in several phases of group work). The samples included female-female and male-female lead pairs with different combinations of psychodrama training: from assistant level to therapist/leader level to trainer. In both samples, there were groups with group members or leaders over the age of 65: during the investigation, the health consequences of the Covid infection were considered most dangerous for this age group.

On a five-point Likert scale, the managers had to evaluate the quality of their experiences with the group, as well as the cooperation between the managers before, during and after the March-June forced break. Regarding the interruption, we asked about the forms, channels and frequency of communication with the group. Also, on a five-point Likert scale, they could judge their own stress level and that of the group members during the forced break. We also asked the managers about the occurrence of significant intra-group events related to the Covid situation or not. In the second questionnaire, focusing on the reunion, we asked them about the continuity of the group, the form of the group meetings (in person or online) and the rate of absences. Psychodrama techniques were also used in the questionnaires: in the first one, the participants could formulate sentences

from the role of the group and from their own leadership role (Moreno 1953, 1985) regarding the time of the forced break. In both questionnaires, they could look at the group and themselves after the reunion through a mirror (Moreno 1953, 1985) and express their perceptions. In addition, they could give themselves advice based on the most important lessons from the forced break and reunification.
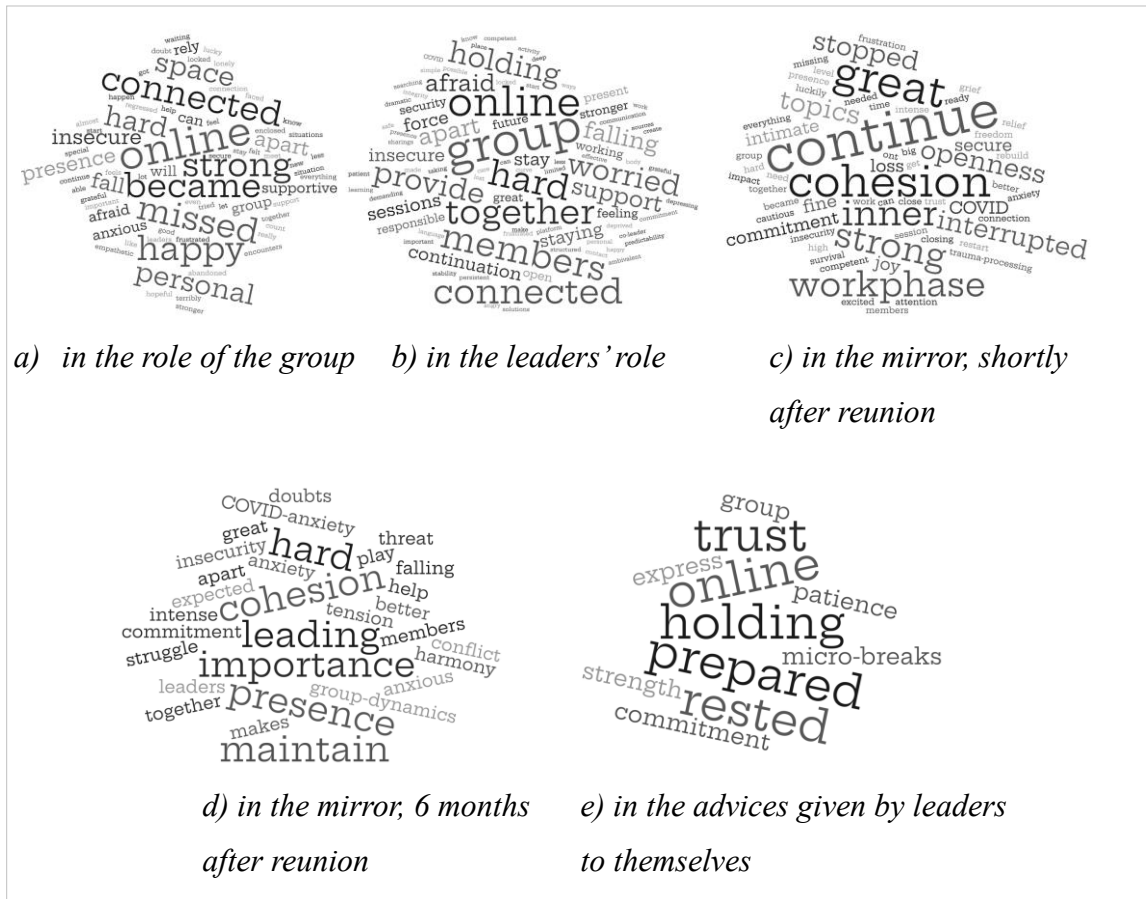
6.2. Main results

The stress on managers during the forced break was a significant and immediate effect, which is related to other phenomena in a number of ways. One of the possible risks of a higher level of stress for managers was the intensity of communication with the group during the interruption, these two factors were moderately correlated: the result of the Spearman correlation calculation was $r_s (27) = 0.586$, $p = 0.001$. This connection can be explained by the pressure caused by the use of new forms of communication. Another possible explanation is that in case of more intensive communication, the stress experienced by the group members due to the Covid situation could have had a greater impact on the leaders, which could have increased the stress level of the leaders. These interpretations are also supported by the fact that the number of online group sessions during the forced break showed a positive correlation with the managers' stress level ($r_s (27) = 0.510$, $p = 0.004$). Another group of risk factors for managerial stress was related to the condition of the group members and their managerial perception: these factors are the occurrence of crises among the group members ($r_s (27) = 0.471$, $p = 0.010$) and the perceived stress level of the group members ($r_s (27) = 0.546$, $p = 0.002$). Effective cooperation between managers was found to be an important protective factor against stress ($r_s (27) = –0.405$, $p = 0.029$). The stress on managers during the forced break had a significant effect on the rate of absences after reunification: $r_s (27) = 0.429$, $p = 0.020$. The absenteeism rate did not show a significant correlation with any other variable examined when assessing the direct effects.

Similar to the immediate effects, the stress experienced by the leaders during the interruption had lasting negative consequences after the face-to-face reunion. There was a moderate negative correlation between the stress experienced during the interruption and the quality of the leaders' experiences with the group after the reunion: $r_s (17) = –0.529$, $p = 0.020$. Another similarity to the immediate effects is that the effective cooperation of the managers also played a positive role in the long term. Initial good

cooperation between leaders before the first interruption acted as a protective factor against absenteeism after group reunification: r_s (21) = −0.432, p = 0.039. Leaders' group experience related to reunification showed a moderate positive correlation with group continuity: r_s (16) = 0.474, p = 0.047.

Figure 3 summarizes the frequency of themes found in the managers' experiences formulated using psychodramatic techniques.

a) in the role of the group   b) in the leaders' role   c) in the mirror, shortly
                                                              after reunion

d) in the mirror, 6 months   e) in the advices given by leaders
after reunion   to themselves

Figure 3

Frequency of topics mentioned by managers using different psychodrama techniques

Leading the groups proved to be demanding due to the anxiety and intense group dynamics, as reflected in the themes in Figure 3. Looking back at the entire group process from the time of the second closure in December, through the first closure and the reunion, the managers' advice focused on online work: with strong group cohesion and well-prepared for the online meetings, you can trust the usefulness of the process.

6.3. Discussion

Our study showed that the unique, novel and unexpected forced break of external origin, which was caused by the restrictions related to the Covid-19 epidemic, had a significant impact on the ongoing psychodrama groups in Hungary. The situation provided an opportunity to examine the effects on leaders, group members and the group process. The data showed that adaptation to new forms of communication, crisis and stress perceived by group members contributed to the leaders' own stress levels. A significant result of our research is that it showed that effective cooperation between managers can be considered a protective factor. All these factors had a lasting effect on the continuity of the group, the rate of absences, and the quality of the leaders' group experience after the group was reunited.

The leaders' narratives provide an explanation for the above connections. New forms of online communication and group occasions were a means of continuity and group cohesion, at the same time putting more pressure on leaders to respond to uncertainty and to build and operate new forms of communication. As a result of the period of forced hiatus, after reunification, they found themselves facing either group process difficulties or increased group cohesion. As a lesson, the leaders stated that the earlier and the more often online channels are used, the better they do for group cohesion and continuity. This is consistent with Burlingame et al.'s (2018) findings on the relationships between leadership interventions, intragroup interactions, and group cohesion.

7. The impact of a recurrent accidental leadership crisis situation: The challenges of the waves of the Covid-19 epidemic situation in the daily work of organizational leaders - fifth study

7.1. Method

We collected data among organizational leaders in Hungary at three points in time, in line with the waves of restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. A structured interview after the first wave (March - June 2020 with 333 participants), during the joint second-third wave (November 2020 - January 2021 with 332 participants), and during the fourth wave (October - December 2021 with 707 with a participant) using an online questionnaire, i.e. a total of 1,372 managers took part in the tests. Although the sampling was not longitudinal and non-representative, the three samples showed similar

characteristics: men (54.4%) were slightly in the majority compared to women (45.6%), who were mainly experienced managers (on average 11 years as managers role), there were a similar proportion of junior, middle and senior managers among the respondents (30.1%, 36% and 33.9% respectively). Our respondents came from organizations of various sizes in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

For the first data collection, we used the structured interview method, and based on the results of the interviews, we included additional measurement tools in the subsequent questionnaire surveys, and on the topic of challenges related to managerial tasks, we created answer options for the closed questions of the questionnaire from the answers to the open questions of the interview. During each data collection, we assessed the most significant challenges related to the epidemic situation affecting the respondents' organization and daily work. We examined the effectiveness of management crisis management using the Hungarian version of Hadley et al.'s (2011) 9-item C-LEAD questionnaire, translated by us. The leadership style was examined only in the two questionnaire data collection, using the 6 S version of the multifactor leadership questionnaire (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, MLQ) used in our previous studies (Bass and Avolio, 1992). Organizational trust was examined using the Hungarian version of the Organizational Trust Questionnaire (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000) translated by us. Respondents could describe the organizational culture of their workplace according to Cameron and Quinn's model of competing values (Cameron and Quinn, 1988, 1999, 2011; Cameron et al., 2022), by distributing 100 points between the four culture types of the model, based on the type that received the most points, leaders of market, hierarchy, clan and adhocracy cultures were present in the sample.

7.2. Main results

The significant impact of the epidemic situation on personal contact was also reflected in the examined sample: while before the Covid-19 epidemic, daily personal contact was typical for more than 70% of the respondents, this proportion dropped below 20% during the first wave. and 2-3. nor did it reach 45% during the 4th wave.

In the first wave, controlling work processes and motivating subordinates were the most frequently mentioned managerial challenges. In the following waves, the average effects of the various challenges showed only a small deviation from the neutral effect,

within which the managers considered the maintenance of organizational identity and group cohesion to be the most difficult.

Figure 4 shows the development of organizational trust in different organizational cultures during each epidemic wave.
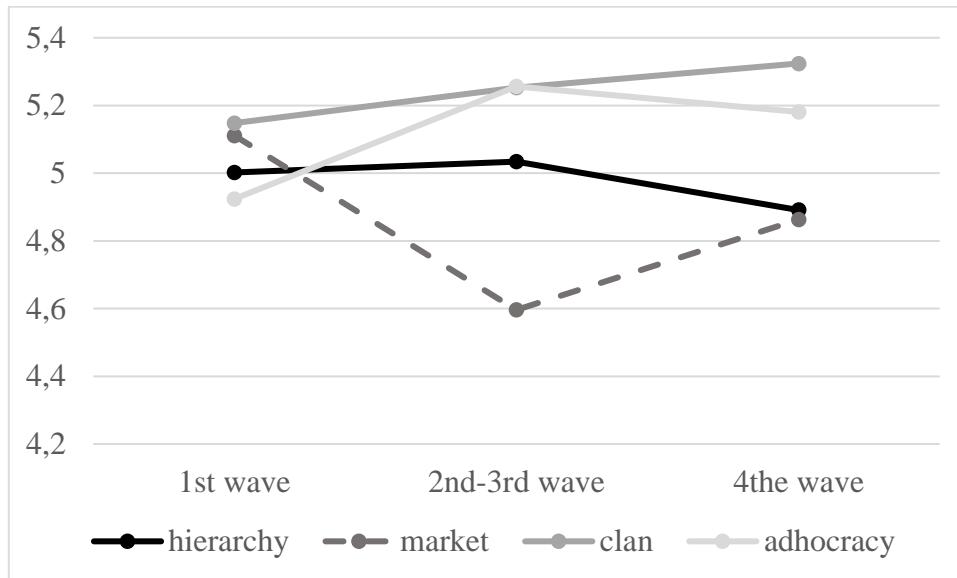
Figure 4

The evolution of organizational trust (on a scale of 1-7) in the waves of the epidemic in different organizational cultures

Wave 1 n = 333, 2-3. wave n = 332, wave 4 n = 707

Significant differences between the values shown in the figure were found in favor of clan-type cultures (a Bonferroni-corrected p-value of 0.004 was used to determine significance): 4th wave clan vs. hierarchy and market (Kruskal-Wallis: $H(3) = 25.513$, $p < 0.001$).

The impact of the Covid-19 situation on managerial work, i.e. the factors affecting the Covid-specific challenges as a dependent variable, was examined using hierarchical linear regression analysis on the data of the 4th wave, the results of which are shown in Table 1. The segment and culture categorical variables were dummy coded and included in the analysis.

Table 1

The result of the hierarchical linear regression analysis

	Model 1 Covid-specific organisational factors	Model 2 General organisational factors	Model 3 Leadership factor(s)[a]
	b	b	b
Intercept	1.929***	1.893***	1.327***
Home office %	0.042	0.025	0.023
Covid impact on organisation	0.481***	0.476***	0.467***
Segment: public vs for profit		0.142	0.142
Segment: public vs non-profit		-0.127	-0.104
Culture: clan vs hierarchy		-0.008	0.041
Culture: clan vs market		0.176	0.231 +
Culture: clan vs adhocracy		0.383 *	0.404 *
Culture: clan vs mixed		-0.219 +	-0.186 +
Trust			0.112 **
N	704	704	704
R^2	.324	.346	.353
Adjusted R^2	.322	.339	.345
AIC	-11.765	-22.880	-28.616
F statistic (against null)	$F(2, 701) = 168.30$***	$F(8, 695) = 45.99$***	$F(9,694) = 42.13$***
F (against previous model)		$F(6, 695) = 3.87$***	$F(1, 694) = 7.67$**

+: $p < 0.10$; *: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$. a: Only organizational trust was included in this one-level model, the managerial variables determining trust were analyzed separately. Dependent variable: The effect of the Covid situation on the manager's work (higher values indicate a more positive effect).

Based on our results, the impact of the Covid situation on the organization was the strongest predictor of the impact on managerial work, and model 3 had the greatest explanatory power. Organizational trust proved to be a significant explanatory variable when all the variables of the previous models were controlled. We analyzed the correlation of this factor with the other investigated leadership variables separately using a path model on the data of the 4th wave, which is shown in Figure 5.
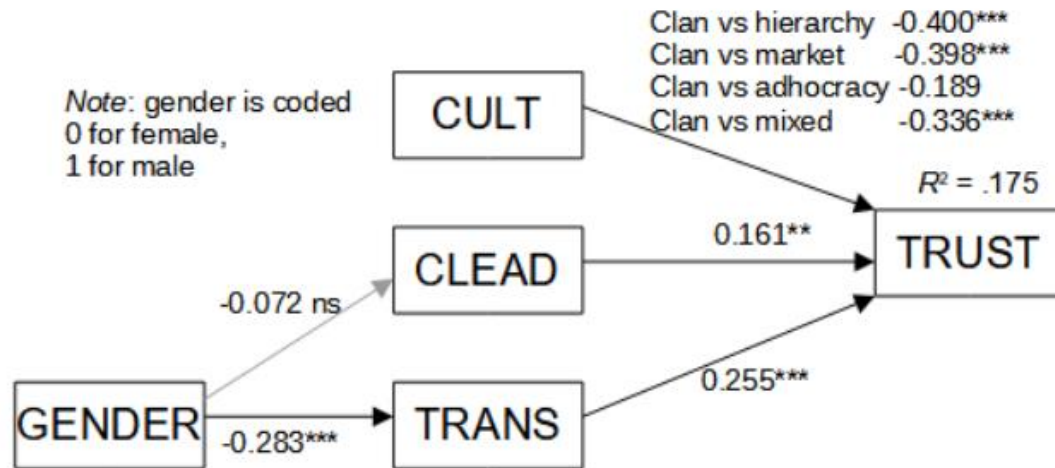
Figure 5

Results of the path model examining organizational trust as a dependent variable (n = 704)

CULT: organizational culture, CLEAD: crisis management, TRANS: transformational leadership, TRUST: organizational trust

Based on the path model, organizational culture proved to be an explanatory variable in relation to organizational trust, and the advantage of clan-type culture was also shown here. In addition, factors related to leadership, the effectiveness of crisis management, and to a greater extent transformational leadership affect organizational trust. Of these, the leader's gender only showed a significant correlation with transformational leadership: this style was more characteristic of female leaders.

7.3. Discussion

Our results, in line with the results of other research, showed that the Covid-19 epidemic situation had an impact on Hungarian organizations and managers, typically posed challenges and negatively affected the work of managers (Patóné Szűcs et al., 2022; Poór et al., 2021). Similar to other reports, our samples also showed a decrease in personal manager-subordinate contact, which did not disappear even when the epidemic situation subsided. It is worth noting that as the epidemic situation progressed, due to diminishing personal relationships, the managers rated the maintenance of group cohesion and the organizational identity of their subordinates as the most difficult challenges. This is related to functioning in interpersonal leadership roles (Mintzberg, 1975, 2013), and

indicates that in the changed situation, leaders must look for new ways to operate these roles.

Among the explanatory variables of the Covid-specific leadership challenges, we found the impact of the Covid situation on the organization, as well as the beneficial role of clan culture and organizational trust, surprisingly, however, manager-subordinate personal contact did not have a significant impact on the situation. All of this indicates that even an unexpectedly exploding external circumstance, the effect of restrictions, has a completely different impact on the leader's everyday life, depending on his personal functioning and organizational culture. Organizational trust was shown to be the mediating factor through which the effectiveness of the leader's crisis management and transformational leadership showed their impact on leadership performance, which can be linked to the results of Katou's (2015) study, which showed the mediating role of organizational trust in transformational leadership and organizational performance. between. These results of ours are in line with the previous research that showed the role of transformational leadership (Lowe et al., 1996) and organizational trust (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006) in the process of organizational adaptation. In addition, our results are related to research results examining the positive effects of solving the Covid-19 epidemic situation as an organizational crisis (Finstad et al., 2021; Kutieshat and Farmanesh, 2022).

## 8. The impact of a crisis on leadership roles: leadership roles in the "new normal" - sixth study

8.1. Method

In our study, we recruited managers working in Hungarian workplaces through convenience sampling, with whom we conducted structured interviews and asked them to forward an online questionnaire to their subordinates. The managers whose at least two subordinates filled out the questionnaire were included in the data analysis. Data collection took place between October 2022 and May 2023. 68% of the 47 participating managers are men, 32% are women, their average age is 46.5 years (standard deviation 11 years). On average, they had 15.1 years of managerial experience at the time of the investigation (standard deviation 10 years), and managed 17 subordinates on average (standard deviation 28).

We asked the leaders questions regarding Mintzberg's (2013) leadership roles: they had to judge the importance of the roles (cognitive aspect), the time spent in them (behavioral aspect) on a scale of 0-3, as well as how they feel in the given role a - on a scale from 3 to +3 (affective aspect). Then they could choose the three roles whose importance increased or decreased the most in the past period, in connection with the global challenges affecting the organization immediately following the Covid-19 pandemic, i.e. the "new normal" organizational reality. We asked the subordinates about their perceptions regarding the above, with the difference that instead of the feelings experienced in the leadership role, they could evaluate the perceived leadership effectiveness in the given role on a scale from -3 to +3. The leadership style was examined using the 6 S version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) used in our previous studies (Bass and Avolio, 1992) to measure both the leaders' self-characterization and subordinates' perception. We examined organizational trust with the Organizational Trust Questionnaire used in our previous studies (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000) for both managers and their subordinates, which, like our previous study, was supplemented with three items related to the impact of challenges outside the current organization. We asked both the leaders and their subordinates to rate the impact of the current global external challenges on the organization as a whole and on the leader's daily work on a scale ranging from -3 to +3, on the following challenges: Pandemic situation and related restrictions, Lack of raw materials, Energy crisis, Inflation, Russian-Ukrainian war.

8.2. Main results

Figure 6 shows the importance of each role as judged by managers, the time spent in them and the feelings experienced in relation to them.
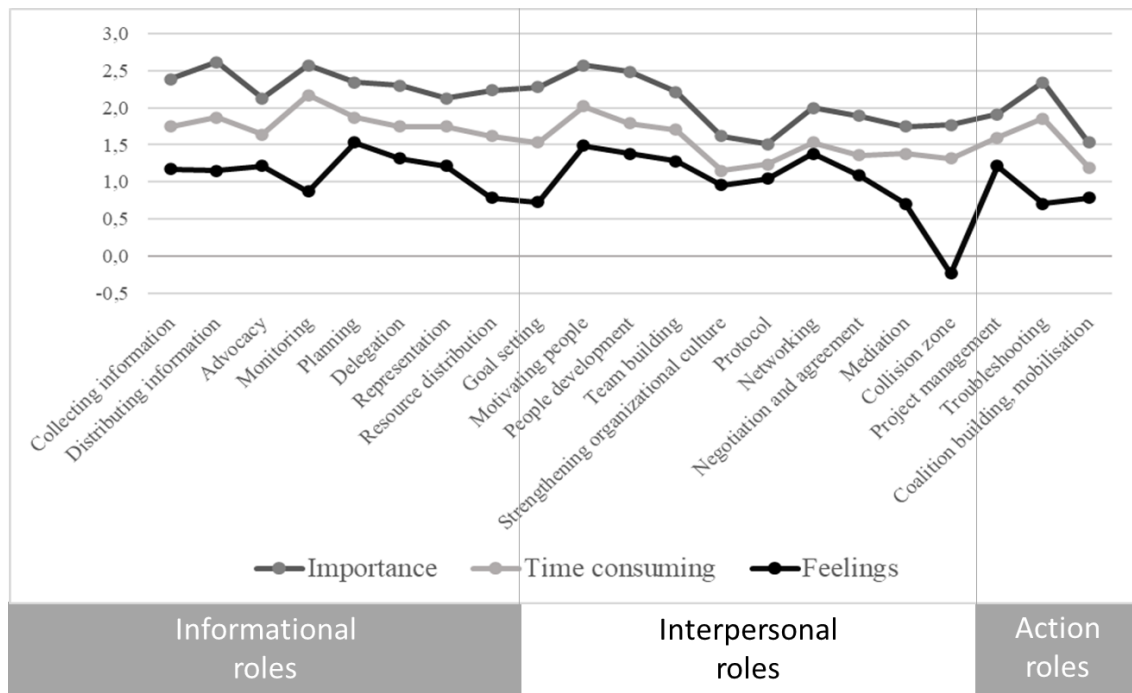
Figure 6

According to the leaders, the importance of leadership roles, the time spent in them and the feelings experienced in relation to them

The importance and time requirements of the roles show a similar pattern, however, the feelings experienced in each role show positive and negative deviations from this pattern. The importance of eight leadership roles was reduced by global challenges, as indicated by moderate, negative Spearman correlation values between the increase in the importance of the roles and the global challenge index (the average of the impact of challenges on leadership work). These roles are Information Dissemination (r_s = -0.497, p = 0.001), Representation (r_s = -0.311, p = 0.038), Team Building (r_s = -0.298, p = 0.047), Organizational Culture Reinforcement (r_s = -0.304, p = 0.043), Protocol (r_s = -0.305, p = 0.042), Negotiation agreement (r_s = -0.341, p = 0.022), Mediation (r_s = -0.526, p < 0.001), Coalition building, mobilization (r_s = - 0.339, p = 0.023).

The subordinates perceived the importance of leadership roles differently for their leaders, in the case of six roles we only found a medium-strength relationship between the two values measured by Spearman correlation: Goal setting (r_s = 0.461, p = 0.001), Motivating people (r_s = 0.324, p = 0.026), Team building (r_s = 0.389, p = 0.007), Protocol (r_s = 0.329, p = 0.024), Negotiation and Agreement (r_s = 0.443, p = 0.002), Troubleshooting (r_s = 0.407, p = 0.005). In the case of the vast majority of roles, their

assessment of the effectiveness of their leader was related to the perceived importance of the roles and how much time they saw the leader spend in the given role.

We found little relationship between managers' assessment of leadership style and subordinates' perceptions. Only in the case of the transformational style was there a moderate Spearman correlation between the two ($r_s = 0.594$, $p < 0.001$). The effectiveness perceived by the subordinates in the individual roles was in most cases moderately correlated with the perceived transformational leadership style (in the case of 18 roles) and the transactional leadership style (in the case of 16 roles), but in no case did it show a correlation with the perceived laissez-faire style. Organizational trust was moderately associated with perceived effectiveness in 15 leadership roles.

8.3. Discussion

The results of the study proved that Mintzberg's (2013) leadership roles can be applied to the investigation of managers in the "new normal" organizational reality of global challenges immediately following the Covid-19 epidemic situation. The reliability of the developed leadership roles questionnaire proved to be adequate, its validity is supported by its relationship with other constructs describing leadership functioning (leadership styles) and influencing factors (global challenges), and its applicability to multiple work organization and management contexts, which are largely independent of organizational and managerial demographic characteristics. In addition, it was confirmed that leadership roles are changing.

The discrepancies between the cognitive, behavioral and affective attitude dimensions of the leadership roles indicate that adaptation to the recently changed and still changing leadership roles is underway: the leaders recognized the change in the importance of the roles and incorporated them at the behavioral level, however, it can explain the difference in their emotional attitudes , that they are not yet there in the acceptance of the change, as in the recognition and behavioral adaptation.

A possible explanation for the change in the relationship to the roles is that the current situation activates the issues of shaping, maintaining and further developing the leadership identity, as Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) approach to identity work suggests. Global challenges as critical events (Lanka et al., 2020) can be significant catalysts for the further development of leadership identity.

Our study confirmed that the global challenges of the "new normal" - the aftermath of the epidemic situation, the shortage of raw materials and assets, the energy crisis, inflation and the Russian-Ukrainian war and the labor shortage - are affecting leadership roles, of which the labor shortage is predicted to be a permanent condition in some segments (Delany, 2022; Vyas, 2022).

We found the perception of subordinates to be significantly different from that of managers, both in terms of the perception of global challenges affecting managerial work and the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of leadership roles. Our results indicate that the perceptions of subordinates are much different from those of managers, but form a coherent system that strongly determines the judgment of managerial effectiveness. Possible explanations for the differences in perception are the leaders' bias towards social desirability (Krumpal, 2011) and the actor-observer perception bias (Martinko and Gardner, 1987).

In accordance with our expectations, the connection between the transformational leadership style and leadership effectiveness discussed widely in the literature was confirmed (Lowe et al., 1996; Dumdum et al., 2013; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020): this style was associated with the effectiveness of most leadership roles. At the same time, the similar role of the perceived transactional style is surprising, for which few previous studies have reached similar results (see, for example, Kalsoom, 2018). Cultural characteristics can also explain such a positive perception of style (a similar result was reached in the Romanian context by Fein et al., 2015).

The prominent role of organizational trust was confirmed in this study as well (Katou, 2015), especially in the case of roles related to relations between leader and subordinates.

9. Limitations, future directions

The generalizability of the results of the *first study* is limited by the fact that the study was carried out on a non-representative sample. Another limitation is that abbreviated measuring instruments were used to measure leadership styles, and that, in the case of qualitative methodologies, the coding process necessarily remains subjective even with the assurance of inter-coder reliability. When interpreting the results, it is also important to take into account that we only asked participants who were in a leadership position at the time of the study and had leadership experience about their experiences, not those

who returned to a non-leadership position after trying out a leadership position. Future studies focusing on them can provide new perspectives for further understanding the experience of becoming a leader and the implicit leadership image.

The data of the *second study* is descriptive and is based entirely on the self-characterization of the participants. Possible explanatory and driving context variables were not included in the study. For example, we did not collect data on perceived cultural norms and normative pressures in participants' teams, type of industry, nature of tasks, or gender composition of participants' work groups. These factors are known to influence women's leadership willingness and effectiveness (e.g. Chen and Houser, 2019). Overall, these limitations hinder causal inferences. Future research should consider the influence of these variables.

The sampling method used in the *third study* has certain limitations. Our sources of information were exclusively the managers of the startups. Based on the study by Bajwa et al. (2017), it is possible that startup leaders have a more positive attitude towards failure than other types of entrepreneurs and leaders (see also Politis and Gabrielsson, 2009), which may lead to biased recall and communication in related narratives. Some of the failed startup leaders are serial entrepreneurs (Gruber et al., 2008), so it may be important for them to develop a positive business image. Second, the length of time between the failure of the startups and the publication of the stories varied from story to story, and the stories were published to a specific target audience. Third, although qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research, it is worth noting the limiting role of sample size, especially in the case of infrequently mentioned competencies.

The interpretability of the results of the *fourth study* is limited by the size of the sample, and the cross-sectional sampling, together with the results of the questionnaires taken in the second and sixth months after the reunification, unanimously indicate that the stress level and cooperation of the leaders play a key role in shaping the group processes after the reunification. Further research conducted on a larger sample and longitudinal sampling can provide an opportunity to examine the effects of multiple forced breaks on the same group, thereby also examining the evolution of managerial experiences and the effects of managerial interventions.

Our *fifth study* was carried out on non-representative and cross-sectional samples, which is why it is limited to generalize our results to a wider range of managers and to

the evolution of adaptation to the epidemic situation over time. Our measurement tools and the size of the sample made it possible to use multivariate statistical methods on the sample of the 4th wave, but this wave represented a later phase of adaptation for the managers, where neither the external influences were so unexpected, nor the organizational practices and solutions they were missing to the same extent as in previous waves. Therefore, from the point of view of future investigations, it may be important to examine the possible explanatory factors at times as close as possible to the change. For an even more precise understanding of the impact of epidemic-like situations on managerial work and managerial adaptation, it may be worthwhile to include variables describing managerial functioning in further studies that are related to the most important challenges named in our results. The model of leadership roles (Mintzberg, 1975, 2013) can provide a promising opportunity for all of this.

Our *sixth study* was conducted on a smaller and non-representative sample, which limits the generalizability of our results. We could not verify the reliability of the Informational and Acting leadership role groups as subscales, therefore, for this and for a more nuanced understanding of each Mintzberg role, further qualitative studies are needed. The self-reported nature of the survey carries the possibility of response biases, as indicated by the differences in the perceptions of managers and their subordinates. At the same time, our results give us the opportunity to take further steps towards the creation of a model that takes into account the cognitive, affective, behavioral dimensions and effectiveness of leadership roles, leadership style, organizational trust and the impact of global challenges on a larger sample and by further developing the questionnaire examining leadership roles.

10. Summary and conclusions

Overall, in various situations and methods, using the possibilities of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, we examined the process of the development of leadership identity through various crisis situations from several perspectives. Our summary findings across individual researches, which also take limitations into account, are presented below.

10.1.   Hungarian employees have a recognizable implicit leadership image that we can study

In the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees, the themes of operative management and friendliness are emphasized, in accordance with the results of previous international research (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004). In addition, the topics of consistency and responsibility, which were not identified by previous research as factors of the implicit leadership image, also appear prominently. Further cross-cultural studies are needed to determine whether these may be culture-specific characteristics.

From the point of view of leadership styles, the implicit leadership image of Hungarian employees is characterized mostly by the behavior characteristics of the democratic, humble, serving and transformational style. This is consistent with many studies that have shown positive perceptions and effectiveness of transformational leadership style (Bakker et al., 2022; Bowers et al., 2017; Dumdum et al., 2013; Lowe et al., 1996; Pillai, 2013; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). Similar results are available regarding the effectiveness of democratic (Crosby, 2021), humble (Kelemen et al., 2023) and servant (Zhang et al., 2021) leadership styles. At the same time, Hungarian employees also show a preference for a transactional style of leadership, with few previous studies reaching similar results (Kalsoom, 2018). It is possible that cultural factors play an explanatory role in this (Fein et al., 2015), but further cross-cultural studies are necessary to establish this.

10.2.   The implicit depiction of the process of becoming a leader can be characterized as a developmental crisis narrative among Hungarian leaders

For Hungarian leaders, the process of becoming a leader is typically depicted along the themes of transformation, the unknown, fulfillment, feedback, obstacles, self-reflection and impact on others. As a whole, the process can be characterized by the narrative of the development crisis that arises naturally from the situation and is realized in the interaction with the environment. This is in line with previous international (Komives et al., 2009; Lanka et al., 2020; Skinner, 2020) and Hungarian research results (Bokor and Radácsi, 2006a, 2006b).

The majority of Hungarian leaders explicitly characterize their leadership career as a developmental trend, which indicates that becoming a leader is a positive solution to all

developmental crises. This can be linked to the positive psychological approach to crises, which is also receiving more and more attention in the context of organizational psychology (Alexander et al., 2020; Donaldson and Donaldson, 2019).

10.3. The accidental crises of the leaders' career contribute to the development of the leader identity

In our investigations of various accidental crisis situations, the participating managers included those who solved the given crisis more or less successfully. Based on our results, even those who solved crises less successfully learned from these situations: failed startup leaders, psychodrama leaders who did not preserve the continuity of the group, and leaders of organizations that found themselves in difficult situations during or after the Covid-19 epidemic were able to formulate lessons that will inform their subsequent leadership can be developed.

The identity development "gain" of those who solve crises more successfully is not only the more effective functioning as a leader (which was measured by the continuity of the psychodrama group, the leadership styles or leadership roles applied in the organizational environment), but also the lessons they formulated are integrated into their leadership identity and contribute for its continuous development. These results can also be linked to a positive psychological approach to crises (Alexander et al., 2020; Donaldson and Donaldson, 2019). They are also consistent with theories of continuous leadership identity development across the leadership career (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Lanaj et al., 2021).

10.4. Personal and contextual factors influence the process and possible outcomes of leadership identity development

Among the personal factors, we found an influencing effect of the leader's gender on the career opportunities of Hungarian managers: while men had a greater chance of moving up the company ladder, and more flexible paths were open to them to reach the top of the hierarchy, women had a lower chance of doing so overall, and the to succeed, they had to either have stereotypically feminine personality preferences (intuition and feeling) or resemble the most common male senior management personality preferences (a combination of extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging). This is in line with international and domestic findings on the underrepresentation of women in leadership

(Barkhuizen et al., 2022; Hideg and Shen, 2019; Nagy, 2012; Nagy et al., 2022; Seo et al., 2017).

The role of the cultural context arises in close connection with the role of the leader's gender: in the case of Hungarian organizations, the leadership identity development of men and women differs due to the preference for masculine values (Nagy and Vicsek, 2008, 2014).

Organizational culture as a contextual factor influenced the success of managers in dealing with an accidental crisis during the Covid-19 epidemic situation and in the subsequent "new normal". Leaders of clan cultures that are flexible and pay attention to the members of the organization had the highest effectiveness (measured using organizational trust and leadership style), even in cases where they were more negatively affected by the crisis compared to other culture types. This is partly in line with previous results regarding the influence of organizational culture (Tran, 2021; Xie et al., 2020), further cross-cultural studies can answer the question of how much the advantage of clan cultures is a characteristic of Hungarian organizational culture.

Among the situational contexts, our research results examining the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic situation and the immediately following "new normal" point to the ongoing transformation of leadership roles. This is of particular importance from the point of view of future research on leadership identity development, because the leadership role itself is significantly changing, to which employees relate both through the implicit leadership image, during leadership socialization, and in connection with their own perception of the leader (Bonacini et al., 2021; Caligiuri et al., 2020, Dias Da Silva et al., 2023).

10.5. The implicit leadership theory affects the perception of the current leader and the attitude towards one's own leadership role

According to our results, the perception of the current leader's effectiveness and satisfaction with him is influenced by how similar he is to the implicit leader image. Hungarian employees mostly characterize their leaders with the characteristics of autocratic and transactional leadership styles, as opposed to the democratic, humble, serving and transformational styles expected of the ideal leader. In addition, the perception of the leader was influenced by the perceived time spent in each leadership

role and the perceived importance of the given role by followers, which typically differed from the leaders' perception. Further studies can provide an answer to the question of whether this difference can be linked to the followers' implicit leadership image. These results can be included in the series of previous research results that refer to the relationship between implicit leadership image, leadership style, certain performance characteristics and followers' job satisfaction from different perspectives (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014; Menon, 2014; Epitropkai and Martin, 2005; Specchia et al., 2021).

The attitude towards one's leadership role was examined along the lines of cognitive, affective and behavioral attitude dimensions related to the changing leadership roles in the "new normal" immediately following the Covid-19 epidemic situation. The detected discrepancies indicate that adaptation to the changing leadership roles is in progress: different emotional attitudes compared to the cognitive and behavioral dimensions may indicate that they are not yet there in accepting the change, as in recognizing it and adapting behaviorally. This is in line with models and research results that articulate the continuous evolution of leadership identity and emphasize the identity-shaping role of critical events and crisis situations (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Bokor and Radácsi, 2006a, 2006b, Komives et al., 2009; Lanka et al., 2020; Skinner , 2020).

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12. Publication list of the doctoral candidate

12.1. Articles and conference presentations related to the topic of the dissertation

Czibor, A., Szathmári, E., Szabó, Zs. P., Restás, P., Kázmér-Mayer, Sz., & Bents, R. (2019). A Golden Profiler of Personality (GPOP) magyar változatának pszichometriai jellemzői. *Alkalmazott Pszichológia, 19*(2), 99-123. https://doi.org/10.17627/ALKPSZICH.2019.2.99

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