# Perception of Creative Identities by Leaders and Non-leaders: Consequences for Theory and Practice of Management

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*Abstract:*

*Purpose: The perception of creative identities of leaders, creators, entrepreneurs, managers, and artists determines the attitude towards thinking and motivations of decisions of individuals with and without leadership factors. Creativity, a crucial factor of today's society and economic development, is a widely requested feature of individuals and groups – particularly in business organisations.*

*Design/methodology/approach: An international interdisciplinary quantitative research of 160 leaders and non-leaders. The chi-square test of independence was used at p < 0.001.*

*Findings: There are no statistical variances in assessing the creative identities of a leader, creator, entrepreneur, manager, and artist between individuals with and without leader's identities. The leadership potential exists in each individual. The additional qualitative analysis revealed that individuals with and without a leader's identity see particular features of these identities slightly differently.*

*Practical implications: The results can be used to understand the qualities of a leader's identity and the perception of creative identities by individuals, groups, and societies dominated by persons with and without leadership factors. The applicability of the findings, mainly due to the role of leadership in today's world as potential laying in each individual, is broad.*

*Originality value: The following groups may practically benefit the study's outcomes: 1) Managers desiring to understand the discrepancies in the explored identities' perceptions by groups, organisations, and societies dominated by leaders and non-leaders. 2) Creative individuals (leaders, creators, entrepreneurs, managers, artists) for a) better understanding the diverse levels of their personality with highlighting the matter of complex identity, b) discrepancies of own identity with the general perception of a particular role by leaders and non-leaders. 3) Scholars wanting to investigate the correspondences and differences between identity and its perception regarding leadership, creativity, entrepreneurship, managing, and artistry by leaders and non-leaders.*

*Keywords: Leader's identity, leadership, creator's identity, creativity, creativeness, entrepreneur's identity, entrepreneurship, manager's identity, artist's identity, artistry.*

*JEL classification: D91, J19, L26, M54, Z11.*

*Paper Type: Research study.*

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## 1. Introduction and Theoretical Background

Leaders play a vital function in each social group and organisation. Without them, achieving demanding goals would be limited or even impossible. Leaders need followers; they also need to inspire creative individuals to reach clouds. Due to the above, leaders' perception of creative individuals plays an essential role that affects the quality of cooperation, the efficiency of performance, and the group's creativity. Based on the social identity theory, creative individuals playing an essential role in groups and organisations are leaders stimulating people to grow and desire goals, creators erecting concepts with imagination, entrepreneurs undertaking risk and founding organisations, managers systematising and completing targets, artists constituting a separate category of individuals "seeing more." These creative individuals have often entitled artists of their professions (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a). Based on the attribution theory, identity alters with time and needs identity work (Gaudette *et al.,* 2020). Researchers investigate the leading source of professional success of individuals with creative identities and describe talent and education as two critical issues (Celuch *et al.,* 2017).

Perception of the creative identities by society is not evident, especially that these identities occur mostly merged in twosomes, like artist-entrepreneur (Bass, 2017; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021b), artist-leader, artist-manager, manager-entrepreneur (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a; 2021d), or threesomes, like creator-artist-manager or artist-manager-entrepreneur (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021b). Individuals with complex identities feel dilemmas, internal difficulties, and identity tensions (Hay, 2014; Mochalova, 2020). On the other side, they expose unique possibilities, potentials, and skills. These individuals control their particular identities using identity work and regulation, paradoxical thinking and develop creativity (Antal *et al.,* 2016; Cuganesan, 2017; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021c). Complex-identity individuals have difficulties describing who they are.

There is no examination linking identity perceptions by individuals with and without a leader's identity. Filling this gap was the goal of this research, and inspecting the variances in the perception of the creative identities by leaders and non-leaders should reveal supplementary outcomes. Two hypotheses were designed for this study: H1) There are differences in perception of the leader's, creator's, entrepreneur's, manager's, and artist's identities between leaders and non-leaders. H2) The differences in perception of the leader's, creator's, entrepreneur's, manager's, and artist's identities between leaders and non-leaders are not the same and vary in the case of each of the particular identities.

## 2. Research Objective and Methodology

Quantitative research was based on a questionnaire containing the examined phenomenon's dimensions and specific indicators describing the examined phenomenons (Nowak, 2007). The examination was supposed to form distinct registers of indicators

for each dimension. Groups of indicators for distinct dimensions were changed based on the literature on leadership, creativity, entrepreneurship, management, and artistry. Inspecting individual groups of indicators showed that each indicator favoured for different dimensions may label each observed dimension. After that, a solitary register of 50 indicators was created and used for all studied dimensions.

The survey named "Perception of creativity, artistry, entrepreneurship, leadership and managerial abilities" was separated into four divisions. First, a list of questions (each connected to a single indicator) was split into thematic parts, scanning each examined dimension. All questions were close-type, and a five-point Likert scale was built for answers: 1. *definitely not*, 2. *rather not*, 3. *hard to say*, 4. *rather yes*, and 5. *definitely yes*. Next, questions were organised about the relation of each analysed dimension to other dimensions. Finally, in the third division, the research participants expressed their identity concerning each investigated dimension. In the end, questions about age, gender, education of the respondents, and the assessment of their own identity were asked.

The nonparametric chi-square test of independence dedicated to small samples without a normal distribution was used to confirm both hypotheses at $p < 0.001$. Data were analysed using MS Excel. However, developed statistics were not performed due to the relatively small sample size (n = 160). Therefore, this article displays only a fragment of the results from the research (Szostak, 2020b; 2021b; 2021d; 2021c; 2021a; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021a).

The survey was active for 30 days between December 2020 and January 2021. The estimated number of people requested to contribute to the research was 2-3 thousand. Eight hundred seventy-nine individuals were finally involved in taking part in the investigation. Finally, one hundred sixty individuals contributed to the examination (18.2% of all interested).

Persons with a leader's identity (answering *definitely yes* or *rather yes*) represented 42.98% of the respondents. Individuals without a leader's identity (answering *rather not* or *definitely not*) represented 37.19% of the respondents. Individuals having issues defining their leader's identity represented 19.83% of the respondents, and their answers were omitted in this research. The structure of the respondents was the following: 57.5% of men and 42.5% women; secondary education 15.75%, higher education 64.57%, above doctoral degrees 18.90%. The respondents represented 28 nations.

## 3. Results and Discussion

H1 ("There are differences in perception of the leader's, creator's, entrepreneur's, manager's, and artist's identities between leaders and non-leaders") was statistically verified negatively. The *chi-square* value amounted to, 405,39 for a leader, 379,12 for a creator, 400,37 for an entrepreneur, 398,20 for a manager, and 381,70 for an artist.

For the $df = 49$, we have a value of 85.3506. On this basis, the results are statistically significant at $p = 0.001$.

H2 ("The differences in perception of the leader's, creator's, entrepreneur's, manager's, and artist's identities between leaders and non-leaders are not identically the same and vary for each of the investigated identities") was statistically verified negatively. The *chi-square* value = 40.58. For the $df = 4$, we have a value of 18.4668. The results are statistically significant at $p = 0.001$. In each investigated identity, the means of the 50 features of the identities of a leader, creator, entrepreneur, manager, and artist are not more different than 7.54% (Figure 1). Leaders underappreciate creative individuals.

**Figure 1.** *Means of the 50 features of each investigated identity perceived by leaders in comparison to non-leaders*
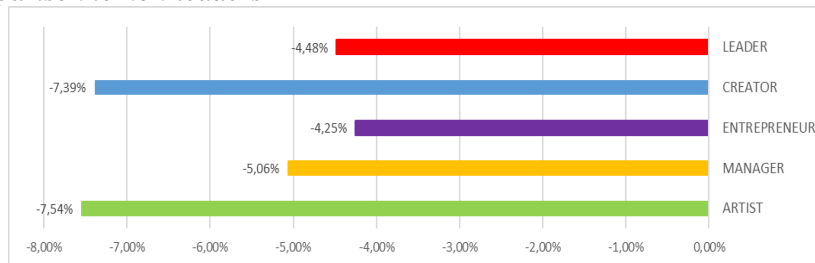


*Source: Author's elaboration.*

The hypotheses were founded to prove variances in individuals' perception of creative identities with and without a leader's identity to emphasise ordinarily perceived discrepancies between leaders and non-leaders. Their rejection was surprising and should be seen as a novelty of a leader's ability present in each individual. Although the hypotheses were statistically verified negatively, the qualitative examination of the in-depth virtues of the studied identities between leaders and non-leaders reveals the following results.
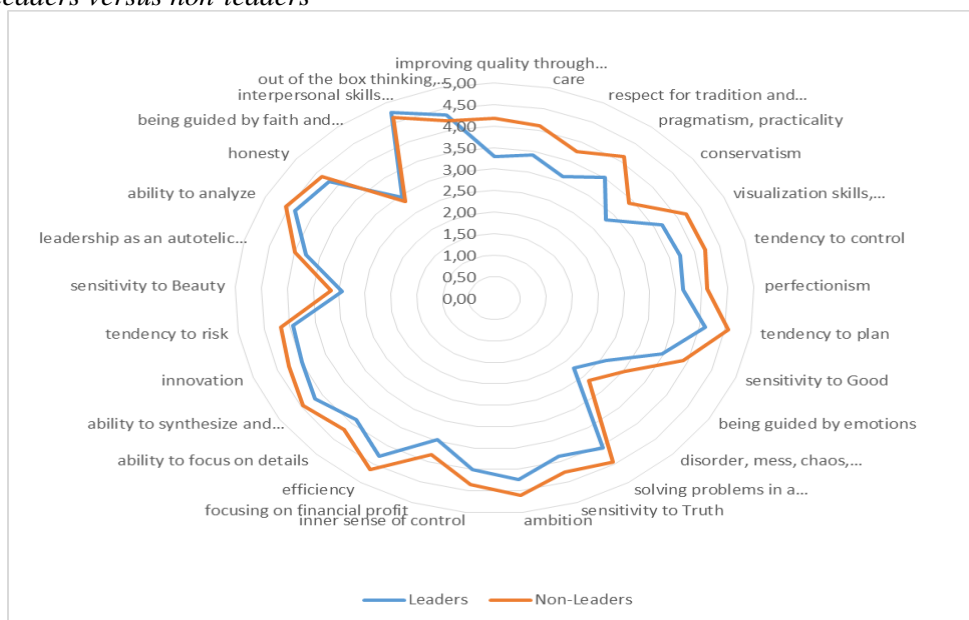
**3.1 Leader's Identity**

The ten critical qualities of a leader's identity perceived by leaders are (in descending order): interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), ability to set goals, ability to resolve conflicts, charisma, courage, responsibility, patience and persistence in achieving goals, self-confidence, observation, resistance to fails and failures. The ten most important qualities of a leader's identity perceived by non-leaders are (in descending order): charisma, ability to set goals, responsibility, ability to resolve conflicts, patience and persistence in achieving goals, courage, efficiency, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), self-confidence, ambition.

The specific 50 explored qualities of the leader's identity by leaders versus non-leaders reveal the following conclusions. The ten qualities of the leader's identity seen as less

crucial by leaders versus non-leaders are (in descending order): improving quality through repetition, care, respect for tradition and history, pragmatism (practicality), conservatism, visualisation skills (imagination), tendency to control, perfectionism, a tendency to plan, sensitivity to Good. The eight qualities of the leader's identity perceived as more critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in ascending order): the ability to resolve conflicts, justice, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, being guided by intuition, passion in action, being guided by faith and spirituality, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), out of the box thinking, breaking patterns. The ten qualities of the leader's identity seen comparably by leaders versus non-leaders are: being guided by reason (rationalism), observation, ability to set goals, resistance to fails and failures, courage, independence, individualism, ability to resolve conflicts, justice, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value. The variety of dissimilarities in the perception of the leader's identity by leaders versus non-leaders is displayed in

Leaders define themselves by personal characteristics (4.63, *very important*), talent (4.21, *rather important*), experience and achievements (4.05, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (3.74, *rather important*), self-definition (3.05, *neutral*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (2.79, *neutral*). On the other hand, non-leaders define a leader by experience and achievements (4.59, *very important*), personal characteristics (4.54, *very important*), actually performed work or occupation (4.24, *rather important*), talent (4.23, *rather important*), self-definition (3.95, *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.56, *rather important*). Considering the examined identities, the subsequent personality dimensions of a leader's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders: entrepreneurship (4.53, *rather important*), managing (4.11, *rather important*), creativity (3.79, *rather important*), and artistry (2.42, *rather not important*). On the other hand, non-leaders see personality dimensions of a leader's identity following: managing (4.49, *rather important*), entrepreneurship (4.48, *rather important*), creativity (4.24, *rather important*), and artistry (3.22, *neutral*).

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**Figure 2.** *Perception of the most differently assessed features of a leader's identity by leaders versus non-leaders*



*Source: Author's elaboration.*

There are arguments that the leader's values and approach to an organisation's identity affect the organisation's financial and non-financial results (Adler, 2006; Voss *et al.,* 2006). The research shows that focusing on financial profit is 7.10% less essential for leaders (3.47) than non-leaders (3.83). Focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, leaders (3.82) and non-leaders (3.78) assess it as also *rather important*, but the results are visibly firmer. Leaders influence, encourage, formulate a vision, motivate, inspire and mobilise followers; they affect people through their charisma; they affect their employees but are inspired by their surroundings (Jankurová *et al.,* 2017).

A leader's identity must be solid enough to face the dynamic, chaotic, complex, and highly subjective, interactional surroundings of current organisations and perspectives (Sutherland, 2013). This research confirms charisma as is vital for leaders (4.67) and non-leaders (4.74) – a difference of 1.51%. The rank of a leader's self-identity affects vision communication with collaborators and dependents certainly (Venus *et al.,* 2019). Transformational leadership and procedural justice considerably shape manager trust, and manager trust impacts creating a sustainable organisational identity (Erat *et al.,* 2020). The narcissistic personality has an important influence on a leader's identity integration (Chen, 2018). These results prove that justice is a *rather important* quality of a leader's identity (4.41 for leaders, 4.39 for non-leaders).

Communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others as interpersonal skills are vital for leaders (4.75) and non-leaders (4.62) – a difference of 2.54%. The level of surveillance regulates followers' answers to leaders with whom they either do or do

not share an identity (O'Donnell et al., 2010). Tendency to control is assessed as *rather important* for leaders (3.71) and non-leaders (4.21) – a difference of 10.01%. A leader's effectiveness depends on sharing values by his followers and is negatively related to compensation inconsistency between a leader and followers (Steffens *et al.,* 2020). This research proves efficiency as a crucial factor of a leader's identity (by analogy: 4.29, 4.63, 6.82%).

Leaders' moral identity and moral thoughtfulness as backgrounds of perceived ethical leadership and follower moral identity and moral attentiveness as ethical leadership products are portrayed in the literature (Ete *et al.,* 2020). The ethical attitude and leader's honesty mainly was studied based on decision-making rapidity (Van de Calseyde *et al.,* 2020). This research reveals that a leader's sensitivity to the Truth, with a difference of 7.60%%, is perceived as a *rather important* factor (3.88 by leaders, 4.26 by non-leaders). A leader's sensitivity to Good is less critical for leaders (3.47) than non-leaders (3.92) – a difference of 8.95%. Leaders' care for leaders (3.41, *neutral*) in comparison to non-leaders (4.10, *rather important*) is perceived with a disparity of 13.67%.

Leaders act more ethically than non-leaders. Authenticity and high self-concept consistency in a leader's identity are underlined in the literature (Steffens *et al.,* 2021) and portray the role of rationalism among leaders based on the environment of religiosity (Pascoe *et al.,* 2019), politics (He and Feng, 2015; Rueda, 2020), or higher education institutions (Charteris *et al.,* 2016). This research proves that a leader's inner sense of control is *rather important* for leaders (4.00) and non-leaders (4.35), with an apparent discrepancy of 7.10%. Also, a leader's honesty plays a central role in professional behaviours (4.18 for leaders, 4.37 for non-leaders, a difference of 3.89%).

Leaders define themselves by personal characteristics (4.63, *very important*), talent (4.21, *rather important*), experience and achievements (4.05, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (3.74, *rather important*), self-definition (3.05, *neutral*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (2.79, *neutral*). On the other hand, non-leaders define a leader by experience and achievements (4.59, *very important*), personal characteristics (4.54, *very important*), actually performed work or occupation (4.24, *rather important*), talent (4.23, *rather important*), self-definition (3.95, *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.56, *rather important*). Considering the examined identities, the subsequent personality dimensions of a leader's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders: entrepreneurship (4.53, *rather important*), managing (4.11, *rather important*), creativity (3.79, *rather important*), and artistry (2.42, *rather not important*). On the other hand, non-leaders see personality dimensions of a leader's identity following: managing (4.49, *rather important*), entrepreneurship (4.48, *rather important*), creativity (4.24, *rather important*), and artistry (3.22, *neutral*).

## 3.2 Creator's Identity

The ten most important characteristics of a creator's identity identified by leaders are (in descending order): visualisation skills (imagination), passion in action, self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, observation, innovation, courage, patience and persistence in achieving goals, originality, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns). Conversely, the ten most important features of a creator's identity perceived by non-leaders are (in descending order): courage, passion in action, self-confidence, originality, innovation, visualisation skills (imagination), patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to set goals, observation, searching for opportunities.

**Figure 3.** *Perception of the most differently assessed features of a creator's identity by leaders versus non-leaders*
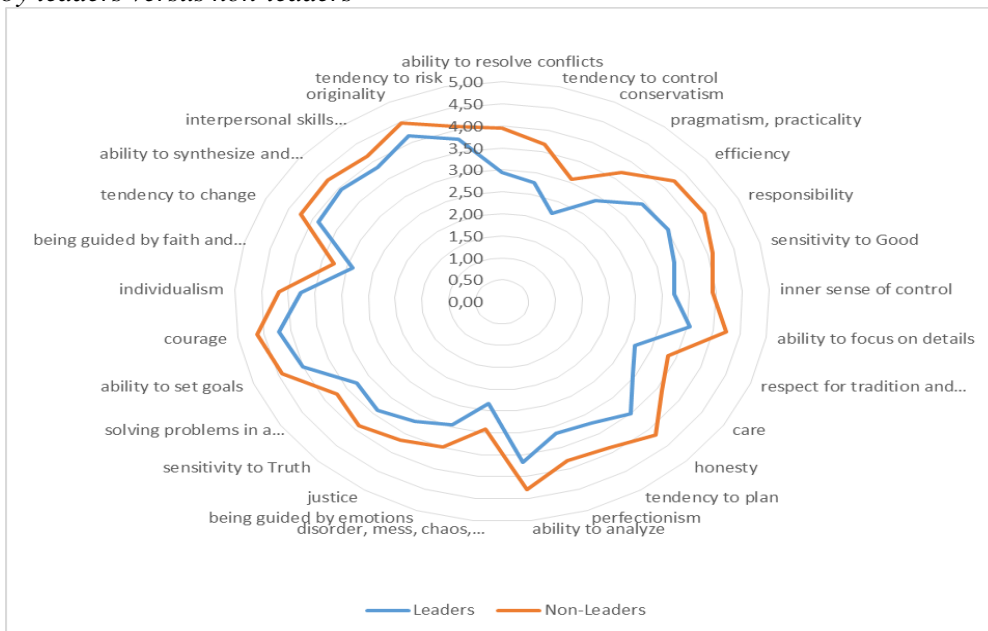


*Source: Author's elaboration.*

The subsequent conclusions reveal the perception of the 50 surveyed qualities of the creator's identity by leaders versus non-leaders. The ten features of the creator's identity seen as less critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in descending order): the ability to resolve conflicts, tendency to control, conservatism, pragmatism (practicality), efficiency, responsibility, sensitivity to Good, inner sense of control, ability to focus on details, respect for tradition and history. Only six qualities of the creator's identity are seen as more critical by leaders versus non-leaders (in ascending order): being guided by reason (rationalism), visualisation skills (imagination), charisma, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, sensitivity to Beauty, resistance to fails and failures. The ten qualities of the creator's identity seen similarly by leaders and non-leaders are: improving quality through repetition, observation, tendency to be inspired, ambition, independence, leadership as an autotelic (in itself) value, being guided by reason (rationalism), visualisation skills (imagination), charisma, focusing

on creating added (non-financial) value. The whole variety of variances in the responses about the creator's identity perceived by leaders and non-leaders is shown in Figure 3.

Creator's identity was investigated in the framework of individuals dealing with particular areas: profit- or non-profit oriented organisation (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011), classical arts like literature (Ottery, 2006) or music (Tillay and Chapman, 2019), new arts like anime (Reysen *et al.,* 2020), social media content (Arriagada and Ibáñez, 2020), religious institution (Jones and Massa, 2013), fake-news or rumour *(Dong et al.,* 2019). Researchers highlight the inconsistent contexts and necessity for regulation to these differences. The research shows that focusing on financial profit (2.83 for leaders, 3.08 for non-leaders, a difference of 4.87%) is generally less significant than creating added (non-financial) value (by analogy: 3.89, 3.80, 1.78%).

As a matter of aesthetics, creative personality was explained by comparing creative personality and basic personality, in addition, categories of creative personalities and creation purposes were described (Gołaszewska, 1984; Szostak, 2020a; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a). Among examined specific features of creators were, resistance to fails and failures (Leone and Schiavone, 2019), courage (Davenport and Redman, 2020), individuality (Lorenzo-Romero and Constantinides, 2019), fairness (Thanh and Quang, 2019). Motifs of creative endeavours are also vital in this type of identity (Gołaszewska, 1984; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a). Creativity proved its significance in overwhelming traumatic experiences (Hirschmann *et al.,* 2020). Through creativity and sharing, the creators build relationships with social sustainability *(Pinto et al.,* 2020). This research proves the significance of a creator's resistance to fails and failures (by analogy: 4.39, 4.22, 3.47%). By analogy to a creator's fairness, a creator's sensitivity to Truth (by analogy: 3.39, 3.89, 10.07%) is more important than justice (by analogy: 3.17, 3.68, 10.21%). Creator's courage is vital both for leaders (4.22) but even more for non-leaders (4.63) – a difference of 8.17%.

Leaders define creators by (in descending order): talent (4.39, *rather important*), personal characteristics (4.33, *rather important*), experience and achievements (3.89, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (3.50, between *neutral* and *rather important*), self-definition (3.26, *neutral*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (2.61, *neutral*). Non-leaders define a creator by talent (4.48, *rather important*), personal characteristics (4.25, *rather important*), experience and achievements (4.13, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (3.83, *rather important*), self-definition (3.77, *neutral*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.19, *neutral*). Considering all investigated identities, the subsequent personality dimensions of a creator's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders (in descending order): artistry (4.32, *rather important*), managing (3.53, *rather important*), entrepreneurship (3.11, *neutral*), and leadership (2.63, *neutral*). Non-leaders see personality dimensions of a creator's identity following (in descending order): artistry (4.21, *rather important*), managing (3.88, *rather important*), entrepreneurship (3.72, *rather important*), and leadership (3.58, *rather important*).
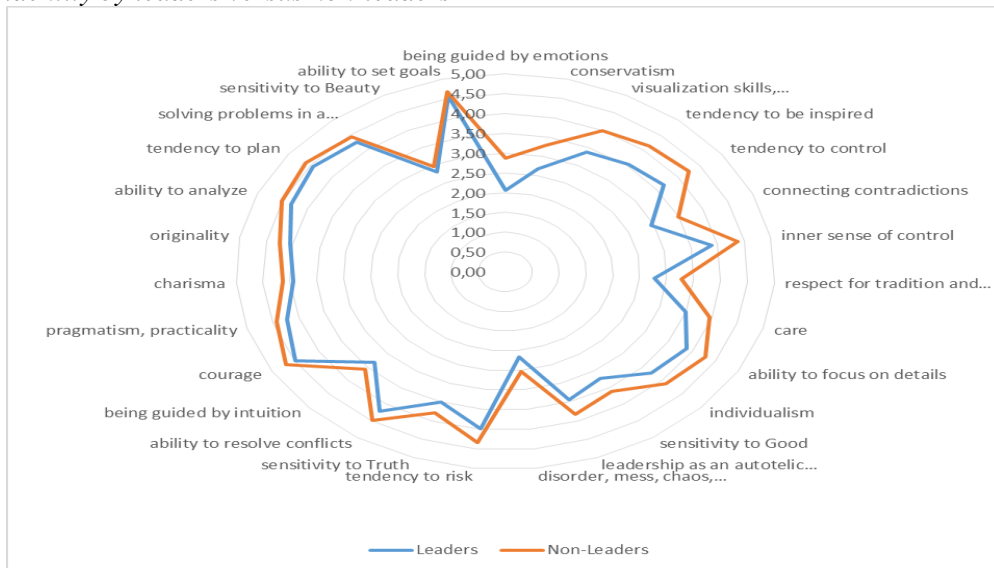
### 3.3 Entrepreneur's Identity

The ten most significant features of an entrepreneur's identity perceived by leaders are (in descending order): responsibility, efficiency, resistance to fails and failures, searching for opportunities, patience and persistence in achieving goals, self-confidence, ability to set goals, focusing on financial profit, innovation, courage. The ten most important qualities of an entrepreneur's identity perceived by non-leaders are (in descending order): searching for opportunities, patience and persistence in achieving goals, courage, self-confidence, responsibility, ability to set goals, efficiency, a tendency to plan, focusing on financial profit, resistance to fails and failures.

The following conclusions are revealed by the 50 investigated qualities of the entrepreneur's identity by leaders versus non-leaders. The ten qualities of the entrepreneur's identity seen as less critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in descending order): being guided by emotions, conservatism, visualisation skills (imagination), tendency to be inspired, tendency to control, connecting contradictions, inner sense of control, respect for tradition and history, care, ability to focus on details. The only seven features of the entrepreneur's identity seen as more critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in ascending order): responsibility, independence, efficiency, innovation, perfectionism, being guided by reason (rationalism), resistance to fails and failures. The ten qualities of the entrepreneur's identity seen similarly by leaders and non-leaders are: the ability to synthesise and draw conclusions, passion in action, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), tendency to change, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, focusing on financial profit, observation, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), responsibility, independence. The disparities in the answers referring to the entrepreneur's identity seen by leaders and non-leaders are displayed in Figure 4.

An entrepreneur's identity is created around the subject of financial or beyond financial profitability (Saxena, 2019). This research confirms this issue: focusing on financial profit is perceived equally as *very important* for leaders (4.56) and non-leaders (4.59). On the other hand, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value is assessed as *rather important* by leaders (3.39); as *neutral* by non-leaders (3.43). The literature shows that entrepreneurship and creativity are linked together by actualisation, motivation, and innovation (Fillis and Rentschler, 2005). This research confirms the importance of innovation: leaders (4.56) and non-leaders (4.48) assess it as a fundamental issue.

**Figure 4.** *Perception of the most differently assessed features of an entrepreneur's identity by leaders versus non-leaders*



*Source: Author's elaboration.*

Analyses reveal that personal differences and characters – like individuality, proficiency, human capital and abilities, cognition – play a vital role in the process of an entrepreneur's identity creation (Lewis *et al.,* 2016). In this research, the respondents asked about the issue of independence (which is analogous to individuality) approved that independence is fundamental for leaders (4.39) and non-leaders (4.35). Observation (being analogous to cognition) was also confirmed by leaders (4.44) and non-leaders (4.48). The ethical side of an entrepreneur's identity was explored about honesty (Alrawadieh and Alrawadieh, 2018). This research confirms the significance of honesty: both leaders (3.94) and non-leaders (4.11) perceive it as a *rather important* issue – a difference of 3.33%.

Entrepreneurs define themselves by actually performed work and occupation (4.47, *rather important*), experience and achievements (4.37, *rather important*), talent (3.68, *rather important*), self-definition (3.47, *neutral*), personal characteristics (3.47, *neutral*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.11, *neutral*). On the other hand, non-leaders define an entrepreneur by actually performed work or occupation (4.35, *rather important*), experience and achievements (4.43, *rather important*), talent (3.73, *rather important*), self-definition (3.97, *rather important*), personal characteristics (3.97, *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.21, *neutral*).

Considering all investigated identities, the subsequent personality dimensions of an entrepreneur's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders (in descending

order): managing (4.63, *very important*), leadership (4.26, *rather important*), creativity (3.95, *rather important*), and artistry (2.32, *rather nonimportant*). On the other hand, non-leaders see the dimensions in the following descending order: organising (4.56, *very important*), creativity 4.29, *rather important*), and leadership (4.27, *rather important*), and artistry (3.02, *neutral*).

## 3.4 Manager's Identity

The ten most important qualities of a manager's identity perceived by leaders are (in descending order): patience and persistence in achieving goals, responsibility, ability to resolve conflicts, efficiency, ability to analyse, ability to set goals, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, a tendency to plan. The ten most important characteristics of a manager's identity perceived by non-leaders are (in descending order): efficiency, ability to set goals, a tendency to plan, ability to resolve conflicts, patience and persistence in achieving goals, responsibility, ability to analyse, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), ambition, self-confidence.

Perception of the particular 50 investigated qualities of the manager's identity by leaders versus non-leaders reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the manager's identity seen as less critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in descending order): originality, conservatism, visualisation skills (imagination), inner sense of control, individualism, respect for tradition and history, innovation, sensitivity to Good, ability to focus on details, sensitivity to Truth. Only six features of the manager's identity are seen as more critical by leaders versus non-leaders (in ascending order): independence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), ability to resolve conflicts, patience and persistence in achieving goals, responsibility, resistance to fails and failures. The ten features of the manager's identity seen similarly by leaders and non-leaders are: being guided by intuition, ability to synthesise and draw conclusions, being guided by reason (rationalism), charisma, tendency to be inspired, ability to analyse, self-confidence, independence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), ability to resolve conflicts. The range of differences in the manager's identity perceived by leaders and non-leaders shows Figure 5.

Manager's identity in the writings is expressed as: an organiser, an expert, a political operator, a rational actor (Bulei *et al.,* 2014; Watson, 2001). Being guided by reason (rationalism) was assessed as *rather important* by leaders (4.39) and non-leaders (4.45). Some studies indicating randomness as one of the specific attributes of the manager's identity (Lahmiri et al., 2020) are in opposition to the results that disorder, mess, chaos, and randomness in a manager's action as *rather unimportant* for leaders (2.06) and non-leaders (2.29) – a difference of 4.60%.

Diverse levels of creativity and efficiency constitute the following manager's identities: an administrator, a professional, a manager-theoretician, a creative manager (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a). Studies on educational institutions show that managerial creativity is influenced by: confidence, risk tolerance, innovative leadership attributes, openness, action-oriented, domain expertise, emotional stability, and professional growth (Alsuwaidi and Omar, 2020). The literature emphasises the influence of managers on their employees' creativity (Williams, 2001), but the strength of creativity among managers differs due to different factors. Creativity has its paradoxes of assumptions and questions without answers (DeFillippi *et al.,* 2007).

**Figure 5.** *Perception of the most differently assessed features of a manager's identity by leaders versus non-leaders*
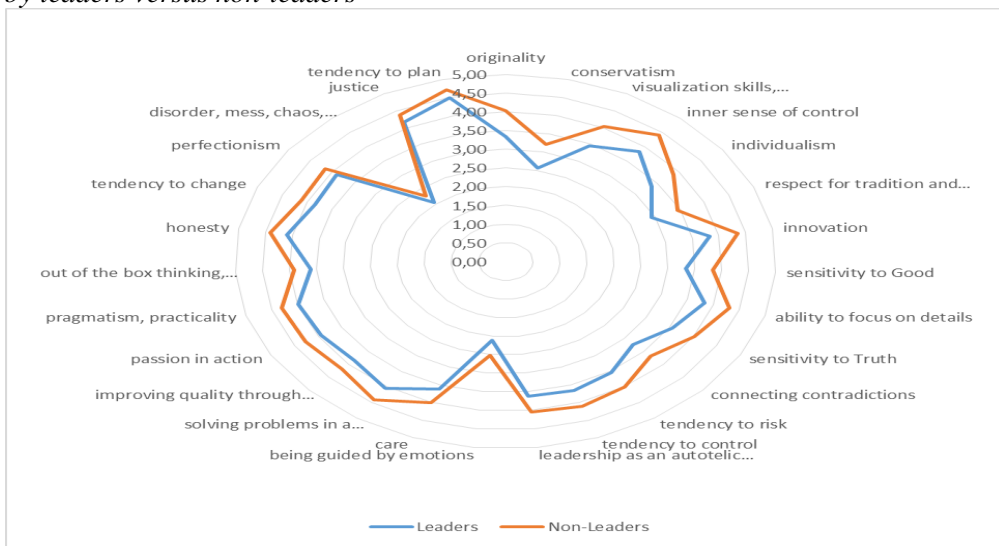


*Source: Author's elaboration.*

This research confirms the importance of creativity among managers. It can be stated that: 1) innovation is perceived with a difference of 10,21% by leaders (3.83) and non-leaders (4.21); 2) originality is perceived *neutral* by leaders (3.33) and *rather important* by non-leaders (4.03) – the difference is 13.96%; 3) out of the box thinking and breaking patterns was assessed by leaders and non-leaders as *rather important* (3.61, 3.92, 6.22%); 4) searching for opportunities is perceived by 2.40% weaker by leaders (4.33, *rather important*) than by non-leaders (4.45, *rather important*).

Manager's identity is formed throughout profitability: financial or beyond financial (FitzGibbon, 2021; Gaudette *et al.,* 2020). The research proves this statement, but it needs to be underlined that focusing on financial profit is much vital (4.22 for leaders, 4.39 for non-leaders, difference 3.37%) than focusing on creating added (non-financial) values (3.44 for leaders, 3.64 for non-leaders, a difference of 3.92%).

Between specific attributes of the manager's identity, the literature emphasises efficiency (Kohail *et al.,* 2016), rationalism (Faran and Wijnhoven, 2012), responsibility (Mikkelsen and Marnewick, 2020), independence (McGrath *et al.,* 2019), individualism (Frank *et al.,* 2015), and courage (Barratt-Pugh *et al.,* 2013). The research confirms the high importance of efficiency (4.67 for leaders, 4.81 for non-leaders, a difference of 2.92%), independence (by analogy: 4.05, 4.06, 0.17%), individualism (by analogy: 3.35, 3.87, 10.40%), courage (by analogy: 4.28, 4.42, 2.88%), responsibility (by analogy: 4.78, 4.69, 1.81%). However, conservatism is *neutral* for leaders (2.56) and non-leaders (3.22) – a difference of 13.26% is the most significant discrepancy between all analysed features of a manager's identity.

Leaders define managers by experience and achievements (4.63, *very important*), actually performed work or occupation (4.58, *very important*), formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (4.26, *rather important*), talent (3.63, *rather important*), personal characteristics (3.47, *neutral*), and self-definition (3.05, *neutral*). On the other hand, non-leaders define a manager by experience and achievements (4.59, *very important*), actually performed work or occupation (4.51, *very important*), personal characteristics (4.27, *rather important*), self-definition (3.92, *rather important*), talent (3.91, *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.89, *rather important*).

Considering all observed identities, the following personality dimensions of a manager's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders: leadership (4.58, *very important*), entrepreneurship (4.00, *rather important*), creativity (3.74, *rather important*), and artistry (2.53, *neutral*). On the other hand, non-leaders see personality dimensions of a manager's identity following: leadership (4.59, *very important*), entrepreneurship (4.45, *rather important*), creativity (4.22, *rather important*), and artistry (2.88, *neutral*).

### 3.5 Artist's Identity

The ten most important features of an artist's identity perceived by leaders are (in descending order): passion in action, visualisation skills (imagination), sensitivity to Beauty, originality, tendency to be inspired, self-confidence, patience and persistence in achieving goals, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), observation, individualism. The ten most important qualities of an artist's identity perceived by non-leaders are (in descending order): passion in action, self-confidence, originality, visualisation skills (imagination), patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to focus on details, observation, courage, ability to set goals, innovation.

Perception of the 50 examined qualities of the artist's identity by leaders versus non-leaders reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the artist's identity seen as less critical by leaders versus non-leaders are (in descending order): care, ability to resolve conflicts, tendency to control, ability to synthesise and draw conclusions, inner sense of control, conservatism, efficiency, perfectionism, being guided by faith and spirituality, respect for tradition and history. Only four attributes of the artist's identity

are seen as more critical by leaders versus non-leaders (in ascending order): resistance to fails and failures, tendency to be inspired, out-of-the-box thinking (breaking patterns), sensitivity to Beauty. The ten features of the artist's identity seen similarly by leaders and non-leaders are: searching for opportunities, a tendency to risk, passion in action, originality, leadership as an autotelic (in itself) value, sensitivity to Truth, visualisation skills (imagination), resistance to fails and failures, tendency to be inspired, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns). The whole range of discrepancies in the answers about the artist's identity seen by leaders and non-leaders shows Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** *Perception of the most differently assessed features of an artist's identity by leaders versus non-leaders*
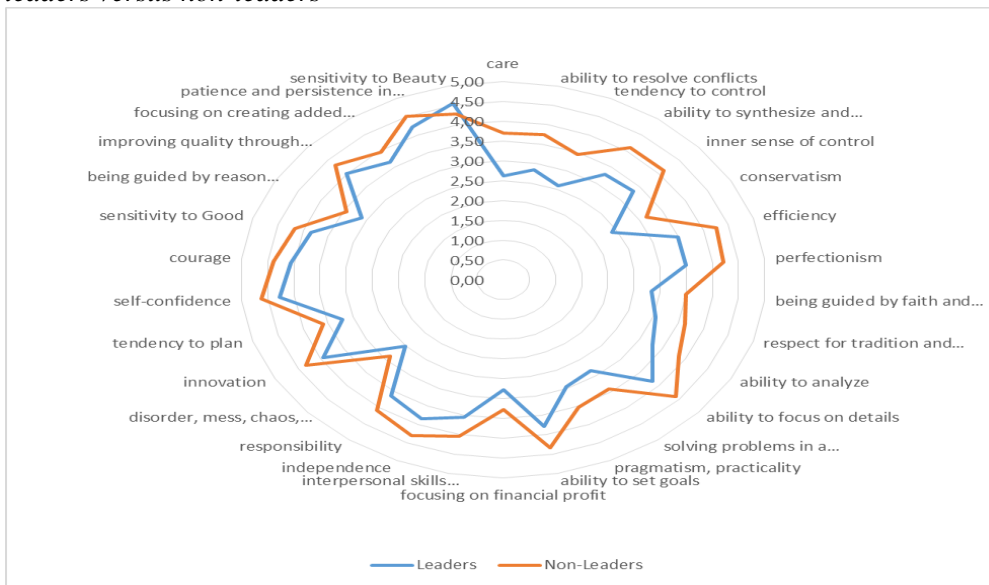


*Source: Author's elaboration.*

An artisan, a holy man in touch with the hidden, a doer, a God's will doer, a genius, a master, a knowledge worker, a cultural aristocrat, a professional, an influencer, an entrepreneur, a freedom maker, a value or idea guardian, a collaborator, a superman – are identities of an artist in the historical perspective *(Deresiewicz, 2015; Hermes et al.,* 2017; Hocking, 2019; Tatarkiewicz, 2015). Considering varied levels of creativity and efficiency, an artist may be perceived as, a copyist, a conceptualist, an artistic craftsman (artisan), and a creator (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a). In this context, the research describes an artist's possibility of breaking patterns and out-of-the-box thinking as *rather important* for leaders (4.22) and non-leaders (4.05) – a difference of 3.51%. An artist's efficiency is perceived with a higher discrepancy (15,23%) between leaders (3.50) and non-leaders (4.26). Artist's identity is defined on the meta-level in the crisis situation (Rikou and Chaviara, 2016).

The growth of an artist's identity reduces symptoms and exposes destructive narratives based on a psychopathological pattern (Thompson, 2016). This research exposes that

resistance to failure is *rather important* for leaders (4.11) and non-leaders (4.11). Solving problems methodically and logically is perceived as *neutral* (by analogy: 2.83, 3.41, 11.46%). Artist's ability to resolve conflicts is less critical for leaders (2.83) than non-leaders (3.73) – a difference of 18.02%. In the same context, an artist's ability to connect contradictions is perceived by leaders (3,44) and non-leaders (3.65) as *rather important* (a difference of 4.03%). Artist's identity appears in many areas of human activity: among school teachers and university lecturers (Bremmer *et al.,* 2020; Dahlsen, 2015) or managers (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020a; 2021c; 2021d).

Nevertheless, the context is successively described as the most significant aspect in self-identity and the artist's perception; artists' state of self-negotiation and identity formation is noticeably dependent on context (Luger, 2017). This research displays that ability to synthesise and draw conclusions about the extensive context of an artist's activity is described as *neutral* by leaders (3.28) and *rather important* by non-leaders (4.11) – a difference of 16.63%. Art interventions in organisations are an excellent tool for creativity and innovation development among particular employees and teams (Skoldberg Johansson *et al.,* 2015). Scholars portray an artist's identity as a complex issue where self-defining, choosing an identity, and becoming are isolated elements but intensely united in a single piece (Hocking, 2019).

According to this research, an artist's innovation is *rather important* for leaders (3.94) and non-leaders (4.33) – a difference of 7.78%. The artist's identity may greatly influence other individuals, e.g., children dealing with musicians or their artworks (Ey, 2016). Investigations about similarities and dissimilarities in artist's identities were undertaken (Lindholm, 2015). Among particular characteristics of the artist's identity, researchers highlight individualism (Kenning, 2009), randomness (Wagner, 2020), charisma (Senior and Kelly, 2016), sensitivity (Koide *et al.,* 2015), honesty (Syrko, 2019), an inclination to plan (Koponen *et al.,* 2018), and a tendency to risk (Kleppe, 2017). This research does not confirm that disorder in an artist's action is essential for leaders (2.50) and non-leaders (2.89); this feature is *neutral* or below (a difference of 7.81%). The research proves that an artist's individualism is *rather important* for leaders (4.11) and non-leaders (4.32) – a difference of 4.14%. In the case of sensitivity, the research concludes that the most important is sensitivity to Beauty (by analogy: 4.56, 4.28, 5.49%), sensitivity to Good (3.83, 4.16, 6.46%), and sensitivity to Truth (3.89, 3.92, 0.66%). This order is contrary to the essential feature of art, which grounds the most on Truth, then Beauty – in opposition to kitsch (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020b). The investigation exposes that honesty (3.50, 3.78, 5.63%) is somewhat more essential in an artist's identity than charisma (3.89, 4.14, 4.95%), although both qualities are perceived as *rather important*. Artist's tendency to plan (3.22, 3.59, 7.43%) is perceived as less important than the ability to set goals (3.78, 4.34, 11.32%). Leaders distinguish artist's tendency to risk (3.78) as less essential than non-leaders (3.95) – a difference of 3.51%.

Artists constitute themselves by talent (4.67, *very important*), experience and achievements (4.16, *rather important*), personal characteristics (4.06, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (3.61, *rather important*), self-definition (3.50, between *neutral* and *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.00, *neutral*). Non-leaders define an artist by talent (4.62, *very important*), experience and achievements (4.44, *rather important*), personal characteristics (4.16, *rather important*), actually performed work or occupation (4.05, *rather important*), self-definition (3.94, *rather important*), and formal education at schools, studies, courses, training (3.24, *neutral*).

Considering all investigated identities, the subsequent personality dimensions of an artist's identity play the following roles in the eyes of leaders (in descending order): creativity (4.72, *very important*), managing (3.16, *neutral*), entrepreneurship (2.68, *neutral*), and leadership (2.37, *rather unimportant*). Non-leaders see the majority of dimensions of an artist quite similar: creativity (4.62, *very important*), entrepreneurship (3.57, *rather important*), managing (3.52, *neutral*), and leadership (3.03, *neutral*).

## 4. Conclusions

The study limitations are the following: 1) Separation of respondents with and without a leader's identity was achieved by their auto-definition; no independent tools to assess the presence of a leader's qualities were used. 2) The research was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic that could influence respondents' opinions. 3) The study sample was relatively small compared to the studied problem. 4) Synthetic deductions should not be essentially representative due to the density of the experiment problem. 5) Because more than 90% of respondents hold at least a higher education degree, the interpretations should not be mechanically spread to the entire society. 6) Because 71.7% of respondents come from European countries, the results should be extrapolated to society with caution.

Although the results are on a high level of generalisation, the practical contribution of the research may be extensive. The following groups may benefit the outcomes of the study. 1) Managers desiring to understand the discrepancies in the explored identities' perceptions by groups, organisations, and societies dominated by leaders and non-leaders. 2) Individuals (leaders, creators, entrepreneurs, managers, artists) for a) better understanding the diverse levels of their personality with highlighting the matter of complex identity, b) discrepancies of own identity with the general perception of a particular role by leaders and non-leaders. 3) Scholars wanting to investigate the correspondences and differences between identity and its perception regarding leadership, creativity, entrepreneurship, managing, and artistry by leaders and non-leaders. The applicability of the findings is broad, mainly due to the role of leadership in today's world. If leadership is a potential existing in each individual, there is a problem of catalysing particular triggers, not just looking for ready-made leaders (contrary to non-leaders). The education process of leaders should be determined to reveal a leader's potential based on the inspirations and to uncover the motifs of the leader's activity.

Potential research questions for future studies are: 1) Perception of particular creative identities may differ from perceptions of identity by groups/society dominated by leaders or non-leaders. 2) Self-perception of creative identity is analogous to the perception of the identity by a particular group if there is a consistency (leaders and non-leaders) between the evaluated identity and individuals seeing the identity.

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