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Does Polish Post-Communist Cultural Burden Influence the Perception of Creative Identities?

ABSTRACT

Objective: Post-communist countries, affected by decades of one of the most repressive political systems, are perceived as a particular area of gaps in social capital. These gaps influence the whole spectrum of behaviors of individuals, groups, and society. Countries that changed their political system start a journey of external (economic, social) and internal (personal, interpersonal, group) changes. The post-communist burden determines human behavior, so leaders and managers should pay attention to these consequences. The research deals with the differences in perception of creative identities (a creator, artist,

manager, entrepreneur, and leader) by Polish society compared to other countries without communist history.

Methodology: Quantitative research (n = 160) in the form of a survey among people from Poland and other countries. Verification of hypotheses by chi-square test of independence used (SPSS, MS Excel). Next, a qualitative analysis of discrepancies was undertaken (NVivo).

Findings: There are no statistical differences in the perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader between citizens of Poland and citizens of other countries. The additional qualitative analysis exposed that differences in perception of the creative identities between investigated societies might have necessary consequences while managing or leading groups (and organizations) dominated by creative individuals. These differences are shown in detail, and links between our research results and the literature are built.

Value Added: It looks like a post-communist burden in current Poland has a minimal impact on the perception of creative individuals. Thus, it can be said that communism disappears from the social capital during one generation (ca. 30 years).

Recommendations: Further research exploring the perception of creative identities by different analogical groups of compared societies would be valuable.

Key words: Social capital, creator's identity, artist's identity, manager's identity, entrepreneur's identity, leader's identity, creativity

JEL codes: D91, J19, L26, M54, Z11

Introduction

Social identity theory (social psychology) interest deals with the relations between personal and social identities. It specifies the conditions when an individual thinks of himself as an autonomous individual or group member. From this perspective, the consequences of personal and social identities for individual perceptions and group behavior should be respected (Wolf, 2019). Using

this perspective, each country, being a specific group of people creating and using the same culture, influences the identities of its citizens. Parallelly, personal identity, being one of the basic foundations establishing an individual, is not an accessible area for researchers, mainly if they focus on the managerial side of the problem and its organizational consequences. Due to the strictly psychological characteristics of the research area (identity), management scientists, being weaker armed in tools than psychologists, attempt to determine canons that can help include different identities in management practice. This philosophy was the initial point for this research.

Although external factors, like the social and intellectual background, primary material wealth, or just luck, affect each person's fortune, it is the identity being the steering power behind an individual's personal and professional life cycle. Previous research in the area of creator's, artist's, manager's, entrepreneur's, and leader's identities discovered that even the persons who own gifts, personal characteristics, and well recognized professional positions in the above fields have problems to define of who a creative person is, who an artist is, who a manager is, who an entrepreneur is, or who a leader is. These indistinct "definitions" of the particular identities directed the researchers to isolate the complex identities like artists-managers (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a; 2021b; 2020b) or artists-entrepreneurs (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2021a). Even the individuals with highly developed abilities allowing to describe their characteristics have many problems with the distinction between the creative and noncreative artist/manager/entrepreneur/leader.

The above considerations guided to compare the perception of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish citizens. Following this purpose, the research hypotheses were established: H1) Polish citizens perceive the creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader differently than citizens of the rest of the world. H2) The differences in the perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish

citizens are not the same and vary in the case of each of the above identities.

Materials & Methods

Initially, secondary research in the form of reviewing literature was undertaken (NVivo Pro). The literature review approach was based on a qualitative selection of materials from EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Mendeley, Scopus, and Web of Science. The methodological approach was based on an interdisciplinary and multi-paradigm tactic referring to arts and aesthetics, creativity, management, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Secondly, quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire was conducted. The survey was established on the approach of Stefan Nowak (2007), containing the dimensions of the studied phenomenon and selecting indicators allowing describing the studied phenomenon. The initial methodological idea assumed constructing separate sets of indicators for each of the analyzed dimensions. Sets of indicators for individual dimensions began to be developed based on the literature on the subject in the field of: artistry (Bayrakci et al., 2009; McHugh, 2015; Szostak, 2020; Walter, 2015; Wilson & Brown, 2012; Woodward & Funk, 2010), creativity (Dufour, Maoret, & Montani, 2020; Gangi, 2018; Lehmann & Gaskins, 2019; Leso et al., 2017; Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a; Taleghani, 2012; Zhou, Shin, & Cannella, 2008), managerial issues (Baker et al., 2012; Bulei, Mihalcioiu, & Tucmeanu, 2014; Elstad & Jansson, 2020; Hallier, 2004; Hatch, Kostera, & Koźmiński, 2006; Hracs, 2015; Lähdesmäki, 2012; López-Fernández, Romero-Fernández, & Aust, 2018; Lutas, Nistor, Radu, & Beleiu, 2020), leadership (Adler, 2006; Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Carroll & Levy, 2008; Jankurová, Ljudvigová, & Gubová, 2017; Lord & Brown, 2001; Nikolski, 2015; Postuła & Majczyk, 2018; Raso, Fitzpatrick, & Masick, 2020; Stuke, 2013; Woodward & Funk, 2010), and entrepreneurship (Bureau & Zander, 2014;

Clarke & Holt, 2019; Damásio & Bicacro, 2017; Lewis, Ho, Harris, & Morrison, 2016; Postuła & Majczyk, 2018; Toscher, 2019; 2020). However, the analysis of individual groups of indicators showed that, in principle, each of the indicators selected for individual dimensions might be used to describe each of the examined dimensions. Following this assumption, a single list of 50 of the same indicators was compiled and applied to all five examined dimensions. Thanks to the above, the obtained results may be compared to the same indicators for other dimensions.

The survey was ultimately divided into four segments. In the first section, a list of questions (each question related to one indicator) was divided into thematic units referring to each analyzed dimension: artistry, creativity, entrepreneurship, leadership, and managerial issues. All questions were closed, and a five-point Likert scale was formed to answer: *definitely not*, *rather not*, *hard to say*, *rather yes*, and *definitely yes*. In the second part of the investigation, questions were raised describing relationships of the analyzed dimensions to the other dimensions. In the third segment, the respondents explained their identity concerning each of the dimensions. Finally, the fourth part included questions classifying the respondents, i.e., gender, age, education, their assessment of their own identity (as a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, leader).

The nonparametric chi-square test of independence dedicated to small samples that do not have a normal distribution was used to verify the hypotheses. The pairs of the observed values were compared with pairs of the expected values for each hypothesis. The p-value of the tests was < 0.001. Data analysis was executed using IBM SPSS and MS Excel. Due to the minor size of the sample (n = 160), complex statistics were not executed. Therefore, this article exhibits only some conclusions from the whole investigation.

The survey entitled "Perception of creativity, artistry, entrepreneurship, leadership and managerial abilities" lasted 34 days, i.e., from 20th December 2020 to 23rd January 2021. Two

undistinguishable surveys, one in English and the other in Polish, were distributed by direct contact (sending requests to participate in the survey) and using indirect public utensils (social networks, collective messages to various types of communities). The number of people asked to participate in the investigation is estimated at approximately 2–3 thousand. Eight hundred seventy-nine people were interested in taking part in the survey, which was judged by clicking on the link leading to the survey. The authentic contribution to the study, consisting of filling in the questionnaire, was attended by 160 individuals, which is 18.2% of those interested in taking part in the research. The average time spent filling in the questionnaire was almost 33 minutes, and the typical respondent was 38 years old. Among the respondents: women represented 42.5% and men 57.5%; people with higher education (bachelor, master, engineer) 64.57%, people with doctoral, postdoctoral, or professor degrees 18.90%, people with secondary education 15.75%. The respondents originated from 28 countries: 74% from developed countries and 26% from developing countries (United Nations, 2021). 71.7% were from European countries, 28.3% from non-European countries; 49.6% from Poland, and 50.4% from other countries.

Current state of knowledge

Communism as the almighty demon, and ethnocentric individualism as an internal way of individual's determinism, are two dominant metatheories explaining post-communist societies' social capital weakness. Dilemmas, exceeding generations and material differences, occupy the minds of both national decision-makers and creative individuals on whom the quality of the social fabric depends. Weak but socially approved social capital practices combine corruption, bribery, and favoritism and achieving institutional fairness. Decades of convergence with mature democracies help people have different aspirations, well suited to the context of

post-communist transformation, to make up for the delay of decades gripping the jaws of communism (Soaita & Wind, 2020). Change between publicly- and private-owned resources influences people's minds, behaviors, and goals (Huber & Montag, 2020). Researchers investigated the quality of social capital among many post-communist societies (Dolšak, 2019; Markowska-Przybyła, 2020; Nicoara, 2018; Soaita & Wind, 2020).

Creator's identity may be explicated in the context of personalities dealing with profit- or non-profit organization's creator (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011), classical arts – literature creator (Ottery, 2006), music creator (Tillay & Chapman, 2019), new arts – anime creator (Reysen et al., 2020), social media content creator (Maynard, 2021), religious institution creator (Jones & Massa, 2013), fake-news or rumor creator (Dong et al., 2019). Academics accentuate the shifting contexts and need for regulation to these deviations.

An artist's identity has been described historically as an artisan, a genius, a doer, a God's will doer, a master, a holy man in touch with the hidden, a cultural aristocrat, a knowledge worker, a professional, an entrepreneur, a freedom maker, an influencer, a value or idea guardian, a collaborator, a superman (Deresiewicz, 2020; Tatarkiewicz, 2015). In addition, the artist's identity may be identified as a copyist, a conceptualist, an artistic craftsman (artisan), and a creator (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a).

The manager may be perceived as an administrator (an official), a manager-theoretician, a professional, a creative manager (a leader). A manager with extraordinary creativity and competence in his field can be named a management artist; it will also be authorized to call the manager as an artist/virtuoso who, achieving his ideas, knows how to organize reality according to his intentions (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a). Researches of educational institutions reveal factors affecting managerial creativity (alphabetically): action-oriented, confidence, domain expertise, emotional stability, innovative leadership attributes, openness, professional development, risk tolerance (Alsuwaidi & Omar, 2020). The

literature emphasizes the intense influence of managers on their employees' creativity (Williams, 2001), but the level of creativity among managers varies depending on many factors, e.g., gender (Ahmad & Zadeh, 2016). Creativity also has its paradoxes in the form of assumptions and unanswered questions (DeFillippi, Grabher, & Jones, 2007).

The literature shows that the level of a leader's self-identity impacts vision communication with collaborators and subordinates positively (Venus et al., 2019). The narcissistic personality has an essential impact on a leader's identity integration (Chen, 2018), but it may negatively impact the organization (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020b). Transformational leadership and procedural justice positively and meaningfully affect manager trust, and manager trust positively impacts creating a maintainable organizational identity (Erat, Kitapçi, & Akçin, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Discussing each research hypothesis separately, from the statistical point of view, we can say that: H1 (Polish citizens perceive the creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader differently than citizens of the rest of the world) is verified negatively. The *chi-square* value amounted to 390.35 for a creator, 394.21 for an artist, 406.27 for a manager, 40747 for an entrepreneur, and 411.35 for a leader. For the *df* = 49, using the chi-square distribution table, the chi-square value = 85.3506 was found. Based on the above, the results are statistically significant for the significance level of *p* = 0.001. H2 (The differences in perception of creative identities of a creator, artist, manager, entrepreneur, and leader by Polish and non-Polish citizens are not the same and vary in the case of each of the above identities) is verified negatively. The *chi-square* value = 40,193. For the *df* = 4, using the chi-square distribution table, the chi-square value = 18.4668. It means that the result is statistically significant for the significance level of *p* =

0.001. In each investigated creative identity case, the means of the 50 features perceived by Polish citizens are lower less than 2.10% comparing to non-polish citizens. It can be said that Polish citizens perceive creative identities slightly weaker than the rest of the world: see figure 1.

Figure 1. Differences in perception of investigated creative identities: Polish versus non-Polish citizens
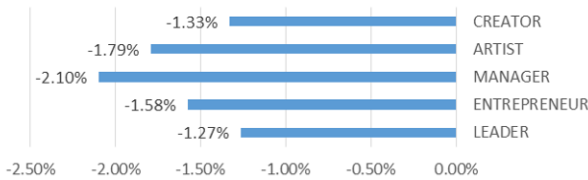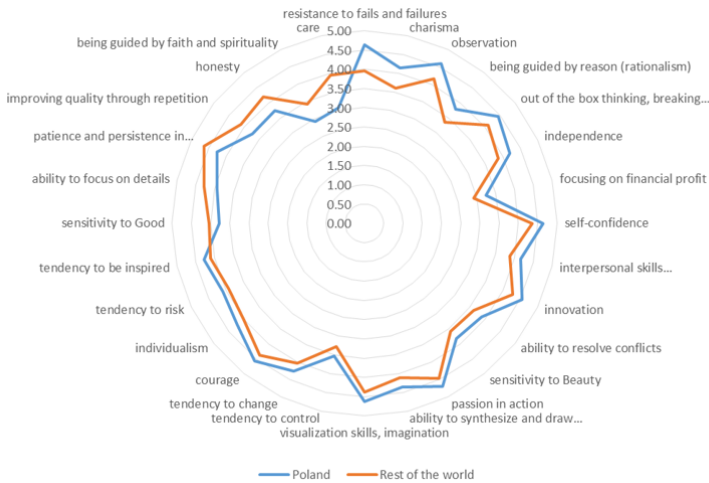

Source: own elaboration.

The negative verification of research hypotheses was astonishing and should be perceived as a novelty in the investigated area. Although both hypotheses were statistically verified negatively, the qualitative analysis of the in-depth characteristics of the investigated identities reveals that these identities interpenetrate and are considered to be more or less complementary.

Creator's identity

The ten most important features of a creator's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): passion in action, self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, visualization skills (imagination), observation, courage, innovation, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), originality, ability to synthesize and draw conclusions. On the other hand, the ten most critical features of a creator's identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): patience and persistence in achieving goals, passion in action, visualization skills (imagination), courage, self-confidence,

originality, ability to set goals, ability to focus on details, innovation, honesty.

Figure 2. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a creator's identity
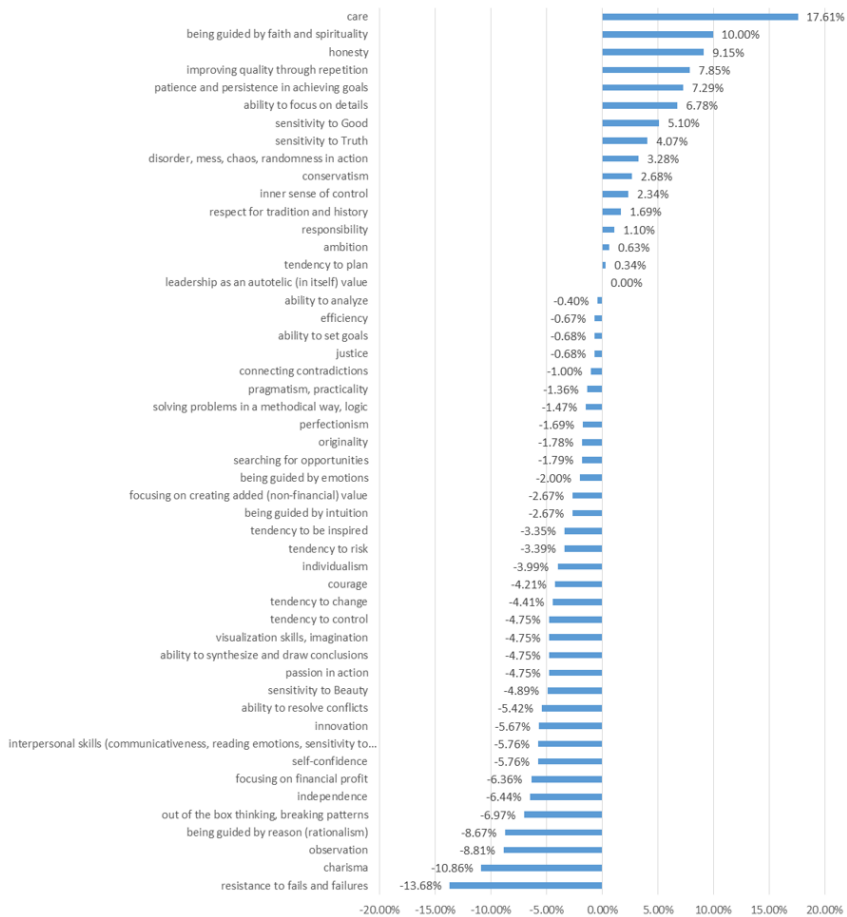

Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 examined characteristics of the creator's identity by Polish citizens compared to non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the creator's identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): resistance to fails and failures, charisma, observation, being guided by reason (rationalism), out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), independence, focusing on financial profit, self-confidence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), innovation. The ten features of the creator's identity seen as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): conservatism, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), sensitivity to Truth, sensitivity to Good, ability to focus on details, patience and persistence in achieving goals, improving quality through repetition, honesty, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the creator's identity perceived the most similarly by

Polish and non-Polish citizens are pragmatism (practicality), con-
necting contradictions, justice, setting goals, efficiency, ability to
analyze, leadership, a tendency to plan, ambition, responsibility.
The variety of disparities in the answers referring to the creator's
identity seen by Polish and non-Polish citizens may be observed in
figure 2 and figure 3.

Figure 3. Perception of a creator's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world
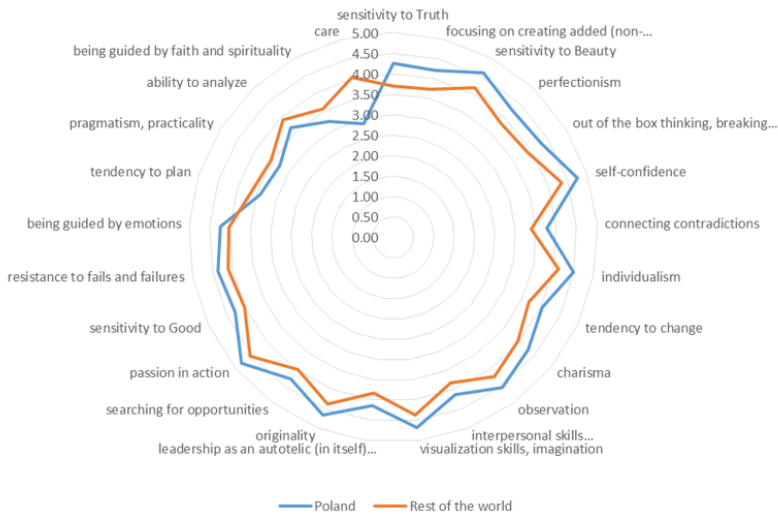

Source: own elaboration.

Artist's identity

The ten most principal features of an artist's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): passion in action, self-confidence, visualization skills, imagination, originality, sensitivity to Beauty, observation, patience and persistence in achieving goals, individualism, tendency to be inspired, resistance to fails and failures. Conversely, the ten most vital features of an artist's identity seen by non-Polish citizens individuals are (in descending order): passion in action, patience and persistence in achieving goals, visualization skills (imagination), originality, improving quality through repetition, self-confidence, ability to focus on details, tendency to be inspired, courage, ambition.

Figure 4. Perception of the most differently assessed features of an artist's identity

Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 studied qualities of the artist's identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the artist's identity perceived as the

least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): sensitivity to Truth, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, sensitivity to Beauty, perfectionism, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), self-confidence, connecting contradictions, individualism, tendency to change, charisma. The ten attributes of the artist's identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): a tendency to control, focusing on financial profit, respect for tradition and history, a tendency to risk, an inner sense of control, a tendency to plan, pragmatism (practicality), ability to analyze, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the artist's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are courage, ability to synthesize and draw conclusions, patience and persistence in achieving goals, efficiency, justice, conservatism, innovation, improving quality through repetition, ability to resolve conflicts, ability to focus on details. The whole spectrum of differences in the responses about the artist's identity perceived by Polish and non-Polish citizens shows figure 4 and figure 5.

Figure 5. Perception of an artist's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world
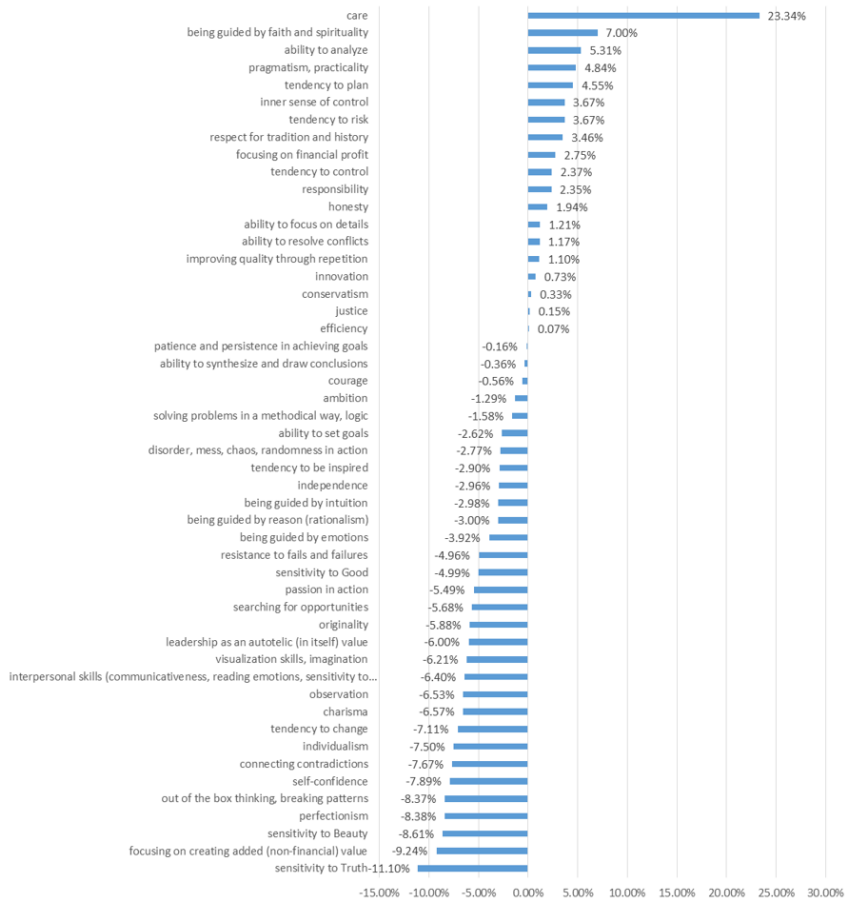
Source: own elaboration.

Manager's identity

Figure 6. Perception of a manager's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world
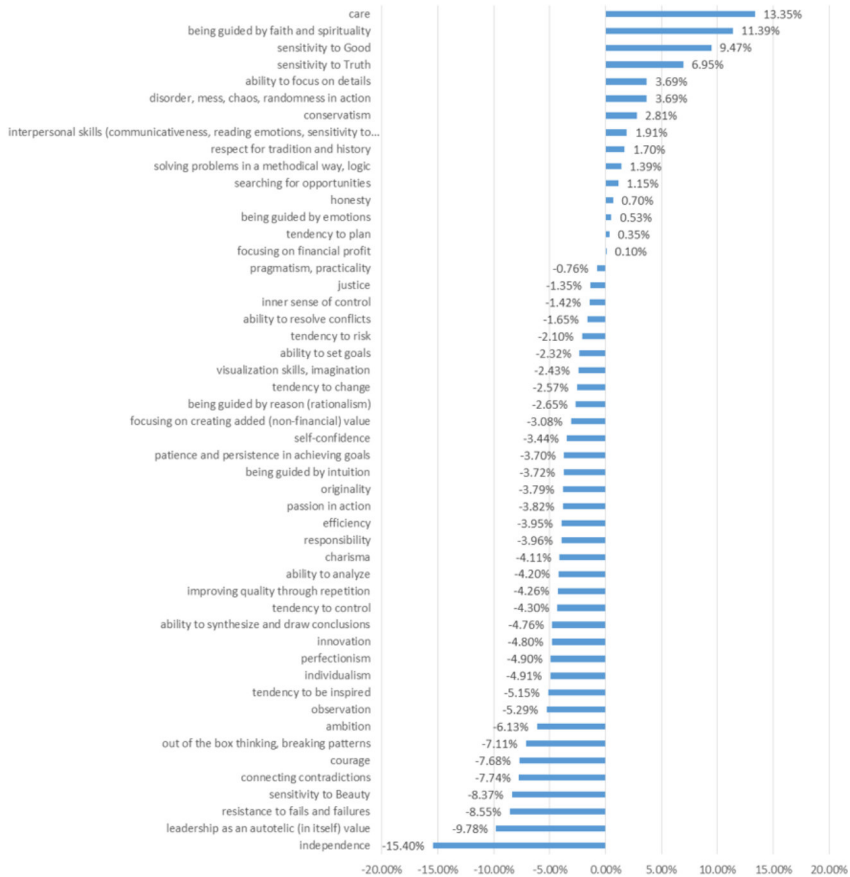
Source: own elaboration.

The ten most important features of a manager's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): efficiency, responsibility, ability to analyze, patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to set goals, ability to resolve conflicts, self-confidence, a tendency to plan, resistance to fails and failures, ambition.

The ten most important features of a manager's identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): a tendency to plan, efficiency, ability to resolve conflicts, responsibility, ability to set goals, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to analyze, self-confidence, searching for opportunities.

Figure 7. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a manager's identity

Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 investigated features of the manager's identity by Polish citizens compared to non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the manager's identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): independence, leadership, resistance to fails and failures, sensitivity to Beauty, connecting contradictions, courage, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), ambition, observation, tendency to be inspired. The ten features of the manager's identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): solving problems in a methodical way (logic), respect for tradition and his-

tory, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), conservatism, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), ability to focus on details, sensitivity to Truth, sensitivity to Good, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the manager's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are the ability to resolve conflicts, an inner sense of control, justice, pragmatism (practicality), focusing on financial profit, a tendency to plan, being guided by emotions, honesty, searching for opportunities, solving problems in a methodical way (logic). The range of differences in the manager's identity perceived by managers and nonmanagers shows figure 6 and figure 7.

Entrepreneur's identity

Figure 8. Perception of an entrepreneur's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world
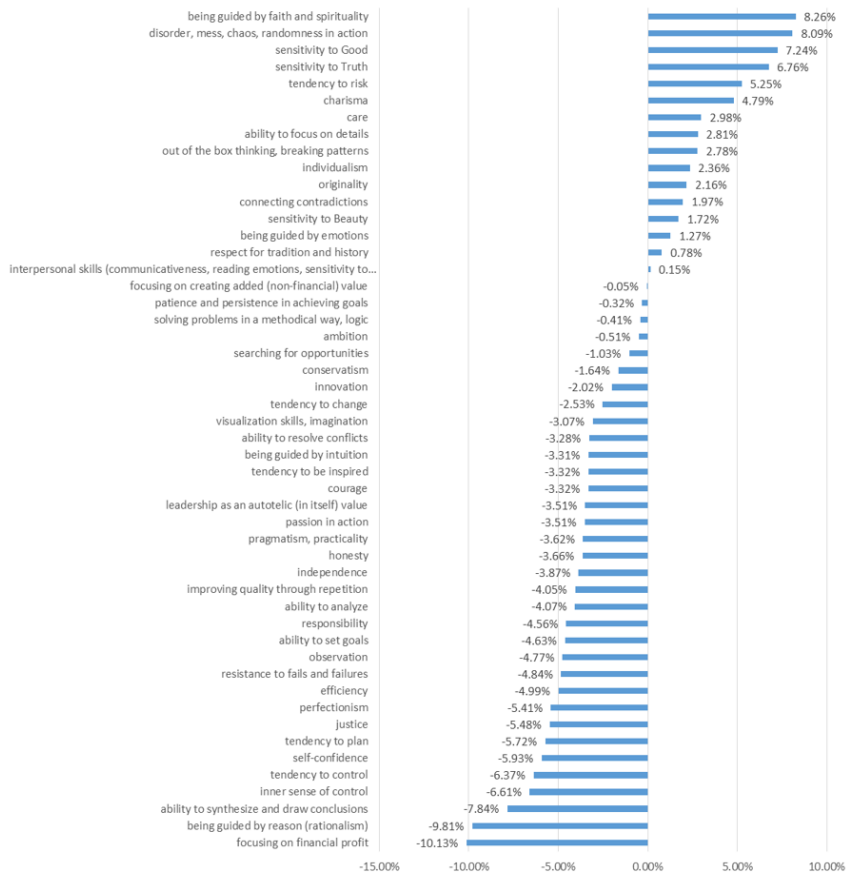
Source: own elaboration.

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

entrepreneur's identity perceived by non-Polish citizens individuals are (in descending order): patience and persistence in achieving goals, searching for opportunities, setting goals, responsibility, ambition, efficiency, courage, self-confidence, resistance to fails and failures, innovation.

Figure 9. Perception of the most differently assessed features of an entrepreneur's identity

Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the particular 50 examined features of the entrepreneur's identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveal the following conclusions. The ten features of the entrepreneur's identity seen as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): focusing on financial profit, being guided by reason (rationalism), ability to synthesize and draw conclusions, an inner sense of control, tendency to control, self-confidence, a tendency to plan, justice, perfectionism, efficiency. The ten features of the entrepreneur's identity seen as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): individualism, out of the box thinking, breaking patterns, ability to focus on details, care, charisma, a tendency to risk, sensitivity to Truth,

sensitivity to Good, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), being guided by faith and spirituality. The ten features of the entrepreneur's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are: conservatism, searching for opportunities, ambition, methodically solving problems (logic), patience and persistence in achieving goals, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), respect for tradition and history, being guided by emotions, sensitivity to Beauty. The variety of disparities in the answers referring to the entrepreneur's identity seen by Polish and non-Polish citizens displays figure 8 and figure 9.

Leader's identity

The ten most important features of a leader's identity perceived by Polish citizens are (in descending order): the ability to set goals, charisma, ability to resolve conflicts, resistance to fails and failures, self-confidence, courage, patience and persistence in achieving goals, responsibility, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), observation. The ten most important features of a leader's identity perceived by non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): charisma, responsibility, ability to resolve conflicts, patience and persistence in achieving goals, ability to set goals, self-confidence, interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to others), courage, ambition, a tendency to plan.
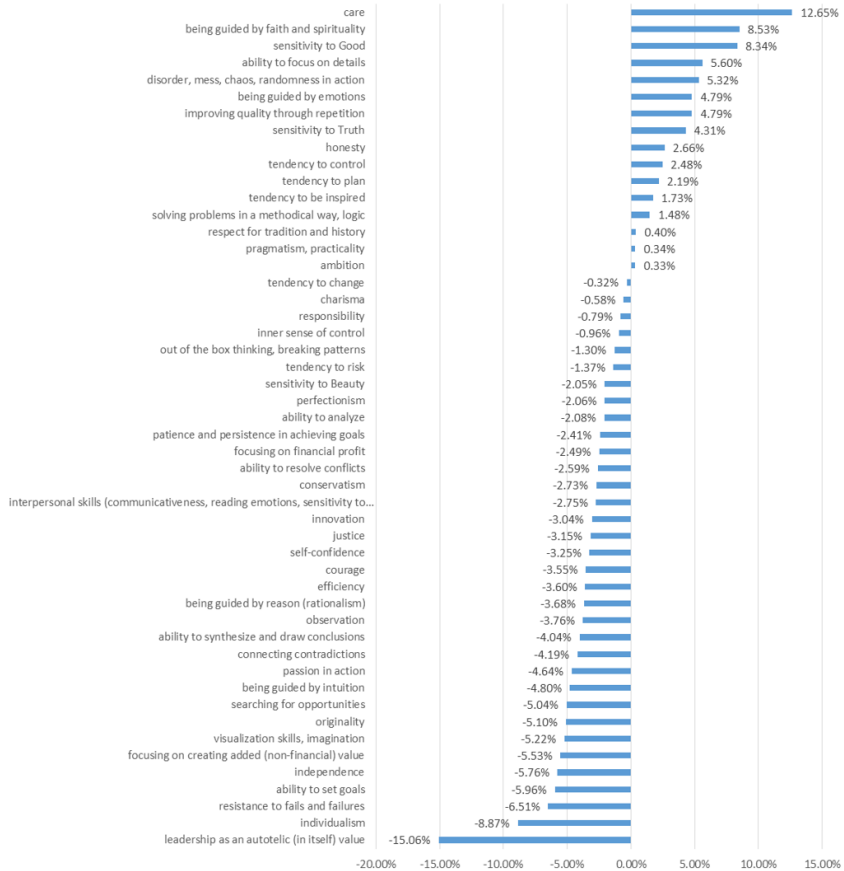
Figure 10. Perception of the most differently assessed features of a leader's identity

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 11. Perception of a leader's identity: Poland versus the rest of the world

Feature	Value
care	12.65%
being guided by faith and spirituality	8.53%
sensitivity to Good	8.34%
ability to focus on details	5.60%
disorder, mess, chaos, randomness in action	5.32%
being guided by emotions	4.79%
improving quality through repetition	4.79%
sensitivity to Truth	4.31%
honesty	2.66%
tendency to control	2.48%
tendency to plan	2.19%
tendency to be inspired	1.73%
solving problems in a methodical way, logic	1.48%
respect for tradition and history	0.40%
pragmatism, practicality	0.34%
ambition	0.33%
tendency to change	-0.32%
charisma	-0.58%
responsibility	-0.79%
inner sense of control	-0.96%
out of the box thinking, breaking patterns	-1.30%
tendency to risk	-1.37%
sensitivity to Beauty	-2.05%
perfectionism	-2.06%
ability to analyze	-2.08%
patience and persistence in achieving goals	-2.41%
focusing on financial profit	-2.49%
ability to resolve conflicts	-2.59%
conservatism	-2.73%
interpersonal skills (communicativeness, reading emotions, sensitivity to...	-2.75%
innovation	-3.04%
justice	-3.15%
self-confidence	-3.25%
courage	-3.55%
efficiency	-3.60%
being guided by reason (rationalism)	-3.68%
observation	-3.76%
ability to synthesize and draw conclusions	-4.04%
connecting contradictions	-4.19%
passion in action	-4.64%
being guided by intuition	-4.80%
searching for opportunities	-5.04%
originality	-5.10%
visualization skills, imagination	-5.22%
focusing on creating added (non-financial) value	-5.53%
independence	-5.76%
ability to set goals	-5.96%
resistance to fails and failures	-6.51%
individualism	-8.87%
leadership as an autotelic (in itself) value	-15.06%

Source: own elaboration.

Perception of the specific 50 explored features of the leader's identity by Polish and non-Polish citizens reveals the following conclusions. The ten features of the leader's identity perceived as the least critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in descending order): leadership as an autotelic (in itself) value, individualism, resistance to fails and failures, ability to set goals, independence, focusing on creating added (non-financial) value, visualization skills

by intuition. The ten features of the leader's identity perceived as the most critical by Polish than non-Polish citizens are (in ascending order): a tendency to control, honesty, sensitivity to Truth, improving quality through repetition, being guided by emotions, disorder (mess, chaos, randomness in action), ability to focus on details, sensitivity to Good, being guided by faith and spirituality, care. The ten features of the leader's identity perceived the most similarly by Polish and non-Polish citizens are a tendency to risk, out of the box thinking (breaking patterns), an inner sense of control, responsibility, charisma, a tendency to change, ambition, pragmatism (practicality), respect for tradition and history, solving problems in a methodical way (logic). The whole range of differences in perception of the leader's identity by managers and non-managers displays figure 10 and figure 11.

Final remarks

The limitations of the research are: 1) The research was run during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; 2) The research sample (n = 160) was relatively small in comparison to the analyzed problem; 3) Conclusions cannot be widely representative due to complexity of the research problem.

The research results can be used by: 1) Leaders and managers for a) better understanding the layers of personality and complex identity in the context of Polish culture, b) comparison of own identity with the general perception of a particular role in reference do Polish society; 2) Researchers wanting to investigate the similarities and differences between identity and its perception in area of creative identities in reference do Polish perspective.

Potential questions for future qualitative research or the hypothesis for further quantitative investigations may be the following: 1) Self-perception may vary from the perception of the identity depending on the belonging to the particular society; 2) Self-perception is similar to the identity features perceived by society if their nation structure is similar.

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