



The new way of leadership. Characteristics of future leaders based on a netnography research

*Andrea Sólyom

Budapest Business School, Hungary

solyom.andrea@uni-bge.hu

Andrea Juhászné Klér

Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Judit Oldal

Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Nur Haniz Mohd Nor

Taylor's University, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

In today's ever-changing world, digitalisation has a powerful impact on leadership. In our research, we focus on how leaders can lead in each situation by letting go of the classic "how to do it well" guiding principle, and instead listen and feel the situation, as well as rely on their own self-awareness and the quality of their team and collaboration. This study aims to identify the characteristics that leaders should adopt to succeed in a world of continuous change. Aiming to identify which character traits are most important, both in practice and in literature, we employed systematic literature review and netnography to answer this question. The systematic review revealed five recent leadership style models, which highlight different aspects of leadership styles and categories of leaders. For netnography, anonymous employee evaluations of six international companies were analysed. The two methodological tools converged in a synthesis of concepts, where the partial results of each method were analysed. The study identified four salient traits that are important for a manager to adopt in an ever-changing environment. These essential traits for a future leader are resilience, innovation, responsiveness to people and self-awareness. These characteristics will help leaders to better respond to the changing world's challenges. The added value of this study is that it highlights four leader characteristics of great importance in theory and practice and draws attention to the importance of self-awareness in leadership.

Keywords: **Leadership characteristics, "new work", innovation, digitalisation, netnography, leadership behaviour**

INTRODUCTION

The world's constant and accelerating pace of change requires organisations and people to be constantly responsive. However, in the 1990s, during the technological paradigm shift, research primarily focused on technological capabilities for organisational performance, with less attention paid to the human factor. Subsequently, there has been an increasing focus on the human factor, with a growing body of research on knowledge management and the productivity gains that can be achieved through a combination of technology and human factors (Benbya et al., 2020; López, 2023).

As Davenport contended, artificial intelligence and other new technologies are bringing about significant changes in work tasks and business processes (2019). Moreover, the development of digital platforms is broadening communication opportunities for knowledge workers (Davenport, 2019), as well as providing opportunities for collaborative work between people with different skills, backgrounds, and perspectives in different geographical locations (Woyke, 2018). In addition to all these changes, the role of managers has also been gradually changing from decision-maker to partner in recent times. In this regard, constant change requires a high degree of adaptability, and continuous search for innovative solutions to replace the regularity and fixity of work processes (Khosravi et al., 2019). All this requires a fundamental change in management approaches.

Our study explores leadership traits vital in today's constantly evolving, highly digitalised world. We adopted a two-pronged approach: first, the exploration of emerging leadership styles and approaches from literature; second, the evaluation of practical leadership characteristics in firms and their appraisal by employees, and then, correlating these findings with literature. Methodologically, we used a systematic literature review to study newly emerging leadership styles for the first sub-question, and netnography, to broaden international access and leverage digitalisation for the second sub-question.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to traditional leadership skills such as leadership, cohesion, situational awareness and delegation, new skills are becoming increasingly important in response to the constantly changing world. In the years after Olson and Simerson (2015) stressed the importance of self-awareness, attention and adaptability, these qualities have become even more increasingly valued. In a world of constant innovation and rapid technological advancements, changes in the workforce are inevitable, and managers need to respond to these changes. For instance, employees need skills to master cognitive technologies more quickly and facilitate social responsiveness and group collaborations (Kudyba et al., 2020).

Teams are ubiquitous in workplaces around the world (McDaniel & Salas, 2018). However, leadership has become dispersed due to digitalisation and the rapid pace of change in recent years, which can impact a team's leadership and performance (Scheuer et al., 2021). In this evolving world, the role of leaders in communication has become even more important (Farooq et al., 2022). Several newer leadership styles have emerged, highlighting transactional, transformational, empowering, and servant leadership styles, all of which expand the notions of leadership and management beyond the traditional leadership style models.

Transactional leadership is a leadership style in which goals are predetermined, and the leader uses rewards and punishments to motivate followers. It focuses on improving the current state of the organisation. Its mission is to transform the firm's culture and improve current organisational policies and procedures. Max Weber first put forward this

management style, which was later discussed by Bernard Bass in his study (Bass & Bass, 2009; Jamali et al., 2022).

In contrast to the transactional leadership style, transformational leadership is a leadership style in which the leader uses his or her influence and enthusiasm to motivate followers to work for the organisation's benefit (Jamali et al., 2022; Kittikunchotiwiut, 2020). By drawing on their emotional intelligence, employees can choose between positive and negative emotions and determine how to control negative emotions provoked due to perceived uncertainty (Saud et al., 2022).

In the transformational leadership style, the motivating leader works with the subordinate to identify the changes needed in the organisation. He or she works to change the current conditions of the existing organisation by embracing the mission and implementing the change with followers' commitment. This leadership style allows for multiple proactive leaders in the system (Muharam, 2023).

The origins of empowering leadership can be found in social cognitive theories and participative goal setting (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2018). The leader using this style delegates authority, resources, and information management to employees. This division of power is the central concept of this style. This leadership style allows employees to more likely voice their opinions, even if they are not the same as the leader. Consequently, a work environment and culture is created in which employees can make their own decisions and manage their work freely without the interference of a strict manager (Schermuly et al., 2022). This makes employees happy, which in turn contributes to a good working environment, which then leads to increased job satisfaction (Manaf et al., 2021).

Servant leaders are characterised by the need to satisfy the needs of their followers (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). These leaders focus on the interests of the corporate stakeholders on a moral basis. They see employee development as significant not because the employee is an asset that will be more productive with more development but because they see their development as beneficial to the individual. As these type of leaders consider the needs of those around them as very important, they are humble towards others. They treat their employees with respect, appreciation and direct attention and do not use them to achieve their personal goals (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2018).

The importance of development is therefore also reflected in this leadership style. Leaders support the development of individuals and the unfolding of their potential. Based on this, the leader carefully conveys to employees the importance of skills, knowledge, needs, goals and abilities as well as assists them in career planning (Schermuly et al., 2022). The above literature also confirms that leadership is constantly changing, but always with some focus. In recent times, this focus has been increasingly directed towards people.

The aim of this study is to find out the main qualities which are vital for leaders today. In order to answer the question, the research was carried out using two methods — systematic literature review and netnography — for which two sub-questions were formulated. Sub-question 1 enquires the new leadership styles that have emerged, and new leadership approaches that have spread. Sub-question 2 looks at the qualities of company executives and how employees assess them.

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory research takes an iterative approach to the question of leadership qualities. Our research aims not to make generalisations but to understand what leadership qualities are desirable in today's and tomorrow's leaders.

Systematic literature review involves selecting a range of literature to be examined after a screening process according to a predefined set of criteria, and analysing the selected publications according to the research question. The selection criteria for this study are as follows: publications between 2017 and 2022, in English, published in an academic journal or book, and containing the following keywords: leadership style, a new type of leadership, definition, or a combination of these. The search was conducted using EBSCO SuperSearch (EBSCO, 2022). The systematic literature review included the following sections: the research question, reproducible search, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, well-documented screening methodology, analysis of bias and quality criteria, and synthesis of the reproducibility of results (Higgins & Thomas, 2022; Kozinets, 2018; Liberati et al., 2009). This research was also conducted based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009), which can help answer sub-question 1.

To answer research sub-question 2, a qualitative research method, netnography, was utilised. This is the online version of ethnography, where information is collected in online spaces, usually, forums and social networking sites, through which the culture of online communities can be studied (Kozinets, 2018, 2020; Mitev, 2019). However, it is essential to keep in mind that the generalisability of the information obtained is limited. In this methodology, the ratings of certain online groups were examined, while their comments and textual opinions were subjected to content analysis (Mitev, 2019). This methodology provides excellent access to information from around the world. Information transfer and innovation are shaped in the digital space, so the utilisation of the digital world will inevitably be integrated into the academic world. An excellent example is online business rating platforms used as source in netnographic research.

Following the systematic literature review, a netnography was carried out to gather the perspectives of employees of some of the largest consultancy firms on the qualities of their managers. The six large consultancy firms included in the netnographic research were selected primarily based on their emphasis on management quality and corporate stability. However, it was also vital that they were international firms operating in the same industry, as this gives them sufficient international visibility.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research question is what are the main qualities worth having in today's leaders, specifically, what is found in the literature, what new leadership styles have emerged, and what new leadership approaches are being spread. The next question is whether employees support the importance of these leadership characteristics.

The primary skills defined in the systematic literature review were also found in the netnographic results as well, with regard to what leaders think about themselves, and what employees think about these leader characteristics. In summary, four characteristics were identified as the essential skills that current and future leaders need to be good leaders.

Systematic literature review

In order to discuss which leadership skills are emphasised in the present and near future, the systematic literature review examined five young leadership style models that have received significant attention in recent years: the innovative leadership style (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022), the resilient leadership style (Lombardi et al., 2021), the 4.0 leadership

style matrix (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018), the digital leadership style (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018), and Goleman's six leadership styles (Goleman, 2017).

Goleman's six leadership styles (Goleman 2017)

According to Daniel Goleman, leadership style is not a strategic decision if it is a function of personality. However, we do not choose a leadership style for personality but the given situation and environment. The importance of emotional intelligence is considered in determining the character of leaders, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies enable us to understand and control ourselves as well as helps us to understand and control those around us (Goleman, 2017). The model categorises leaders according to two dimensions, the level of their relationship orientation and the level of their task orientation. Based on these dimensions, six leadership styles can be distinguished: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and commanding. The visualisation of the six leadership styles can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Goleman's six leadership styles (Goleman, 2017)

Innovative leadership style (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022)

In their 2022 work, Berdecia-Cruz and his colleagues formulated a new leadership style, called innovative leadership. This new leadership style focuses on an innovative mentality as the central axis, and adaptation to the environment by combining different leadership styles. In their research, they included transactional and transformational leadership styles among the combinable options that they explored from the perspective of an innovative mentality and proposed their applications. The combination of innovative mentality with leadership styles enables team members to work to their full potential to achieve organisational success (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022). Based on Berdecia-Cruz et al.'s paper, we have prepared a visual representation of the model in Figure 2. Here, we can see the two axes: the abundance of the leadership style repertoire and the degree of innovative mentality. The leadership style repertoire defined in the literature is limited to transformational and transactional leadership styles; we propose to extend these, as the broader the leadership style repertoire, the more sensitive it is in responding to more complex situations.

Innovative leadership style has also attracted the attention of other researchers such as Alharbi and Davis, who highlighted risk tolerance (Alharbi, 2021; Davis, 2019). According to Abdullrazak and Alyamani, innovative leaders should be open-minded (2019). Additionally, Supriatna and Zulfanef are convinced that the globalised world needs new leadership styles, and as such, innovative leadership could be an answer (2023).

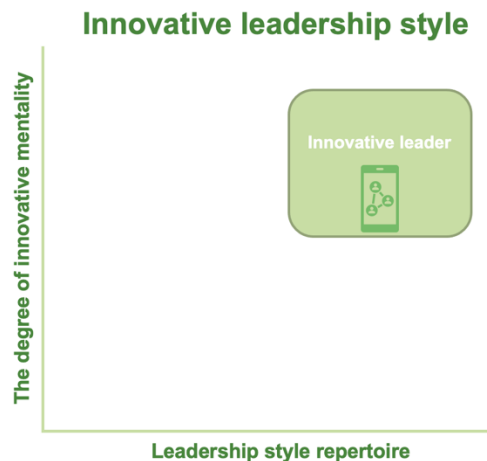


Figure 2. Innovative leadership (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022; Lombardi et al., 2021)

Resilient leadership style (Lombardi et al., 2021)

The importance of resilient leadership was analysed by Eliot (2020) and Giustiniano et al. (2020), focusing on the effect on followers of leaders in the context of COVID-19. According to Lombardi et al. (2021), resilient leadership is a powerful combination of opposing elements such as preparedness and improvisation, precise directional control, and flexibility in a given set of circumstances, as shown in Figure 3. Thus, resilient leadership can be defined by the consolidation of opposites to focus on more than a single dimension (Lombardi et al., 2021).

Resilience implies a complex network of variables, and it defines the capacity to absorb adversity, trauma, external shocks, or any significant sources of stress while learning from them, preparing, and responding to changes (Giustiniano et al., 2020). Today, resilience is in increasing demand in management as an excellent tool to respond to a rapidly changing business environment. Managers' responsibilities include crisis management where they need to understand, process, manage and learn from crises. The ability to recover from difficulties is an essential skill for organisations to revamp themselves every so often following crises. At the same time, leaders must pass on this ability to their staff through their influence so that resilience can be adopted as a culture at the organisational level (Lombardi et al., 2021).



Figure 3. Resilient leadership (Lombardi et al., 2021)

Leadership style matrix (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018)

In meeting the challenges of Industry 4.0, leaders must adapt quickly to novel circumstances, necessitating the emergence of unique leadership styles. In this respect, innovation and design thinking are paramount to digital leadership and personal problem-solving (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). Oberer and Erkollar proposed a 4.0 leadership style matrix in 2018, using innovation and personal orientation as intersecting parameters to determine appropriate leadership styles. The matrix axes represent concern for innovation/technology and people, further dividing the model into four sections. Education, skills, and motivation drive innovation and technology orientation, while interpersonal communication influences the care for people (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). Figure 4 illustrates this leadership matrix which highlight four distinct leadership styles: Novice leaders, uninterested in both colleagues and innovation; social leaders who prioritise colleagues, boosting employee engagement; technology leaders are focused on innovation and technology, enhancing business value but lacking in people skills; and digital leaders who balance employee care and innovative progress, thus augmenting productivity (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018).

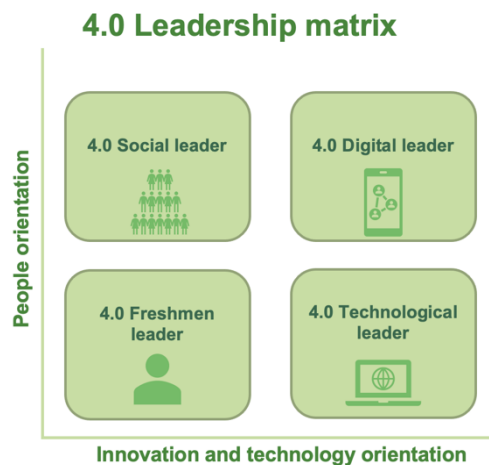


Figure 4. 4.0 Leadership matrix (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018)

Digital leadership (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018)

The main objective of Rao and Sahyaja's study in 2018 was to study the variables affecting new leadership by focusing on the factors influencing digitalisation on an individual basis. The process and effects of digitalisation are referred to as "digital transformation". Contemporary leadership styles in today's complex and changing world of business are explained by theories such as value-based, transformational, and authentic leadership styles (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018).

This paper explores the evolution of leadership styles through four dimensions as leaders respond to the challenges of the digital age. The four dimensions are emotional (EQ), intellectual (IQ), digital quotient (DQ), and personal quality (PQ), as shown in Figure 5. The emotional dimension reflects self-awareness, emotional resilience, intuition, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, motivation, and conscientiousness. The digital quotient is characterised by managing the unknowable, entrepreneurship, thought map, speed of differentiation, success in the marketplace, and inspiration through technology (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018).

Digital leadership is studied based on different factors such as sustainability, organizational performance, and environment (Chatterjee et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2023) which shows that it is a topic of interest in the academic community.

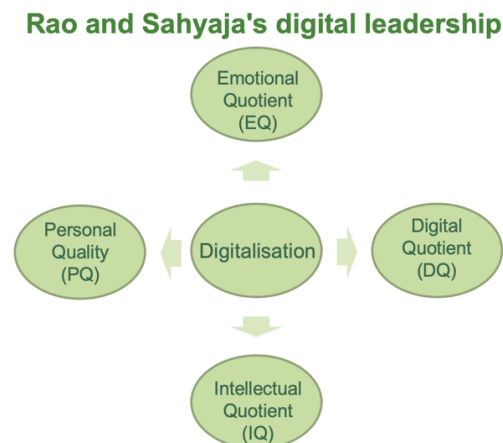


Figure 5. Rao and Sahyaja's digital leadership (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018)

Standard attributes – Factors to consider in the model

Most of the literature commonly used factors to define leadership style. These factors depend primarily on the personality of the leader, including ability and skill attributes such as flexibility, relationship orientation, as well as acquired knowledge such as leadership styles.

The factors used by the models in the selected literature are:

- Task orientation, Relationship orientation (Goleman, 2017)
- Clear direction setting, Preparedness, Flexibility, Improvisation (Lombardi et al., 2021)
- Intellectual quotient, Emotional quotient, Personality quality, Digital quotient (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018)
- Leadership style repertoire, Degree of innovative mentality (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022)
- Person orientation, Innovation and Technology orientation (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018).

The factors were then grouped to identify the skills the authors considered most important in their work, and then a summary was formulated. The grouping is presented in Table 1. The four categories of skills identified are responsibility, resilience, importance of people and innovation, as shown in Figure 6.

Table 1. Skills of leaders

Category	Factors examined	Author(s)
Conscious planning and implementation - Responsibility	• Task orientation • Unambiguous orientation	Goleman Lombardi
Responsible planning and implementation	• Preparedness • Intellectual quotient	Lombardi Rao & Sahyaja
Adaptation - Resilience	• Flexibility/resilience • Improvisation • Leadership style repertoire	Lombardi Lombardi Berdecia-Cruz
Connectedness - Importance of people	• Person orientation • Relationship orientation • Emotional quotient • Personal quality	Oberer & Erkollar Goleman Rao & Sahyaja Rao & Sahyaja
Development - Innovation	• Degree of innovative mentality • Innovation and technology orientation • Digital quotient	Berdecia-Cruz Oberer & Erkollar Rao & Sahyaja

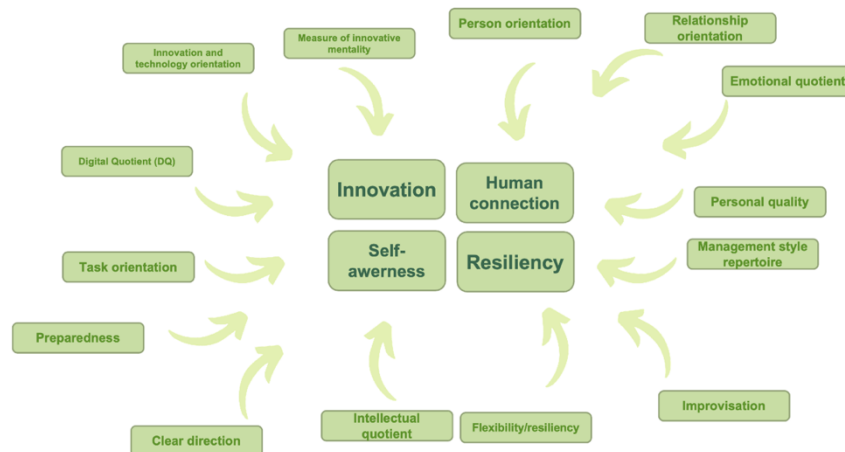


Figure 6. Four main groups of leader skills (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022; Goleman, 2017; Lombardi et al., 2021; Oberer & Erkollar, 2018; Rao & Sahyaja, 2018)

The first category is conscious planning and implementation, which includes task orientation (Goleman, 2017), clear directional orientation (Lombardi et al., 2021), preparedness (Lombardi et al., 2021), and intellectual quotient (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018). This is the most appropriate name for the factors listed here, as these traits facilitate everyday operational functioning. The skill related to these traits is responsibility.

Secondly, the category of adaptation encompasses improvisation (Lombardi et al., 2021), and leadership style repertoire (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022). We believe that adaptation is the appropriate name for this category, as flexibility, improvisation, and different leadership styles help leaders adapt to different situations. The skill related to this category is resilience.

Thirdly, connectedness is the most representative term for the category covering person orientation (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018), relationship orientation (Goleman, 2017), emotional quotient (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018), and person quality (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018). Connecting with co-workers allows managers to look at their colleagues as fellow humans and listen to them, which can impact their performance. The skill that is related to this category is importance of people.

Finally, the category of development includes the degree of innovative mentality (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022), innovation and technology orientation (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018), and the digital quotient (Rao & Sahyaja, 2018). All these factors resonate with the development achieved through innovation, digitalisation, and technology. The skill that is related to this category is innovation. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the skills considered most important by the reviewed scholars, in light of today's challenges and which are considered as essential to managers and leaders, are responsibility, resilience, the importance of people, and innovation,

Leadership style approaches

In the literature reviewed, leadership style is defined in terms of factors, which can be categorised into two groups, called factors and poles, depending on whether the theory examines one factor, and another separately and then links them together in leadership style (factor) or examines leadership styles that alternate between two factors (pole).

The first approach is a clear definition based on two factors, in which the reviewed authors suggest that a leader who excels in both factors is best suited to address the challenges of the present era. Approaches of this type are deterministic. Based on the

preliminary research, the reviewed scholars have defined two factors that are considered as the most critical leadership attributes in our times. Berdecia-Cruz et al. (2022) chose the degree of innovative mentality and the repertoire of leadership styles as the two factors. Innovative mentality as a leadership style attribute must be rooted in the leader's personality, of which flexibility is integral. The leadership style repertoire, on the other hand, refers to leadership styles that have been acquired and put into practice. In their work, only transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered and included in the repertoire (Berdecia-Cruz et al., 2022). However, we believe it could be extended to other leadership styles, thus providing leaders with a more complex toolbox to respond better to changes.

Also based on the first approach, Oberer and Erkollar, selected personal orientation as well as innovation and technology orientation, two factors of their 4.0 leadership style matrix. In this case, the two factors are also focused on the person of the leader, namely how important he or she is to his or her colleagues and how strong his or her interest in innovation and technology is (Oberer & Erkollar, 2018). However, we would consider it worthwhile to split the innovation and technology factors into two because, in our opinion, there can be a significant difference between leaders who consider one or the other important. Goleman, in his model, also identified two crucial characteristics of a leader's persona as task orientation and relationship orientation, depending on which one is the leader's focus (Goleman, 2017).

The other approach is the shuffling between two poles. Along the two or three poles chosen, the leader continuously shapes his or her style based on the central attribute. The fluctuation between the poles depends on what the situation requires, and what is comfortable for the leader. In this case, each pole has some relevance to the leader's action, but the authors emphasise on responding to current challenges.

In the model by Rao and Sahyaja, there are four factors which, in our opinion, form two pairs of poles, the emotional and intellectual quotient and the personal quality and digital quotient. Rao and Sahyaja's model categorise the leadership styles we know so far, based on the identified poles (2018). While their work focused on the emotional and intellectual quotient, we believe the other two poles deserve due attention as both the digital quotient and personal quality can significantly impact leadership (Lombardi et al., 2021).

Standard attributes—main findings of the literature review

The study identified development, connectivity, resilience, and operational compliance as key factors shaping leadership styles. Innovation, as part of development, is crucial for competitiveness. Strong interpersonal relationships, representing connectivity, are vital across all models. Resilience, though not always the focus, is inherent to leadership, while maintaining daily operations (operational compliance) is essential despite constant changes.

Leaders' personalities significantly shape their leadership styles and their orientation towards certain aspects, such as innovation or technology. The research entails a review of recent leadership styles, selected based on their relevance as represented in Table 2. These factors, which include innovative thinking, personal orientation, emotional quotient, and more, are classified into development, connection, adaptability, and operational compliance categories (Table 1).

Table 2. Literature on innovative leadership roles included in the final evaluation

Model	Leadership styles, characteristics	Main findings	Reference
Innovative leadership style	– based on an innovative mentality – mental flexibility – adaptability to new situations – appropriate knowledge and ability to apply leadership styles - combination of transactional and transformational leadership	Framework: central axis: degree of innovative mentality - known and applicable leadership styles. It can also be equated to situational leadership. Our recommendation is to expand beyond transactional and transformational leadership among the options.	Berdecia-Cruz et al. (2022)
Resilient leadership	– non-deterministic – level of influence – absorbing difficulties via transforming knowledge via adaptive usage – incorporating the acquired knowledge into practice (multi-loop learning)	Framework: preparedness and improvisation—clear direction and flexibility	Lombardi et al. (2021)
Leadership 4.0	– Freshmen leader 4.0 – Social leader 4.0 – Digital leader 4.0 – Technological leader 4.0	Framework: interest in innovation and technology and interest/care for people in a matrix The digital leader is the best person to withstand the present challenges because in addition to a high degree of digitalisation, he also pays attention to people's personalities, thus enabling a higher level of adaptation.	Oberer & Erkollar (2018)
Digital leadership	Four dimensions of evaluation with digitalisation in focus: – Emotional quotient (EQ) – Intellectual quotient (IQ) – Digital quotient (DQ) – Personal quality (PQ)	Empowering leadership, knowledge-based leadership and visionary leadership best meet these criteria. This can also be considered as situational leadership.	Rao & Sahyaja (2018)
Goleman's six leadership styles	Leadership styles: – Visionary – Coaching – Affiliative – Democratic – Pacesetter – Commanding	Framework: Task orientation and (human) relationship orientation	Goleman (2017)

Each category entails specific skills, indicating areas leaders should focus on. These skills are interconnected and require strategic implementation, emphasising the need for flexibility, interpersonal connections, and innovation. Self-awareness, defined based on London et al.'s work, is an essential prerequisite for effective leadership (2023). The next section looks at employee perceptions of these leadership qualities, and their correlation

with job satisfaction and engagement, which were also explored in the study, to further strengthen the interconnections between these characteristics.

Netnography

In the second part of the research, netnography was carried out to identify the key factors influencing employee perceptions of selected companies and to examine the characteristics of the top managers in these companies. The characteristics of the selected company managers match the characteristics extracted from the literature, as the importance of people appeared in five out of six managers, but the extent of this differed across managers.

Resilience is also a common feature among the managers surveyed, consistent with its importance as highlighted in the literature. Expressions referring to flexibility and adaptability were also found significantly in the literature, on which the definition of the hypothesised leadership characteristics was based. For one of the leaders reviewed in the study, the operational fit was most typical; he was characterised by solid hands-on, innovation, and task-oriented thinking.

Based on the employee evaluations of selected companies, people-centeredness, referred to as good teamwork, significantly influences employee satisfaction and engagement. Furthermore, development is also seen as an essential attribute, not only at the employee and manager level but also at the organisational level. Leadership was identified as an area for improvement in several places, and this also can refer to the development of leadership styles and the development of leaders as individuals. As presented in Table 3. this characteristic also affects employees' Net Promoter Score (eNPS') indicator, satisfaction, and commitment.

Table 3. eNPS indicators and most common terms for the companies surveyed

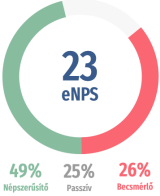
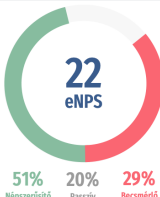
Company	Value of eNPS indicator (Nazar et al., 2022)	Most common positive terms	Most common development terms
Company No 1	 49% Népszerűsítő 25% Passzív 26% Becsmentő	Work-life balance, trust, honesty, empowerment	Increase your salary, development—coaching, fewer working hours
Company No 2	 51% Népszerűsítő 20% Passzív 29% Becsmentő	Good team, working environment, motivating leaders	Fewer working hours, increase in pay, stress
Company No 3	 42% Népszerűsítő 29% Passzív 29% Becsmentő	Good team, working environment, interesting tasks	Fewer working hours, work-life balance, better communication

Table 3. (con't)

Company	Value of eNPS indicator (Nazar et al., 2022)	Most common positive terms	Most common development terms
Company No 4	7 eNPS 42% Népszerűség 23% Passzív 35% Beccmértő	Working environment, good team, appreciation	Increase your salary, leadership, fewer working hours
Company No 5	0 eNPS 35% Népszerűség 30% Passzív 35% Beccmértő	Good team, challenging tasks, training and development	Fewer working hours, increase in pay, reduced turnover
Company No 6	-6 eNPS 34% Népszerűség 26% Passzív 40% Beccmértő	Working environment, good team, culture	Management, training and development, fewer working hours

We then linked the leadership characteristics identified from the literature, the assumed characteristics of the selected companies' leaders, and the selected companies' employee ratings. We looked at whether the characteristics extracted from the literature are similar to the hypothetical characteristics of the managers. The hypothetical characteristics of the managers were highlighted by the evaluators and thus jointly confirmed by the evaluators, managers, as well as the pieces of literature on the critical leadership characteristics identified in the study.

In our opinion, both the results of the systematic literature review and the characteristics identified by the employee evaluations confirmed the answer to our research question. Based on recent years, the leadership characteristics that have become more important over the last years are responsibility, resilience, the importance of people, and innovation, including all aspects of self-awareness.

Main findings

The research aims to understand what leadership skills are needed to be fit for the present and the future. By modelling the results, the need for leadership skills can be understood. A leader must possess a range of hard and soft skills to ensure that he or she always uses the appropriate leadership style from his or her vast repertoire according to the situation at hand. This is situational leadership, but beyond this, the results suggest that the value of the human factor has become more prominent. It has become evident that soft skills such as people orientation, flexibility and self-awareness are also essential in addition to hard skills.

The results also demonstrate a shift towards soft skills. For a situational leader to lead well, it is not only dependent on external influences but also on the internal factor, the leader himself. In other words, situational leadership depends not only on the situation but also on the leader himself.

As a result of engaging with himself, developing his self-awareness, and understanding his impact on employees, the leader becomes concerned with the self-development of

employees while at the same time, serves as a role model for his colleagues. All this can improve cooperation within the group, which contributes to the leader's success, an effect that is not achieved through external pressure but the role model function. In this type of leadership, solutions are not ready-made but are sought by the team, which involves free, but responsible experimentation as the team goes through the learning process together with the leader. If the leader does not know himself/herself, he/she will not trust others.

Up to now, managing staff working offline was more practical because they could be convened in one place and supervised physically. However, the online working environment as a result of digitalisation means that employees are dispersed geographically and knowledge-wise, so the manager needs to trust his or her staff.

From developing the worker, the focus shifts to developing the manager, in parallel with employee development. Although there is a slight shift of emphasis in leadership development training towards coaching and personal development, these are only rudimentary, and it would be worthwhile to emphasise self-reflection and self-awareness of leaders.

Transparency has changed. Thanks to digitalisation, the assessment of individual managers is no longer only reflected in evaluations within the company's walls but also through platforms accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world.

If the reviews remain within four walls, the leader will not develop as much, or the team will not be impacted as much as compared to if the evaluation platform is out in the digital world. As the world progresses and AI develops, human-robot interactions in the world of work also raises interesting questions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the traits of future leaders by exploring new leadership styles that have surfaced recently and gauging employee perceptions of their company leaders. A systematic literature review was used to understand leadership trends, and netnography to understand employee views. Thus, the study harmoniously blended literary findings and real-world observations.

From the synthesis of the concepts, it can be said that the future leader should have the following four primary characteristics: innovativeness, human relations focus, resilience, and adequate self-awareness. To achieve goals, a leader needs to have the proper self-awareness to set clear directions and lead his team in that direction. A team is necessary to achieve the objectives, and to lead a team, it is essential to have a good relationship with people, which goes beyond people management.

The relevance of this paper is particularly significant given the current economic, political, and environmental challenges that managers face, as they are confronted with changes that they have not yet encountered, and there are no ready practices for them. We recommend our work to leaders at all levels to reflect more on their leadership styles and identify areas for improvement that can drive their success. We also recommend it to employees because it may help them to better understand their leaders. In general, because of the importance of self-awareness, having the four characteristics can be a competitive advantage for anyone currently. For further research, it is recommended that the defined leadership traits be carried out between companies in other fields, with a much larger sample size, so that the adequacy of the traits can be validated as general findings.

While we aim for completeness in our research, this completeness is, by definition, not achieved due to various limitations. Firstly, as this type of research is resource intensive,

we believe we have not been able to provide a complete picture due to our limited resources such as time, energy, and money.

Next, netnographic research, due to its online nature, is inherently limited in reaching all relevant groups for a given research question, capturing only the perspectives of online participants (Mitev, 2019). As such, the derived data stems from a specific group type, mandating careful interpretation. Moreover, the evaluation results do not distinguish between employees and non-employees, nor verify the authenticity of those claiming to be employees. In addition, there may be a distorting effect of the researchers' attitudes, attitudes, and worldviews, which may have occurred in the course of the work, although we have tried to filter out and strive for objectivity.

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Andrea Sólyom

is Associate Professor at the Budapest Business University. She obtained her PhD in Knowledge Management. Her main research fields are organization and personnel development, knowledge management and leadership.

Andrea Juhászné Klér

is Associate Professor at the Institute of Management, Corvinus University of Budapest. She obtained her PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology at Eötvös Lorand University in 2014. Her main research fields are organizational culture, leadership, and talent management.

Judit Oldal

studied management and leadership, accounting and human resources at Corvinus University of Budapest. Her main research interest is techniques and tools of leadership in the changing world.

Nur Haniz Mohd Nor

is currently the PhD Programme Director at the School of Media and Communication, Taylor's University. Her research interest revolves around journalism, politics and social media. She is the Co-Chair for the 7th International SEARCH Conference 2022. As of 2023, she is still the Managing Editor of the SEARCH journal.
