

# “The identity and self-perception of artists-managers”

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# THE IDENTITY AND SELF-PERCEPTION OF ARTISTS-MANAGERS

## Abstract

Manager's and artist's professional identities seem to be opposite, but there are many indications that this understanding is not justified in reality. Despite the contradictions, these two identities can intersect. The paper aims to define the characteristics of the artists-managers' identity. The object of the study was qualitative research (n = 22) conducted in the form of in-depth interviews with key informants from the international environment. The practical objective was to verify common and contradicted features of the artist's and the manager's identities among artists-managers to understand the possibilities of reducing the intra-psychic tensions and ways of fruitful paradoxical thinking among managers and negative consequences for personalities and organizations. The study reveals common characteristics between the artist's and manager's identities and describes artists-managers' identity. Although artists-managers experience diversity between both identities, they do not see them as contrary; they use paradoxical thinking, being experts in using personal seemingly contradictory characteristics to achieve outstanding performance. Acting in paradoxical contexts and focusing on the positive aspects of seemingly contradictory personal qualities, they find nonstandard creative solutions. By trying to understand and implement their self-construction, there is the possibility to reduce the intra-psychic tensions and negative consequences of seemingly opposite identities or goals among individuals in organizations. There is a synergy between the manager's and artist's identities. Understanding the nature and attributes of artistic creativity, aesthetic theories and the phenomenon of artist-manager's identity can be a valuable contribution to the practice of management and organizational life.

## Keywords

artist's identity, manager's identity, artist-manager's identity, identity tensions, self-construction, paradoxical thinking, creativity

## JEL Classification

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## INTRODUCTION

The professional identities of managers and artists seem to be opposite, since in the subject literature the prevailing belief is that these two professions are separate. There are many indications that this understanding is not justified in reality. Despite the contradictions, these two identities can intersect. "Good" artist works just like a "good" manager; it is not the role/profession occupied that determines personality traits, but it is the personality (creative one – in particular) harnessed to artistic or managerial tasks that give the effect of "good" results (Szostak, 2020; Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a). In management practice, some artists manage various types of organizations: primarily cultural institutions, art schools, organizations employing artists, etc. (Elstad & Jansson, 2020). There is also a group of people, who are both professional artists and professional manager but in different environments with great success in both. Research (Adler, 2015; Mietzner & Kamprath, 2013) shows the common field of professional competencies of managers and artists: creative skills, perseverance, commitment, and passion for work. It seems that a comparison of artist's and manager's identities with artist-manager's identity should reveal in-

teresting conclusions. The paper aims to find the characteristics of the artists-managers' identity using elements of their self-perception (self-construction). Using the above the concept of "artist-manager", who is the professional artist working as a professional manager, should be introduced. It is important to distinguish this identity to reveal additional conclusions to the area of management. Artists, with their predisposition for improvisation, can be a natural source of agile management practices (Morrow, 2018), e.g. the base of the process of improvisation skill development: 1) on the detailed level – the theory and practice of how to improvise e.g. the music form like a fugue introduce techniques of a theme and its counterpoint leading, including implementation in real, in reverse, in augmentation, etc.; 2) on the general level – there are also the rules referring to the whole form of a fugue, which allows seeing the problem as a whole, even before starting to act (Szostak, 2019). Exploring the intra-psychic features of the research participants while having the researcher's knowledge and experience in the researched field can be crucial to understanding delicate mental issues and optics, since individuals reshape their answers according to monitoring their self-perception (Dufour et al., 2020; Kunrath et al., 2020).

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is based on a qualitative choice of literature drawn from EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus. The methodological approach is based on a multi-paradigm approach, taking into account the publications from the areas of art, management, and psychology.

### 1.1. Identity: being-becoming, tensions, paradoxical thinking

Identity, being the distinguishing character or personality of an individual, underlines elements of who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others. Because an individual does not have a single identity, it disposes of several different identities. Individuals develop different facets of their identities in different settings (Antal et al., 2016), that is why the individual and his/her discourses are subjected to contradictory pressures. Identity should be seen as a social process (becoming) rather than something characterized by absolutism (being). Identity is neither stable nor has a final stop; it is an endless process, becoming stable only in certain conditions (Bulei et al., 2014). The dynamics between identity and anti-identity are crucial in the understanding of identification challenges (Ahuja et al., 2017).

Literature shows different identity types. The basic distinction is about an individual or personal identity (Cuganesan, 2017; Zambrell, 2016) versus a group or collective identity (Khazraee & Novak, 2018; Zhang & Huxham, 2020). Adding social

optics, there is social identity (McNeill & Venter, 2019) and national identity (Saavedra Llamas & Grijalba de la Calle, 2020). Adding the organization optics, there is organizational identity (Erat et al., 2020) or identity integration (Tendayi Viki & Williams, 2014). Focusing on the area of an individual's activities reveals professional identity (Kunrath et al., 2020). Adding ethics optics, moral identity can be found (Gerpott et al., 2019). Looking through a market lens, a brand identity can be found (Szczepaniak, 2018). Taking into consideration a processual approach, it is possible to find a developing identity (Yazar & Arifoglu, 2012), established identity (Erat et al., 2020), sustainable identity (McNeill & Venter, 2019), and identity work (Bennett & Hennekam, 2018). The aspect of the structure reveals identity construction (Zambrell, 2016), relational identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996), identity regulation or formation (Warhurst, 2011). Considering identity as an organization's quality, identity management strategies (Grigoryan & Kotova, 2018), or narrative identity (Wolf, 2019) can be found that help managers to reach particular goals. Adding additional dimensions, researchers built particular types of identity: creative identity (Vincent & Kouchaki, 2016), or dialogical identity (Masso, 2010). Depending on the complexity, there can be distinguished a simple (separate) identity, e.g. manager's identity (Hallier, 2004; Watson, 2009) and artist's identity (Dahlsen, 2015), or a complex identity, e.g. artist-manager's identity (Degot, 2007; Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a).

Brewer and Gardner (1996) discuss identity at two levels: independent and social. At the independent

level, the identity is built in terms of its distinction from others. At the social level, the interactions are viewed in terms of connections with others. They divided the social self into two dimensions: the relational (bonds of attachments with specific others) and the collective (individual's motivation acts in terms of the collective's welfare). They established three self-concept systems: independent, relational, and collective. These concepts are not pure; this means that, depending on the circumstances, when appropriate sources of activation are available, the mentioned mental units become activated. On this basis, Lord and Brown (2001) described the connections between leaders (managers), values, and subordinate self-concepts.

In organizational contexts, tensions between managerial and artistic identities are one of the most investigated areas (Adler, 2015; Antal et al., 2016; Cuganesan, 2017) and are intensified in contexts of change and uncertainty (Antal et al., 2016; Zambrell, 2016). Separating two independent identities limits an individual's ability to be fully creative and altruistic (Antal et al., 2016; Voss et al., 2006). Artists and managers use adaptive skills; they can work everywhere because it involves the creative use of the "real world" to implement ideas from the "world of values" (Szostak, 2020; Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020b); this is confirmed by the fact that artists and managers work in all economic conditions and systems, perfectly adapting even to deep and fast changes. Artists do not feel tensions between their particular identities and they can be perceived as perfect patterns for managers who work in complex organizations full of internal oppositions (Gangi, 2018; Schediwy et al., 2018).

Paradoxical thinking is a process in which an individual identifies and defines contrasting personal characteristics to bring about their positive aspects (Fletcher & Olwyler, 1997). An individual will be able to apply the positive aspect of its personal characteristics to make more positive choices leading to successful outcomes (Antal et al., 2016). The paradox contains inconsistent, commonly exclusive portions being present and functioning correspondingly at the same period: a musician must be focused on his public performance, but he also needs to be relaxed at the same time. The theory behind paradoxical thinking makes sense if there is an expression of the

most positive aspect of the core personal qualities. Paradoxical thinking problem solving requires thorough self-analysis to discover the most positive ways of expressing personal characteristics. Referring to the social identity theory, identity tensions between an individual's true self and the standards and anticipations of groups they belong to, or want to belong to, can be prevalent among people dealing with precarious professions (managers and artists can be seen as professions of this kind). This statement stresses the requirement for individuals to construct a self that is authenticated by others (Bennett & Hennekam, 2018).

## 1.2. Artist's identity

Artist's identity has been developing from the beginnings of human activities. Ancient ages did not focus on the person of the creator. There were "material", "tradition" and "work" factors; the person was placed in the last one but without underlying his role as the creator (Tatarkiewicz, 2015); society call this identity a "doer". According to Deresiewicz (2015), the middle ages started to understand the role of the creator's talent connected with God's power; this identity was named "God's will doer". Baroque creator called himself "artisan" doing his job as well as possible, without underlying special gifts nor personal features. An individual practitioner could come to be "master", but the distinction between art and craftsmanship was weak. Romanticism broke the rules and overthrown tradition. The arts emerged as the basis of a new dogma, the area where societies turned to put themselves in connection with higher certainties; the artisan became "genius" – "holy man" inspired in touch with the unseen (like priest or prophet). Modernists saw the artist as a "cultural aristocrat" with whom the traditional nobles wanted to associate. In the post-war world, art became institutionalized: the genius became a "professional" working hard and explaining his work slowly climbing the ranks and accumulating credentials. Artists were much more likely seen as just another set of "knowledge workers". The end of the 20th century created the identity of the self-employed "entrepreneur" (Deresiewicz, 2015). The 21st century created the identity of "influencer", whose main ability is based on the creative process, in which, through the artwork, the artist influences the recipient. There are also identities of

“artist by vocation” (feeling internal mission), “values/ideas guardian”, “superman”, and “freedom maker”. Szostak and Sułkowski (2020a) described the following artists’ identities: “conceptualist”, an artist who creates the work but who does not implement his idea in any matter of art; “copyist”; “artistic craftsman” (artisan); and “creator” called as a real/true artist. The differences between the artist’s identity and the common approach to the artist’s role should be underlined.

### 1.3. Manager’s identity

In the 19th century, the dominant manager’s identity was an “organizer” – a person needed for setting the rules and composing the organizational elements referring to these rules. According to Watson (2009), management can be found as a process requiring the negotiation of knotty linkages of organizational power, a manager can be seen as a “political operator”. Another manager’s identity is an “expert”, who has all the needed knowledge and understands his area perfectly (Bulei et al., 2014). The researchers suggest that, referring to the manager’s social self, an individual stereotypically represents himself/herself as a “rational actor” being in control and employing methodical abilities to implement strategies in pursuit of organizational goals (Watson, 2001). It should be also stated that there is a group of identities (identity construction) of “kitsch managers” (but it is more an issue of external description rather than self-conception). Among them, there are “self-styled management gurus”, “narcissistic managers” and “mendacious managers” who underline their personal goals above the goals of the organization (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020b). The manager with high creativity and proficiency in his field can be successfully called a “management artist”; it will also be authorized to name the manager as an artist who, realizing his visions, knows how to organize reality according to his intentions – unlike conceptualists who do not deal with the implementation of their creative visions.

According to humanist norms, “an essentially autonomous, self-fashioning individual can select a customized identity”, but a structuralist approach characterizes identity as imposed from the outside by public influences, which are used by powerless issues. From a poststructur-

alist stance, the self is culturally constructed. A beneficial technique to theorize this interaction is in relations to the tension between essential potencies for “identity regulation” and individuals’ “identity-work”. Managers may be seen as inactive and unthinking marionettes, but leading management discourses are far from totalizing. Management can be conceptualized in terms of the tension between identity-regulation and identity-work (Watson, 2009). Identity work implicates a dialogue between internal ideas, wishes, and affections and outside metaphors and assessments (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

Watson’s (2001) analysis signals a discrepancy between a “double control problem” where managers operate to supervise the self while concurrently being awaited to be the other to accomplish the actions and thinking of co-workers. Managers should treat the various dimensions of their identities as two edges of the same issue, not as conflicts (Gotsi et al., 2010). The method of channeling identity tensions in organizations contributes to the construction of employees’ personal identities. Because there are variances in the interpretation of tensions across the levels in an organization, the function of the top management team leader’s performs in authorising tensions for their corresponding lower-level managers becomes essential. Szostak and Sułkowski (2020) show manager’s identities based on dimensions of creativity and efficiency: “manager-theoretician”, “administrator” or “official”, “professional”, and “creative manager” called a “leader”.

### 1.4. Artist-manager’s identity

Researchers’ interest is mainly focused on describing the identity of a manager who is facing seemingly opposite issues; in this area, identity tensions and paradoxical thinking are often recognized (Knight & Paroutis, 2017). The most-deliberated tensions in the industries of culture and creativity are those between art and exchange, creativity and business, the artistic and the economic logic (Schediwiy et al., 2018). There is not much about the identity of an artist-manager in the literature. Only one theoretical research shows the relations of the artist’s and the manager’s identities (Szostak & Sułkowski, 2020a). Similarities include: the fact that an artist and a manager begin creative

activities in the non-material sphere (conceptual phase), and then implement ideas/goals in the material sphere; both – without a specialized education – can function well in their fields. Among the differences, it should be noted that: the manager can be satisfied with the “slightly better” results; the artist always refers to and strives for the ideal; manager’s utilitarianism is inherently contrary to the artist’s creative freedom even though both of them pursue specific goals; some artistic (musical) works live in time only, while organizations function in time and space; a classical artwork does not evolve; organizations evolve; artists – with artistic creation – worry about the financial result of the entire artistic undertaking rarely; they have administrative directors for this purpose; in turn, a manager usually has to consider the aspect of financial effectiveness of his work; the artist works in art on his basis, although his interpersonal-organizational skills are not insignificant; manager works as a team – he is more of an orchestra conductor of the performance. Szostak and Sułkowski (2020) found four identities of artists-managers: “visionary” – a person with high creativity and low organizational efficiency; “reproducer” – low creativity and low organizational efficiency; “craftsman” – low creativity and high organizational efficiency; “creator” – high creativity and high organizational efficiency.

Based on the above considerations, the research questions for this study were the following: 1) What are the differences and the common characteristics between the artist’s and the manager’s identities? 2) Do artists-managers have their own identity? 3) Do artists-managers experience identity tensions and paradoxical thinking? 4) Is being an artist an added value to the manager’s role? The practical objective was to verify the above elements to reduce the intra-psychic tensions and negative consequences of paradoxical thinking among personalities in organizations.

## 2. METHOD

The qualitative research was conducted in the form of structured in-depth formal interviews with key informants in the studied field: people who are/were both artists and managers in their professional life. The choice of this methodology was the

most suitable for the pilot nature of the study. The research sample was not limited to persons who currently play both roles at the same time; among the respondents, some people played both roles at different periods of their lives, to varying degrees and at different levels. The selection of the study sample was justified by the availability of people with possibly diverse artistic and managerial experience from different countries, cultures, and their openness to participate in such research. One of the author’s private contacts with respondents was crucial to receiving open answers. 33 artists-managers were asked to participate in the research; finally, 22 of them agreed to take part in the project; those, who didn’t finally take a part in the research, said that they didn’t consider themselves as artists or as managers, although – according to the research requirements – they met the criteria completely. This factor can be seen in the tension between these respondents’ true self and a lived, false self; a kind of denial of self-authorship.

The majority of the sample was from Poland ( $n = 12$ , i.e. 55%), three from the USA (14%), two from the UK (10%), one person from Bulgaria, Nigeria, and Ukraine (4,5% each). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were men ( $n = 16.73\%$ ), have art experience from the classical music field ( $n = 18.82\%$ ), and most of the sample have no formal managerial education ( $n = 15.68\%$ ). There was no effort to achieve a balance in the area of sex or age of the participants, neither according to their professional experience length nor the chosen art form. Full awareness was held on the impact of these elements on the research results, but – due to the pilot character of this study – the findings and results were continued. Detailed consequences of the sample characteristics are listed in the Conclusion section.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in February and March 2020 in the form of a personal conversation, and – due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations in meetings in person – some in the form of an online conversation; several respondents completed a questionnaire with 36 questions in writing. Interviews with Polish respondents were conducted in Polish, interviews with other respondents were conducted in English. Non-English interviews were translated into English. Answers were listed in the table togeth-

er with categories defining nationality, age, gender, formal education in the field of art, management, and other fields, description of the activity in the field of art and management. The fragment of this material is shown in Table A1 (Appendix). Data analysis was carried out using the NVivo software.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines the areas of artist's and manager's identity leading to the description of artists-managers' identity and its characteristics.

#### 3.1. Artist's identity

To the first question "Do you consider yourself as an artist? Why?", all respondents answered positively. Being an artist is seen as an inborn and inalienable (permanent) phenomenon, but there is "a need of awareness and tools to express it; this is related to cognition, science, so to a large extent professional artistry is teachable, although the imperative to create is associated with personality is innate" [PL8]. "The desire to be creative, once discovered, is permanent and cannot be taken away, though practical opportunities to express this come and go over time" [UK1]. It can be said that it is easy to identify as an artist, although the arguments for that are different.

The answers to the second question refer to the theories of independent and relational self-concepts (Luger, 2017). The majority of respondents believe that there is no need to receive any external certification (title, nomination, membership, awards) to be an artist, although these kinds of signs are the important factors in an artist's self-construction. "One doesn't need an organization, title, or otherwise to be an artist. However, being an artist is more than just self-perceived or defined. One must be part of the community to practice and emerge as an artist" [US1]. "Having the talent and skill (as long as it is practiced) is permanent, but having the means (opportunity, time, audience) is dependent on external factors. One can only be an artist if both are present" [UK2]. "From a substantive point of view, it is enough to have that divine spark, but there is a need to visualize its presence and be able to use it creatively. External confirmation in the form of degrees in the field of art or rec-

ognition by industry organizations was and is an important element of self-identification as an artist" [PL7]. "You need knowledge and work on how to express yourself – this is usually associated with professional and official teaching. A title or a professional nomination is only a consequence" [PL8]. But there is an area of no security in self-perception when a person has no external certification: "I think I am not taken seriously sometimes as a musician because I don't have a degree or dedicate myself to music 100% of the time" [US3].

Next, an examination of the respondents about the moment in their lives when they started to think about themselves as artists was conducted. "When I began teaching at the college level and began being invited to perform concerts" [US1]. "During emigration from the Soviet Union, which took several months, I did not have access to a piano. After my family got a tiny spinet in America I realized I really missed music and started practising willingly at that point" [US3]. "In high school, around the age of 14-15; through self-analysis and contemplation" [UKR]. "At a very early age, when I was trained as a musician and belonged to a series of choirs" [UK2], "Since I started to attend theatre classes" [PL13]. Some respondents were not able to define "any particular moment when I would consciously make such a decision. It happened naturally" [PL12]. "At the time I sat at the instrument for the first time" [PL4]. "From the moment when performing artistic activities began to be a "natural" skill for me and ceased to cause technical difficulties" [PL7]. "The need to create has always accompanied me. But when it comes to the feeling of being a professional in the field of painting, it was the moment of graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts" [PL8, PL10, PL14].

#### 3.2. Manager's identity

The respondents have some problems with auto-definition as managers. There are two main distinctions of manager's auto-construction: managing people ("As the owner of an artist management agency, I am a manager and I manage about 14 different artists" [BUL]) and managing things/processes/projects ("I consider myself a manager because of my work related to planning and making decisions, organizing and leading" [PL1]). In managing people, the number of people managed is underlined.

It was important to find at what point or under what circumstances in life a person felt that he/she became a manager. The first group of answers was attached to an “external moment”: “When I was employed in this position” [PL9]; “When I started my own company and started to organize events and hire people” [PL12]; “When I got promoted to lead a team” [US3]. The second group of answers underlined the processual factor, which refers to identity work: “When management began to become natural to me and difficulties began to disappear resolving conflicts” [PL7]; “I did not make such decision at a specific moment, it was rather a process” [PL3].

Interviewees were asked whether being a manager is a transferable (periodic/temporary) phenomenon or rather inalienable (permanent)? “I believe that some people are more innately successful as a manager than others, but I believe that managerial skills can be taught and transferred from an experienced manager to someone endeavoring to become a manager” [US1]. “I think being a manager is probably a temporary situation, as required by the situation, though many would see it as an end in itself” [UK1]. Some respondents said that it was transferable (periodic, temporary) [UKR, BUL, PL6], “It is just a position” [PL9], “This is a periodic phenomenon, limited to the activities undertaken” [PL10], “In my assessment, negotiable. A person who has experienced so-called burnout and will not find the strength to manage, will not effectively manage the processes in the company, and since he is ineffective, he ceases to be a manager” [PL5]. Two respondents have chosen that being a manager is inalienable (permanent) [US3, PL14], “it’s a predisposition, character trait” [PL11]. Some answers were that both transferable and inalienable: “It’s a profession – so it’s a negotiable phenomenon. Features that are desirable for a manager and, at the same time, those that I consider permanent are those of a leader” [PL8].

Around half of respondents show management skills as learnable that should “be developed or built” [NIG]. Only three of them (13,6%) see them as innate (inborn) [PL12, PL13]: “Some skills such as people skills and organizational skills are sometimes inborn” [US2]. Both, learnable or innate, were chosen by the rest (22,7%). “Skills are teachable but some people are natural at being managers

and leaders” [US3]. “Being a good people manager is innate through proper sensitivity to human nature, but techniques can be taught, which helps handle certain situations. These are only a supplement to natural management skills” [UK1]. “Innate qualities are essential. However – depending on their level of awareness and ability to use them – they often have to be developed through various forms of education” [PL7]. “Teachable, though, to be a good manager you need to have specific (permanent) personality traits” [PL8]. Summarizing this area, there is the management talent or predisposition but the learning factor is also important.

External confirmation to be a manager (title, nomination, organization membership) is necessary for 30% of respondents, because: “professional title is important to be taken seriously” [US3]; “good managers will know for themselves whether they are successful, but accreditation is very helpful to progress in the business world” [UK1]; “you must at least hold the managerial position to be able to be called manager” [PL9]. For the next 30%, the self-perception is enough, because: “the most important are predispositions and experience” [PL8]; “what matters more is your feeling and real skills and achievements” [PL12].

### 3.3. Artist-manager’s identity

The special features of a person who is both a manager and an artist are: “the ability to make decisions and be a leader, always being open for understanding the other person” [US1]; “being honest and working with integrity” [US2]; “better understanding of self and others by using both right and left brain-sides” [US3]; “multitasking, universalism, flexibility” [UKR]; “complement one another; a person who can make sound and informed decisions, relate to people well on all levels and have forward vision” [UK2]; “being more interdisciplinary” [PL1]; “getting a healthy distance to each of them” [PL3]; “being more sensitive to impulses from the world; seeing more; behave more rationally, because of not wasting resources, energy and time on actions that will not bring the expected results; being more creative” [PL7]; “being usually more imaginative than those who are not artists; in addition, having in their life a sphere of professional satisfaction oth-

er than managerial, they are more open and contented” [PL8]; “being more versatile, have a very strong ego” [PL11]; “being super hardworking and extremely mentally resistant” [PL12].

Respondents show the following similarities between managerial and artistic activities: honesty, integrity, paying attention to details [US2], being organized and persistent [US3], self-discipline, imagination, experience [UK2], dedication [NIG], perseverance in pursuing goals, and multi-faceted activities [PL1], ability to work on a specific project [PL2], achieving goals [PL3], ingenuity, commitment, passion, determination, creativity [PL5], communication with the recipient, promotion and presentation [PL8], devotion, patience [PL9], establishing contact with the audience [PL10], absolute diligence and full commitment [PL12], “consistency, strategic thinking, recognizing contexts and responding to them appropriately, permanent consideration of the human factor, satisfaction is very fleeting and depends on the reaction of people, in each of them I am ‘alone’, i.e. no one can understand my problems and adversities, although everyone has a lot of comments and advice” [PL7].

The differences between managerial and artistic activities were the following. “The artistic sphere allows for time in more singularly-personal thought world than possible in the managerial world” [US1]. “In managerial, you tend to put yourself and others under a controlled condition for a particular goal while in artistic, you infuse or combine your passion with creativity” [NIG]. “Paradoxically, artistic realities are more orderly and predictable [PL3]. “Managerial is more ‘permanent’ (tangible assets); artistic is more abstract sphere (me vs. ideas), although these ideas are realized in the real sphere; the influence of people in managerial activity is greater than in artistic; managerial must consider the human factor much more than the artistic one; in managerial it is easier to recognize the situation; artistic realities are more palpable than noticeable – more experience to navigate confidently is needed” [PL7]. “Managerial activities are limited by many frameworks related to the need to take into account many factors independent of us in management. In artistic work, the only limitation is the artist himself” [PL8]. “Managerial activity is more focused on the external world, e.g. of indi-

vidual artists, and artistic activity – on the internal world of the artist” [PL9].

The skills developed in artistic work and used in managerial activities are: patience, calmness, integrity, honesty [US2], creativity, risktaking, irrationality [UKR], emotional sensitivity, ability to communicate expressively [UK1], self-control, simplicity [NIG], consistency in action, self-discipline, proper organization of time [PL10], responsibility, concentration, empathy, interpersonal skills [PL11]. The more developed answers were: “It is not easy to define because the artist’s features are deeply internalized; they are difficult to select. I think I can use features: creativity, a non-standard approach to problems and reality, perseverance, although these are rather character traits” [PL7]. “All life experiences make up the whole picture of me. The only connection between these two fields is my person – including my emotions, changes, intellect – if they change, every area of my activity changes. Gaining some management skills has no direct impact on the way I paint” [PL8].

The skills developed in managerial activity and used in artistic creation are: planning several months ahead [US3], being organized [PL1], being pragmatic, using theory [UKR], being able to appreciate structure and formality [UK1], initiative, imagination, interpersonal skills [UK2], self-discipline and teamwork [NIG], attention to detail and general impression [PL10], diplomatic skills, negotiation, self-presentation, control stress and emotions [PL11]. Some answers were more complex. “Paradoxically, the basic and universal features of good work are important in both areas. The individual approach and character traits are important” [PL3]. “Both identities – being deeply internalized – interpenetrate and it is difficult to distinguish which of the features/skills comes from which identity; maybe they result from character traits and these character traits determine being an artist and a manager?” [PL7].

The majority of respondents chose the artistic sphere of life as giving greater personal satisfaction, because: “I can bring joy to myself and others through it and it challenges me” [US3]; “There is much greater freedom of expression and others will naturally respond to that rather than by the formal structure of a work hierarchy” [UK1];

“It is more demanding” [PL10]; “Every time I feel spiritually renewed” [PL14]. One respondent chose the managerial sphere, because “I am most satisfied with the satisfaction of customers who recommend us further” [PL5]. Both spheres were chosen [UKR] because “they are complementary” [PL11]. “The most satisfying is art. Managerial work only has a complementary role, although it is a source of satisfying needs such as the need for success, appreciation, the fulfillment of ambition and contact with people” [PL8].

Respondents chose either the artistic or the managerial sphere as more demanding. The artistic sphere was chosen because: “of many hours of practice that have to be done” [US3]; “of the continuing need to develop and improve technique and fluency” [UK1]; “it needs constant care, attention, retention, and development” [UK2]; “requires much higher competence and is a major challenge for me” [PL8]. The managerial sphere was chosen due to “the number of artists being managed” [BUL], “I have been in this profession for a short time and every professional task requires me to broaden my competencies” [PL9]. Two respondents chose both spheres as equally demanding “but each requires different effort and type of work” [PL7].

Respondents described the following situations when they noticed any non-standard situations in their lives in which they were perceived differently from a “classic” manager who is not an artist. “I am known as the person who is the easiest to get along with, which works to my benefit with other departments; they know I will not get upset with them; I will be easy to get along with” [US1]. “I am asked for artistic input or advice in for example meetings as a manager [UK2]. “Most often it happens when an opinion about the artistic activity is needed” [PL3]. “I often leave more freedom in the way I express myself or present myself (e.g. in my outfit or less rigid means of communication), which I use to better communicate with the team or superiors. Sometimes, however, it carries the danger of slightly dismissive treatment of me – but it’s more related to my gender [female] than being an artist” [PL8]. “There are personal conversations, confessions. Sometimes I get the impression that I’m a kind of psychologist” [PL14].

Respondents noticed following non-standard situations in their lives in which they were perceived differently from a “classic” artist who is not a manager. “I didn’t have many artistic situations when the environment noticed my non-artistic activity. If they happened (e.g. during the announcement at the concerts), it was rather in terms of trivia that apart from the art I do something else (something more mundane)” [PL7]. “I might be too pragmatic and sharp or direct” [UKR]. “Other artists will look up to me for direction or leadership” [UK2]. “My fellow artists are noticing my commitment to administrative and organizational matters” [PL3].

Around half of respondents do not experience paradoxical situations in professional life between artist’s and manager’s identities. “I believe those two areas of my professional life affect each other. I believe my managerial skills are uniquely formed by my work as a musician, and my approach as a manager is entirely different from other editors and publishers in the company” [US1]. Those who experienced paradoxical situations said: “all the time; all I want to do is practice instrument but I have to manage details of many non-musical projects as well, as a means of making money” [US3]; “most often when I perform the functions of a contractor and manager for myself” [PL4]. Two respondents experienced paradoxical situations occasionally: “when I might want something artistically but can’t allow it managerially (resources)” [UK2], “I envy my colleagues who are only artists that they are not aware of the administrative kitchen” [PL3].

When seeking a solution in a paradoxical situation in professional life, the manager’s identity dominates the most (31,8%); the artist’s identity is next underlying the factor of “sensitivity to many matters” [PL4]. For the rest of respondents “it is impossible to explicitly support the domination of one of them”, “these identities are interchangeable in various situations” [PL3]; “it depends on the situation, place, task” [PL8], “context and nature of the problem. Rather, it is a matter of seeking a compromise between the suggestions of both identities. I don’t change from the artist’s optics to the manager’s optics, but I work with both optics in parallel” [PL7].

The majority of respondents do not experience tensions between the artist's identity and the manager's identity in the professional life or they solve this problem unconsciously. "I have striven to make these two spheres of my life compatible. It seems to have been an outgrowth of the demand of multi-tasking and, in essence, working at both jobs on the same days" [US1]. "I experience the parallel "voices" of both optics trying to combine them into one coherent message for myself and the environment" [PL7]. "I have no problem with seeing myself as both a manager and an artist at the same time. I am one, the full man who has responsibility for everything he chooses as a field of his activity. I don't see it as some internal tension" [PL8].

Respondents undertake the following methods to avoid the problem of arising identity tensions: "sitting back and relaxing" [US1], "going to the gym" [US2], "putting off doing managerial activities and dedicating time to [artistic] practising" [US3], "playing chess or video games, watching TV, sleeping" [BUL], "doing intellectual analysis; a rational approach to factors, weighting them and conscious decision-making" [PL7]. Referring to the last research question "Is being an artist an added value to the manager's role?", the respondents underline many positive correlations in this field: from the ability to multitasking, through higher sensitivity, up to the commitment, passion, and determination to work.

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## CONCLUSION

The study shows an important number of common characteristics between the artist's and manager's identities and answers positively that artists-managers have their own identities. Although artists-managers experience diversity between both identities, they do not see them as contrary, nor they feel a tension between them; they rather use paradoxical thinking being experts in using personal seemingly contradictory characteristics achieving outstanding performance. By acting in paradoxical contexts and focusing on the positive aspects of seemingly contradictory personal qualities, they find nonstandard creative solutions. Trying to understand and implement their self-construction, there is the possibility to reduce the intra-psychic tensions and negative consequences of seemingly opposite identities or goals among individuals in organizations. The novelty of the research are the following practical implications: the stereotypical perception of the artist's and manager's professions as extremely different has no evidence in this research; there is a synergy between both identities; understanding the nature and attributes of artistic creativity, aesthetic theories and the phenomenon of artist-manager's identity can be a valuable contribution to the practice of management and organizational life; artistic education does not impair the exercise of the managerial profession – it should be considered as an additional advantage, not as a contradictory competence; it is the issue of the level of role(s) internalization – if one/both role(s) is/are not deeply internalized, the individual will feel tensions and paradoxical intra-psychic forces.

Among limitations of the study, the following issues should be underlined: the sample contained mainly musicians (82%); representatives of other arts can have different conclusions; all participants were both managers and artists during the period of the study – the longer period after working in one of the explored roles can change the optic of the participant and indicate different answers; different self-awareness of identity by the respondents and different level of knowledge in the field of identity certainly determine the ability to express opinions on the subject.

As perspectives, the following elements can be seen: quantitative research in the same area; a larger sample could show the distribution of defined answers in this research; quantitative research in the area of perception of artists and managers by people of different cultures, nationalities, and age – it could show potential areas of identity crises within this group.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Formal analysis: Michał Szostak.

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Project administration: Michał Szostak.

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## APPENDIX A

**Table A1.** Description of the research sample

Source: Own elaboration.

Code	Nationality	Birth year	Sex	Formal education in the field of art	Formal education in the field of management	Activity as an artist	Activity as a manager
US1	USA	1965	M	Instrumental studies	None	Director of Music: organist and choir director. Local recitalist. Instructor in organ studies at a university	Editorial Director and Publisher in an international publishing house
US2	USA	1947	M	Instrumental studies	None	International concert instrumentalist	Manager of own artistic career
US3	Russian-USA	1977	F	Music high school, private organ lessons for 20+ years	None, multiple years of experience in a corporate environment	Independent instrumentalist performing locally in public several times a year	Senior manager and director-level manager to a team in advertising technical operations in a large publishing company in NYC
UKR	Ukraine	1990	M	Literature, Master	Post-graduate music management	Poet, poetic translator	Director of concert house, director of an orchestra; managing 30-50 people
UK1	British	1948	M	Associated Board of Royal School of Music Grade 5 in Theory and Instrument. International masterclasses	BSc Electrical Engineering	Part-time instrumentalist. Chairman of local musician association	27 years’ service with British Energy rising to First Engineer grade, in real-time national electrical load management, organization of about 4000 staff
UK2	British	1981	M	Degree and diplomas in music performance and choral direction, instrumentalist	None	Professional organ recitalist and church choir trainer/ conductor	Music department manager: Director of Music, performance, and training, around 50 subordinates. Concert hall arts manager: more admin based, 5 staff

**Table A1 (cont.).** Description of the research sample

Code	Nationality	Birth year	Sex	Formal education in the field of art	Formal education in the field of management	Activity as an artist	Activity as a manager
NIG	Nigerian	1995	M	Music, instrumentalist	MSc, Business Management	Composer/Music Director, Classical/Church musician, Choir/Chorale and Church institution.	Music Director: 60-100 persons; Choirmaster: 14 persons
BUL	Bulgaria	1978	M	Master of Music, instrumentalist	None	Performing recitals, giving masterclass, lectures, performing as a soloist with orchestras and various ensembles	Manager for the past 2 years, managing about 14 artists. Introducing artists to presenters and attempting to secure engagements for my artists
PL1	Poland	1989	M	Master of Music, instrumentalist	Postgraduate studies	Internship: about 15 years, solo and in ensembles, at the Philharmonic (on commission contract) and on own account	Manager at a cultural institution: 50 employees and subordinates
PL2	Poland	1981	M	None	MBA	I create origami lamps, create graphics. Own settlement, independent work	I manage my own business and related projects or people (17 years)
PL3	Poland	1974	M	Master of Arts, vocalist at a Polish music academy and German Music Academy	MBA	Singer-soloist at operas, philharmonics, festivals, early music ensembles, cd, radio, and TV recordings (home and abroad); full-time soloist at opera houses	Impresario of the city opera (internationally acclaimed), organization, and conducting of tours for 100-150 people. Head of an artistic work organization department at the national opera house
PL4	Poland	1999	M	A high school in Music, numerous master courses in music	None	Concert musician for 12 years. Owner of a private music school. Teacher in private music schools. Entertainment band musician. Founder of an orchestra	Promotion agency of various artists. Managing 4 people
PL5	Poland	1980	M	None	None	None	The founder and owner of the company, 15 years old, about 50 subordinates
PL6	Poland	1992	M	Two Master of Musical Arts diplomas	None	An assistant conductor of a national philharmonic, guest conductor in various international institutions	None
PL7	Poland	1980	M	Doctor of Musical Arts, instrumentalist, studies in Warsaw, Milan, London, as well international master courses	Master in Management; completed doctoral studies in Management	A professional musician since 2002 (18 years) in institutions (employment contracts). Regular international (Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa) solo recitalist since 2010 (10 years) for own account, recorded discs	Professional manager (top management level) since 2004 (16 years) in companies (employment contracts, function contracts). Responsibility for various areas of the organization and human teams (10-20 people) in small and medium-sized companies in the international environment

**Table A1 (cont.).** Description of the research sample

Code	Nationality	Birth year	Sex	Formal education in the field of art	Formal education in the field of management	Activity as an artist	Activity as a manager
PL8	Poland	1964	F	Doctor of Art, painter	None	Painter and visual artist, since 1997. Self-employment and in institutions (art associations, universities). Individual artistic work	Vice-president of the artistic association: responsible for the implementation of grant projects, coordination and curating of exhibitions, organization: 20-25 people. Dean of the faculty of a university: managing a team of field managers (around 30 lecturers) and over 2000 students
PL9	Poland	1999	F	1st and 2nd degree Music School	None	Publishing a book in a publishing house, sharing your other work on online platforms, this year's ending of playing in a small symphony orchestra	Since October last year, work at the Artistic Agency as a development and promotion manager. A small organization, no subordinates, project management
PL10	Poland	1991	M	Master of Music, instrumentalist	Postgraduate studies, management completed	For three years an academic and didactic employee of an art university, besides solo concert activity, in chamber ensembles or as a member of an orchestra	Promotion and program departments at public cultural institutions of national importance, implementation of author's musical projects and concerts as part of an own non-governmental organization
PL11	Poland	1952	F	3-year Music Centre and private lessons, vocalist	MSc in Management and Marketing; Postgraduate Study of Culture Managers	Choir singer; vocal group singer; 25 years of cooperation with many entertainment bands as a vocalist	Vice-President of a national association of entertainment musicians. President of an association of performing artists. Manager and co-founder of the 80-member song and dance group at a university. Impresario of cyclical jazz concerts at a capital city
PL12	Poland	1978	F	Master of Music in Poland and in Italy, vocalist	None	Concerts organized as part of one's own business and on specific work contracts; books published at own expense and journalistic cooperation under work and commission contracts	Concerts in cooperation with the local government and as part of their own business, employing up to a dozen people a year, the largest group - five people
PL13	Poland	1970	M	Doctor of Musical Arts, vocalist	None	30 years on stage, actor, opera singer, public and private institutions, solo work	Self-employed, creator of a young musicians' stage; organization of concerts and own artistic work
PL14	Poland	1982	F	Master of Music, instrumentalist	None	Violin teacher, a violinist in a piano duo	Manager of the piano duo