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The Role of Four Life-Story Aspects in a Collaborative Decision-making Process in the Field of Leadership Development

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Abstract

The aim of this conceptual paper is to add knowledge to the existing leadership development field. We examine the development of core intra- and interpersonal values, specifically the individual collaborative features, by considering life experiences (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014), and how these personal collaborative features become integrated when leadership members (members of the leadership process) collaborate (Cullen-Lester, Maupin, & Carter, 2017). We formulate the following four relevant propositions: (1) Individual collaborative features should be integrated with the essential features of the leadership members' collaboration during a decision-making process. (2) A life-story aspect has substantive contents and the information drawn from it will therefore shape the leadership members' collaborative features and develop their meaning-making system, while participating in a collaborative decision-making process. (3) The subject under discussion, the context, the actors, and the time of occurrence are the four basic criteria of a life story aspect, in which an event is selected to be placed in. (4) A life story aspect provides fertile grounds for unpacking collaborative tendencies in general and thus implies such tendencies, particularly in the work setting. Consequently, the theoretical contributions of this paper entail advancing and integrating the existing literature of the life-story approach and collaborative decision-making in the leadership development field.

Keywords: Leadership development, Collaboration, Decision making, Life story

JEL classification: D91

Introduction

The decisions that leaders make influence a wide range of people's lives, which is why complex decision-making processes (Ginkel & Knippenberg, 2012; Larsen, Gray, & Eckstein, 2014) are inevitable for leaders, and it is the positive outcomes flowing from effective decision-making processes what leaders strive for (Mendes, Mendes, & Salleh, 2019). Thus, leaders should definitely learn to develop relevant skills that make processes more effective. Similarly, Rangus and Černe (2019) performed a research of the impact of leadership influence tactics and employee openness towards others, based on

innovation performance which has become imperative in the 21st century.

Leadership members, i.e. members of the leadership process, can make decision-making processes more effective and solve a specific Problem (McHugh et al., 2016), however, only if they participate authentically (Dimovski, Penger, & Peterlin, 2009; Grošelj, Penger, & Černe, 2016; Sidani & Rowe, 2018) and employ collaboration as a working methodology (Crosby & Bryson, 2010). Our topic falls within the area of leadership development (Sparrowe, 2005), since it discusses the way the collaborative features of leadership members are developed and establishes the flow of these collaborative features, while integrating them into the collaboration context among members of leadership

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(Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Day, 2011; Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, & Adler, 2005). We aim to outline that leadership development is an active field in both theory-building and the testing (Spisak, O'Brien, Nicholson, & Vugt, 2015) of complex processes (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2011). A complex process includes in itself a linear study of a large variety of specific concepts (collaboration, leadership, decision making, life stories, and individual characteristics), in order to provide a language for a description of a broader concept, such as is the concept of leadership development (White, Currie, & Lockett, 2016).

Further, to clarify the concept of leadership development, we present the argument that ever since academics have inquired into the issue of leadership, a qualitative distinction has been drawn by scientists and scholars between leadership development and leader development, studying them as two different concepts (Day, 2000; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee, 2014). Of the two, leader development concentrates on studying core intrapersonal values, hence its main focus is on the core individual values (Miscenko, Guenter, & Day, 2017), whereas leadership development includes the core individual values and interpersonal activities of leaders together with their followers (Cullen-Lester, Maupin & Carter, 2017).

In the following paragraphs, we present and elaborate on some of the specific concepts included in this paper, in order to theoretically explain the complex process of leadership development. Leadership members, i.e. members of the leadership process, can only make decision-making processes more effective, if they rely on collaboration as an organizational form instead of other alternative forms, as are competition and cooperation (Snow, 2015). The distinction among collaboration, cooperation and competition is best seen in the way members of leadership behave in the decision-making process (Fjeldstad, Snow, Miles, & Lettle, 2012). Leadership members collaborate for the purpose of acting authentically in such a process

(Morse, 2010) compared with competition, whereby a leadership member is engaged to be a protagonist within the team (Garfield, Rueden, & Hagen, 2019), while cooperation is related to an individual's ability to feel empathy (willingness to sacrifice for the success of others in the team) towards the efforts of colleagues in a given circumstance within a decision-making process (Binmore, 2006).

When decision making is collaborative, there are several persons, each with a different professional, cultural and educational background, who have typically become a limiting factor in delivering the individual's vision (Dahlin, Weingart, & Hinds, 2005). The diversity of leadership members (members of the leadership process) means it is essential to have a process that integrates their personal attitudes, behavior, beliefs and ideas into a common vision (Kramer & Crespy, 2011). This conceptual paper attempts to show that the process of integrating all leadership members may be achieved in cross-individual collaboration settings, where each leadership member's core personality values are integrated into the decision-making process itself (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010). Collaborative features are characterized as the core personality values of the leader/follower that they have developed over time and which they can use in a collaborative decision-making process (Vries, 2012). We further establish the five most important collaborative features, namely Problem definition, critical thinking, information sharing, forecasting, and design thinking (Dinh et al., 2014). All of these collaborative features are shaped by the information a leadership member has accumulated during their life experiences.

A life-story aspect has substantive contents, because the language used to describe the elements does not carry the same meaning as other life-story aspects (Weischer, Weibler, & Petersen, 2012). We emphasize four life-story aspects, in which an event may be positioned and evaluated (Ramarajan, 2014), and explain the meaning of these aspects in Table 1.

Table 1. The four life-story aspects.

Life-story aspects	Description
Internal Social Experiences (ISE)	This life-story aspect includes all events a leadership member has experienced during their lifespan in the environment of their family (Jaskiewicz, Combs, Shanine, & Kacmar, 2017).
External Social Experiences (ESE)	This life-story aspect incorporates all the stories a leadership member has experienced in society (talking with friends, meeting strangers, trips) within a broader context (Ensari & Murphy, 2003).
Professional Experiences (PE)	This life-story aspect consists of the events a leadership member has experienced, while working in all of their jobs (Carpini, Parker, & Griffin, 2017; Solberg & Wong, 2016).
Educational Experiences (EE)	This life-story aspect comprises events a leadership member experienced at school and university (Higgins, Robinson, & Hogg, 2014; Leana & Pil, 2006; Park, Stone, & Hollway, 2017).

We also identify five basic criteria that constitute a life-story aspect, and these are the subject/topic for discussion, the context, the actors, the individual projection for future information use, and the time of occurrence (Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008).

Life stories are considered events that an individual has experienced in the past and that may affect the individual's thinking process in the present moment (Watts, Steele, & Mumford, 2019). A life-story impacts the way leadership members (leaders and followers) are able to create a clarity of self-concept and develop their meaning-making system (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). We therefore outline that the content of life experiences, and how they are experienced and organized, determines the way the individual perceives and delivers their own professional contribution (Simmons, 2002) and allows the individual to successfully merge their person-role in a given collaborative decision-making process (Cooper, Thatcher, & Moteabbed, 2013). In any case, the repetition of these stories over time strengthens a leadership member's meaning-making ability (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Leadership members, i.e. members of the leadership process, must rely on their cognition in the collaboration process and development of meaning-making (Shamir & Hooijberg, 2008). Meaning-making is a lifelong activity that begins in earliest infancy and continues to evolve through a series of stages, encompassing childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, where Kegan (1982) discusses the natural emergence of self (incorporative self, impulsive self, imperial self, interpersonal self, and institutional self). Barrouillet and Gaillard (2010) integrate studies of the working memory development with the theories proposed by neo-Piagetian researchers, who emphasize the role played by cognitive resources and the working memory capacity in the development of thinking and reasoning, of which both play a vital part in decision-making and collaboration processes. It also means that life-stories are an information source that will clarify the leadership member's mind so as to understand their potential contribution to a certain task (Mahn, 2012) and help them match their core personality values with the essential features of the collaborative decision-making process (Schreurs, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2009).

The main purpose of this paper is to present the concept of leadership development as a mature form of different leadership processes (Cullen-Lester et al., 2017). We aim to outline that one can only be objective, in the sense of providing logical argumentation of the occurring phenomena through connecting the truth of premises with the truth of

conclusion, in studying the concept of leadership development, only if the phenomenon and its development process are first identified (Friedman, 1953). A complex process must be defined as a particular phenomenon, i.e. collaborative decision-making among leadership members, that incorporates numerous concepts important for describing the development of the phenomena, in which the concepts need to be integrated in order to create a common description of that phenomenon (Schneider & Somers, 2006). This means that leadership development cannot be studied as a concept per se, because if it is, it then provides only subjective outcomes, by providing opinions. Such a concept is, in general, a complex intermixture of two elements, as it is in part a substantive content of the phenomenon (collaborative decision making) in discussion, and second, it is the language that helps the authors to link particular concepts (life-story aspects, core personality values, decision making and collaboration) in explaining that phenomenon (White et al., 2016).

Three components shape the structure of this paper. The research entails a review of the existing research and a consideration of an existing theoretical framework (Howard, 2006) in order to develop a new conceptual model and the propositions provided in the continuation. We start by presenting the broader theory of leadership development, then explain collaborative decision processes and skills, and finish off with a discussion of the life-story approach that provides a way to develop these skills.

1 The model of this conceptual paper

The model of this conceptual paper in Fig. 1 describes firstly, the process of why and how the four life-story aspects shape a leader's/follower's collaborative features, and secondly, how individual collaborative features determine the flow in a collaborative decision-making process. Our conceptual model is a mixed level phenomenon (Markus & Robey, 1988), which means that the description of leadership development is impossible without taking into consideration at the same time, and joining in one coherent explanation, the life stories and the individual characteristics of development at an individual level and the collaborative decision-making process at a collective level. "The behavior cannot be predicted either by the intention of individual actors or by the condition of environment" (Markus & Robey, 1988). The behavior of each leadership member in a collaborative decision-making process is expressed in an authentic way,

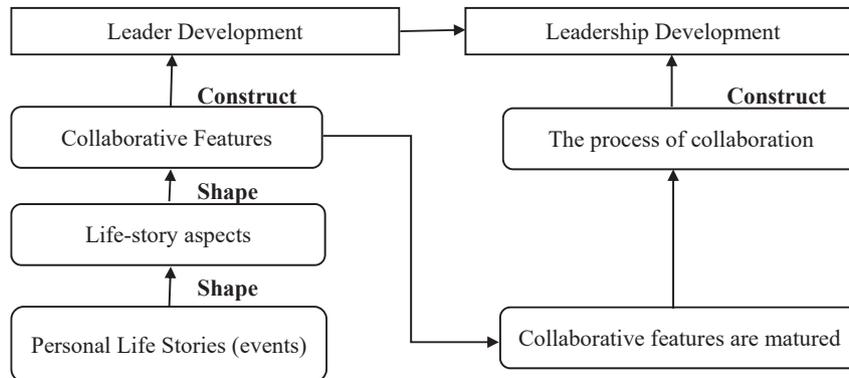


Fig. 1. Components of the complex process in the scope of leadership development.

shaped by life stories experienced before. Outcomes from the process of collaboration are “(partially) predictable from the knowledge of the process, and not from the level of the predictor variables” (Markus & Robey, 1988).

The conceptual model refers to the external forces that shape and reshape the core personality values of a leadership member and shows whether (be aware here about the existence of personal values) the mature core personality values of leadership members (members of the leadership process) are the premise of developing the process of a collaborative decision-making process (Markus & Robey, 1988). The external factors represent the four life-story aspects, where each of these aspects has numerous events, so that the information derived from these events can shape and reshape the core personality of each leadership member.

In the above Fig. 1, we stress the following concepts that shape the conceptual model:

Leadership development, including the intrapersonal core values and interpersonal activities of leaders with their followers (Day, 2000), carries a concept that is not directly related to any type of leadership theories, meaning that leadership development is an independent concept of studying the phenomena that cause the development of leaders’ skills and their potential to collaborate with others in the team (Day et al., 2014). More specifically, the concept of leadership development studies the intrapersonal core values of leadership members and the interpersonal activities of leaders with their followers (Day, 2000). Leadership members cannot deliver their thoughts within their team and accept feedback from their colleagues, if in the beginning they are not aware (matured collaborative features) of the core personality values that they represent (Reiss, 2007). The advancement of leadership development is therefore dependent on the

development of leader development (Solansky, 2010).

Further, leadership development is related to the development of consciousness, which includes the state of being aware of the core personality values that leadership members have shaped across time and can use in decision-making processes among leadership members (Halbesleben, Novicevic, Harvey, & Buckley, 2003). Also, leadership members can be knowledgeable about the content of their own core personality values, however, only if they are first conscious of the existence (matured collaborative features) of these values that they represents (Taylor, Passarelli, & Oosten, 2019). The self-comprehension of what values represent within a team means that these core personality values have passed to a new stage of development. The core personality values are matured enough, when the leadership member has identified what these values are. It means that the leadership member understands clearly the potential that the values represent, while being engaged in a decision-making process (Steffens, Fonseca, Ryan, Rink, Stoker & Pieterse, 2018).

Collaboration stands for a working methodology that is used by leadership members to participate authentically in a decision-making process (Morse, 2010). In our research, we aim to emphasize that collaboration actually defines how leadership members act during a decision-making process (Snow, 2015).

A decision-making process of leadership members (members of the leadership process), committed to the form of collaboration, means that each leadership member in a specific department is free of working independently through being responsible for the duties that they are delegated to accomplish. However, the moment that these decisions could influence also the decisions of any

other department, then the leadership member is dependent on the decisions of other leadership members within the organization (Murase, Carter, Dechurch, & Marks, 2014). Thus, the outcomes of this organizational form describe that the absolute power of one leadership member over the others does not exist, instead, the operational activities and responsibilities of leadership members are spread equally among them (Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, & Mumford, 2009).

Collaborative features represent the core personality values of leadership members that are developed over time and in which they can integrate with the key features of a collaborative decision-making process (Ramarajan, 2014). In this conceptual paper, we create five collaborative features, which include more than 12 individual characteristics within them. The 12 individual characteristics are fused into the five collaborative features presented below:

- 1 Loyalty – is a core personality value that represents the ability of a leadership member to be authentic in every moment and context (Jung, Yammarino, & Lee, 2009).
- 2 Commitment – is a core personality value that represents the ability of a leadership member to fully use personal potential, while attaining a specific goal (Landry & Vandenberghe, 2012).
- 3 Open-mindedness – is a core personality value meaning that a leadership member is ready to hear and accept new ideas, arguments and decisions from other members of the team (Eberly & Fong, 2013).
- 4 Consistency – is a core personality value that stands for a leadership member who, while making efforts to attain a certain goal, keeps a certain level of engagement continuously through finding a successful way of attaining the objective (Michie & Gooty, 2005).
- 5 Honesty – is a core personality value that describes the integrity of a leadership member. An honest person is defined by having a clear vision and goals and staying loyal till the very end. Furthermore, an honest person avoids unethical actions, while being engaged in a decision-making process (Ogunfowora, 2014).
- 6 Efficiency – is the ability of a leadership member to achieve the required results in a decision-making process, with the least waste of time and effort (Combe & Carrington, 2015).
- 7 Innovation – is the ability of a leadership member to present something new in the discussion to find a solution for a specific issue (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018).
- 8 Compassion – is the ability of a leadership member to accept the contribution of others in the team by not attacking their argument without having any base of authentic argumentation (Eagly, 2005).
- 9 Motivation – is the ability of a leadership member to insist on seeking the solution without taking into consideration the difficulties, which emerge from the Problem in the discussion (Gottfried et al., 2011).
- 10 Optimism – is the ability of a leadership member to believe that the solution exists (Hoogh & Hartog, 2008).
- 11 Respect – is the ability of a leadership member to accept any mistake committed by another leadership member in the team, by helping them to understand the situation (Sadri, Weber, & Gentry, 2011).
- 12 Courage – is the ability of a leadership member during the process of decision making to resist any difficulty, pain and danger, without having the fear of failing (Sturm, Vera, & Crossan, 2017).

The four life-story aspects allow an event to be located and used to develop a leadership member's meaning-making system (Dess & Pickens, 2000; Howell & Boies, 2004; Mainemelis, Kark, & Epitropaki, 2017; Noy, 2004). The four life-story aspects are divided only with the purpose of determining the nature of information that a person can absorb and in which the person's personality is shaped and reshaped across time. Thus, these pieces of information in the beginning are absorbed unconsciously by the leadership member, however, the moment that the leadership member is engaged in a collaborative decision-making process, these emerge (Shamir, 2011).

Life story is an event that a leadership member has experienced in the past (Shamir, 2005, 2011) and happens within a given context at a certain point of time. And while more life stories together create one life-story aspect, the connection of more than two stories creates self-narratives (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

2 Collaborative decision-making in the leadership development field

Within the scope of leadership development, we conceptualize a collaborative decision-making process, having three components, which are leadership (Acton, Foti, Lord, & Gladfelder, 2019; Cheong, Yammarino, Dionne, Spain, & Tsai, 2019), decision making (Larsen et al., 2014), and collaboration (Fjeldstad et al., 2012). Traditionally, the leadership

concept is described as the way a leadership member imposes their influence (Hogg, Haslam, Rast, Steffens, & Gaffney, 2019) for the purpose of enforcing their personal contribution in a decision-making process (Yukl, 2006). Decision making is an important process of leadership, as it brings leadership members (members of the leadership process) together to discuss a specific Problem (Westaby, Probst, & Lee, 2010). In our research, we consider a unique type of decision making that includes the way leaders and followers come to act together (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2009) and contend that the self-concept of followers is not linked to the leader's self-concept, but rather to their own core personal values (Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 2000). With such decision making, leadership members are able to justify their vision (McHugh et al., 2016), emphasize personal activities for how to solve a problem (Ginkel & Knippenberg, 2012), and rely on past experience as the key source of their own information (Watts, Ness, Steele, & Mumford, 2018).

The importance of collaboration in decision making is highlighted, because it helps to overcome the social and physical distances among leadership members (Shamir, Cole, & Bruch, 2009) and ensures a better alignment of leadership members by sharing a mental model among them (Dionne, Sayama, Hao, & Bush, 2010). A shared mental model in fact entails the sharing of perceptions, beliefs, and priorities among leadership members (Maynard & Gilson, 2014).

2.1 Leadership member's collaborative features integration with the key features of collaboration

A leadership member's collaborative features must be integrated with the essential features of the collaboration among leadership members (Morse, 2010). As already emphasized, a collaborative decision-making process involves a large number of persons, with each holding different core personality values (Kramer & Crespy, 2011). Leadership members (members of the leadership process) should therefore create a set of norms which they consider are the essential features of collaboration (Fjeldstad et al., 2012). These norms then determine who can be part of the collaborative decision-making process. If a leadership member can successfully find a space to integrate their collaborative features with the key features of the collaboration, they will obtain the right to contribute to the decision-making process, or otherwise be excluded (McHugh, Yammarino, Dionne, Serban, Sayama & Chatterjee, 2016).

Collaboration has the following essential features:

1. The context describes the environment in which a Problem appears (Sharma, 2018).
2. The content is a description of the Problem under discussion (Spangler, Gupta, Kim & Nazarian, 2012).
3. The professional background of leadership members is the information about the knowledge, abilities, and skills of other team members in order to understand the opportunity to collaborate with them (Reid, Anglin, Baur, Short, & Buckley, 2018).
4. Time constraint describes how dynamic the decision-making process is, as well as the time limit to find a solution (Boal & Schultz, 2007).
5. Credibility means that the communication among leadership members is good with the purpose to ensure a free distribution of personal knowledge within the team (Grah, Dimovski, Snow, & Peterlin, 2016).

Accordingly, the selection of leadership members (members of the leadership process) in a collaborative decision-making process should be the result of that integration, i.e. of a leadership member's collaborative features with the essential features of collaboration, since otherwise the leadership members' overall contribution to decision-making is unsuccessful and the right decisions are not made (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010).

2.2 The four life-story aspects that shape a leadership member's collaborative features

The life-story concept is vague, when one seeks to identify its characteristics in order to apply them in explaining certain phenomena (Shamir, 2005). Therefore, a useful way of researching it is by dividing it into the four most important life-story aspects. We identify these four different life-story aspects, because they are experienced in different stages of life, with different actors appearing in them, with each actor playing a different role in shaping the collaborative features held by leadership members (Ramarajan, 2014). Collaborative features are characterized as the core personality values of a leader/follower developed in time (Vries, 2012). In our research, we ascertain the five most important collaborative features that a leader/follower should possess (Dinh et al., 2014) and discuss the collaborative features one by one to evaluate how each life-story aspect influences them.

Problem definition is a collaborative feature that refers to each leadership member's ability to evaluate and analyze how they can authentically contribute to a specific part of the solution (Delbecq,

2017). This collaborative feature determines certain norms that simplify the way personal beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and visions are delivered in the decision-making process (Chatman & Flynn, 2001). These norms should link the characteristics of a specific part of the problem with the core personality values of a leadership member (Taggar & Ellis, 2007). These core personality values are influenced by the personal life-experiences of leadership members (Dunlop & Walker, 2013), with Table 2 below showing the role of the four life-story aspects in developing the mentioned collaborative feature.

Critical thinking is a partial process of a leadership member, whereby the leadership member engages their cognition to find solutions to a specific Problem (Lord & Brown, 2001). This individual devotion to the decision-making process is described based on three important cognitive components, including the listening process, memory, and fluid reasoning (Cowan, 2005). The ability to listen is an individual cognitive component, which refers to how efficiently the information can be processed (Hult, Ketchen, & Slater, 2004). Memory is a cognitive component that describes how levels of different information can be processed and, when a high level is entailed, how much of it is retained in the mind (Gathercole, Pickering, Knight, & Stegmann, 2004). The last of the three important cognitive components, fluid reasoning, is a cognitive ability to engage in quality argumentation on a specific problem in a decision-making process (Engle, Tuholski, Laughlin, & Conway, 1999). In Table 3 below, we elaborate how the four life-story aspects impact this collaborative feature (critical thinking) (see Table 4).

Information-sharing in a collaborative decision-making process describes the trajectory of the information flow between a leadership member and other members, so as to jointly resolve the Problem (Pajunen & Fang, 2013). Information-sharing is important in creating a common strategy on how to attain a given end in a collaborative decision-making process and also define which part of the problem a leadership member is more prepared to give their contribution to (Bavik, Tang, Shao, & Lam, 2018). Consequently, the process of information-sharing is the starting point of collaboration and helps leadership members to create a schema, in which leadership members organize their duties (Drescher & Garbers, 2016). Furthermore, information-sharing refers to the leadership members' capacity to create, extend, and modify the source of knowledge related to the issue in discussion (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019).

Forecasting pertains to the generation of novel or useful authentic ideas that a leadership member employs in shaping their personal vision, goals, and activities (Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011). A leadership member with a high level of critical Problem-solving skills can successfully collaborate with others by being more credible in their colleagues' eyes due to their personal contribution (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002). Thus, forecasting means what a leadership member predicts in relation to the future outcomes of a particular issue (Shipman, Byrne, & Mumford, 2010). During the decision-making process, a leadership member may be affected by many factors, from the working environment, interference of team members, time dynamic, etc., which can lead them in the

Table 2. Role of the four life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE) in shaping the first collaborative feature (Problem Definition).

Internal Social Experiences	Internal social experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to define the responsibilities of leadership members in assessing a specific Problem (Myer et al., 2014). Life-stories drawn from internal social experiences therefore help a leadership member to understand their own position within the team and assess their personal responsibility with respect to defining the problem (Joshnloo & Ghaedi, 2009).
External Social Experiences	External social experiences are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability to accumulate a large spectrum of information, as a result of talking with people who have been in the same situation (Tyszka, Zielonkd, Dacey, & Sawicki, 2008). We emphasize it as a large spectrum of information, since external social experiences are related to the events in society. Some pieces of information are not experienced directly, as some of the information is heard by a leadership member from others. The knowledge created for a specific Problem, stemming from these discussions with different persons in the past, is an indirect way of understanding the nature of a certain problem that a leadership member is struggling to define (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2006).
Professional Experiences	Professional experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to relate to all characteristics of the current Problem, to some extent with those experienced before, and help create a routine for assessing similar problems (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001).
Educational Experiences	While undergoing education at school/university, a leadership member has several intense experiences (dynamic discussions with peers, teachers/professors, and other stakeholders) in the classroom (Montiel, Lopez, & Gallo, 2018). These experiences are sources that shape a leadership member's ability to apply a strict formal and informal set of norms to assess the consequences of a specific Problem in a given context (Kurtmollaiev, Pedersen, Juk & Kvale, 2018).

Table 3. Role of the four life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE) in shaping the collaborative feature of critical thinking.

Internal Social Experiences	Internal social experiences are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability to create systemized basic knowledge about a certain issue, as this leadership member has inherited well-classified information from their family members (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009). These experiences help a leadership member develop their intuition and apply it, while exploring a certain Problem's characteristics within the decision-making process (Patterson & Eggleston, 2017). The intuition of a leadership member is related to the ability to understand faster the key characteristics of the problem, find alternatives for solution, and do the right argumentation of these alternatives within the team (Samba, Williams, & Fuller, 2019). This means that internal social experiences are the source for developing the cognitive abilities of a person to react faster in a difficult situation.
External Social Experiences	The external social experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to reduce the level of uncertainty, while exploring the characteristics of a particular Problem (Vessey, Barrett, & Mumford, 2011). These experiences develop the leadership member's ability to manage a diversity of information through filtering and consider only the information that is important for the issue under discussion (Moshman, 2005). External social experiences are the pieces of information that a leadership member has, and which the leadership member can use to understand the attitude and the argumentation of others in a collaborative decision-making process for a certain issue. Accordingly, we emphasize that external social experiences are meaningful for a leadership member to feel comfortable, while working within a team.
Professional Experiences	Professional experiences are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability to quickly understand the arguments used by colleagues and to challenge those arguments with their own information in order to create a logic for analyzing a Problem (Grant & Parker, 2009). Such an information-filtering methodology creates the foundations for developing well-structured decisions with respect to a certain issue (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019).
Educational Experiences	Educational experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to provide unlimited scientific information relating to a specific issue (Pil & Leana, 2009). Such information helps to predict the consequences of any change in the circumstances after a decision has been taken by leadership members (Taylor et al., 2019).

wrong direction of forecasting (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). In a collaborative decision-making process, a leadership member must have a clear vision that they strongly believe in, which then amounts to the practical implementation of it (Lapidot, Kark, & Shamir, 2007). While faced with a problem, a leadership member tries to forecast the best solution to that problem by considering in forecasting the following key variables: cognition, objectivity, the time dimension, and the content of the solution (Mumford, Steele, McIntosh, & Mulhearn, 2015). All of these variables are directly/indirectly affected by the four life-story aspects a leadership member

experienced in the past. In Table 5, we aim to describe these processes.

Design thinking is a collaborative feature, whereby a leadership member uses their human and social capital for the purpose of developing novel ideas and refining them in order to exclude those that are not good enough to seize genuine opportunities in the future (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002). To successfully transform the situation in an organization, a leadership member must be committed to generating ideas that are novel and to further developing them in order for them to be easily implemented in the actual cases (Baer, 2012).

Table 4. Role of the four life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE) in shaping the collaborative feature of information-sharing.

Internal Social Experiences	Internal social experiences are a source for establishing personal norms a leadership member may rely on, when it comes to delivering their personal information to others and the manner of accepting the feedback of other team members (Hung, Loong, He, Liu, & Weatherall, 2000). These norms set the limits of the leadership member, while they interact with other team members (Willenbrock, Meinecke, Rowold, & Kauffeld, 2015).
External Social Experiences	External social experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to assess the credibility of the information that leadership members consider among themselves (Kim, 2003). These experiences help the leadership member manage the flow of information within the team (Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Quon, & Topakas, 2013).
Professional Experiences	Professional sources are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability to learn how to defend their personal argument before the decision-making team (Steele & Plenty, 2015). These stories relate to the debates developed for a certain issue, where the participants' responsibility is equally distributed (Rudolph, Rauvola, & Zacher, 2018).
Educational Experiences	Educational experiences provide a person with the ability to learn more quickly the characteristics of a certain task and then disseminate them among the team members (McCormick & Cappella, 2015).

Table 5. Role of the four life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE) in shaping the collaborative feature of forecasting.

Internal Social Experiences	In the environment of a family, a person expresses freely the ideas kept in mind on a certain issue in discussion without filtering them (Dess & Pickens, 2000). Repeating these stories creates a habit of expressing personal ideas and opinions at every moment when the person's contribution is required (Daly, Egan, & O'Reilly, 2015). Internal social experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to keep under control the interference of other leadership members in order to reduce the risk of them negatively influencing the process of the leadership member's forecasting (Roessl, 2005). Accordingly, we emphasize that a leadership member must take care of the consistency in not only their articulation of ideas, but their actions too (Steffens, Mols, Haslam, & Okimoto, 2016). A leadership member that changes their authentic argumentation only to satisfy the co-workers is considered a person inadequate to be part of a collaborative decision-making process (Weiss, Razinskas, Backmann, & Hoegl, 2018).
External Social Experiences	External social experiences are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability not be affected by the thinking process of their colleagues. As such, information from the external social experience aspect urges them to engage in brainstorming based on certain norms set at the start of the process (Kimhi & Zysberg, 2009). A leadership member in a decision-making process works only on a specific part of the Problem and when each of the leadership members attains the required outcome, they then connect the dots to create the common alternative for solving the problem in discussion. Accordingly, a leadership member must keep in mind own values, knowledge, and strengths (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Lapidot et al., 2007), be aware of the context in which they operate, and also be confident (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001; Shamir & Shamir, 2017) when forecasting the consequences of a given change in circumstances in the future.
Professional Experiences	Professional experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to provide ideas that are in line with innovative trends related to a certain issue (Mainemelis et al., 2017). Therefore, we conclude that professional experiences are a source for shaping a leadership member's ability to create a schema for future predictions (Grant, 2012).
Educational Experiences	Educational experiences are a source that shapes a leadership member's ability to evaluate and predict a given context in the future that has not yet happened, and shape the structure of the solution (in the future) in line with the Problem's characteristics (in the present) (Leana & Pil, 2006).

Leadership members must therefore be at once highly creative and realistic, because the novel ideas they generate are very often hard to implement in practice (Škerlavaj, Černe, & Dysvik, 2014). The ability to generate and develop a new idea is a consequence of one's past experiences and the four life-story aspects do in fact impact this collaborative feature, as described in Table 6 below.

2.3 Development of propositions

Contextual, human, social, and structural capital are central to the development of collective leadership. Specifically, Elkington, Pearse, Moss, Van der Steege, and Martin (2016) define collaboration

within social capital as cross-organizational communication, diversity eloquence, team leadership, and conflict resolution. Based on these themes, Elkington et al. (2016) identify the key leadership development tactics.

Collaboration among leadership members is developed by ensuring a successful integration of the collaborative features within it (Dinh et al., 2014). Within our research, we identify the essential features of collaboration (context, content, professional background of leadership members, time constraint, and credibility) that a leadership member must consider in order to determine if it fits in with their own collaborative features (McHugh, Yammarino, Dionne, Serban, Sayama & Chatteree,

Table 6. Role of the four life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE) in shaping the collaborative feature of idea evolution.

Internal Social Experiences	Internal social experiences equip a leadership member with the ability to be familiar with the characteristics of the environment, where the idea is in the process of being implemented, until the moment of its maturity (when implemented in practice) or failure to be transformed to a practical case (Rooth, Piuva, Forinder, & Soderback, 2018).
External Social Experiences	By relying on their external social experiences, a leadership member creates an opportunity to use the external resources for the purpose of making the implementation of a specific idea simpler (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2006).
Professional Experiences	Professional experiences make a leadership member conscious of the ideas that can/cannot be seen as meaningful for attaining a given end (Sull, Homkes, & Sull, 2015).
Educational Experiences	Educational experiences help a leadership member understand the methodology of using exemplars (cases previously studied) in order to harmonize the theoretical part of the idea with its practical implementation (Lindsay, Jack, & Ambrosini, 2018).

2016). If a leadership member is able to integrate their collaborative features with the essential features of the collaboration, then collaborative tendencies in the work setting are most likely to manifest, when people are brought together in a decision-making process on how to achieve a specific organizational goal (Fjeldstad et al., 2012).

Proposition 1. Individual collaborative features must be integrated with the essential features of the leadership members' collaboration in a decision-making process.

A life-story is not a set of tautologies (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), instead, the substantive contents of a life-story aspect relate to the unique language used to describe their meaning (Ligon et al., 2008). It is therefore not possible to use the same language for all four life-story aspects, because each life-story has different protagonists with various views on it, different topics under discussion, and dissimilar contexts, but also different concepts (Watts et al., 2018). All four of these life-story aspects are nevertheless equally important for shaping the collaborative features of a leadership member. In fact, the development of collaborative features creates a leadership member's meaning-making system, while participating in a collaborative decision-making process (Kunnen & Bosma, 2000).

Proposition 2. A life-story aspect has substantive contents and therefore the information drawn from it will shape the leadership members' collaborative features and develop their meaning-making system, while participating in a collaborative decision-making process.

So far, we have determined the methodology for accepting a life-story within a life-story aspect of a leadership member (Watts et al., 2019). It is important that the topic of a certain life story experienced by a leadership member states the message that the story of the leadership member provides, which may be used in the future, when taking a decision on a certain issue (Holt, 2013). The meaning of a subject depends on the context, in which a story is developed, and accordingly, the components of a particular context are useful for determining the position of a life story among the four life-story aspects (Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009). The context of a life story includes the components of the environment experienced by a leadership member (Sharma, 2018).

A leadership member is usually not the only person who participates in the story they experience (Huettermann, Doering, & Boerner, 2014). The various people within a life story not only define the nature of the story, but also clarify the context, in which the story develops, and simplify the decision on where to position that same story among the life-story aspects (Watts et al., 2018). For example, if a leadership member experiences a story, and part of it includes some students and teachers, then the story is naturally considered within the scope of education experiences.

The final criterion selected is the time dimension, because it connects the meaning of a life story at the moment it occurs with the meaning of that story at the moment a leadership member aims to employ it in a decision-making process (Boal & Schultz, 2007). We emphasize that a life story experienced by a leadership member is an event which happens within a given context, with more than two actors in it, with the subject in discussion, and a time of occurrence. The moment an event happens, the before mentioned four components are the base on which we can decide where in one of the life-story aspects to locate the event. The identification of the event location in one of the life-story aspects is necessary, if its impact on the core personality values is to be analysed.

Proposition 3. The subject/topic under discussion, the context, the actors, and the time of occurrence are the four basic criteria of a life-story aspect, in which an event is selected to be placed in.

This proposition explains that, if the four life-story aspects are enriched with enough information experienced by a leadership member, then the leadership member will be aware of their personality core values, which are important for collaborative features to emerge, while participating in a collaborative decision-making process. Each life-story aspect is a function of its activities, which are unlike the activities of other life-story aspects (Ketchen & Hult, 2002). A life-story aspect is the origin of specific personal information that was born in a given time period and evolved to the point, where they are considered sufficiently mature (Shamir, 2011). The moment of considering the information mature is when a person is aware of their own core personality values (Bauman, 2013). At this point, the core personality values are the collaborative features a person needs to integrate with the essential features of the collaboration (Morse, 2010).

Thus, collaborative tendencies are considered the outcome of a transition, where collaborative features are successfully integrated with the essential features of the collaboration in a decision-making process (Dinh et al., 2014; Fjeldstad et al., 2012; Snow, 2015).

Proposition 4. The life-story aspect provides fertile grounds for unpacking the collaborative tendencies in general and thus quite reliably implies the collaborative tendencies, especially in a work setting.

3 Conclusion

The paper contributes to the area of leadership development above all theoretically. We explain how the concepts of leadership development, collaborative decision-making process, collaborative features, life-story aspects, and life story interrelate in order to provide a clear meaning of the topic under discussion. Our research focuses on how life-stories shape a leadership member's collaborative features at the individual level (core intrapersonal values) and also examines the interpersonal activities of leadership members, by studying the integration of collaborative features with the essential features of collaborative decision-making (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Day, 2000).

The theoretical contributions made by this conceptual paper include above all advancing the literature of the life-story approach (Shamir, 2005), by not only dividing it into four specific life-story aspects (ISE, ESE, PE, EE), but also by defining each aspect as a different type of life dimension that emerges in various life contexts and produces different outcomes (Shamir et al., 2005; Thomsen, Steiner, & Pillemer, 2016). Secondly, we emphasize that a life-story aspect has substantive contents (unique information). Thirdly, the four life-story aspects presented prove in fact to be a source for shaping the collaborative features of leadership members. And lastly, the final value of our contribution lies in its explanation of the interrelation between a leadership member's collaborative features with the essential features of a collaborative decision-making process in the leadership development field.

We need to stress that the contribution is not only theoretical, but rather that the conceptual model presented in this paper provides guidance for individuals, teams, and organizations, so they are able to enhance their collaborative capabilities in practice. The practical implications therefore are: (1) the

cognition of leaders—to help leaders organize and use their personal information they have accumulated over time (during their life span) in a collaborative decision-making process, (2) collective knowledge and behavior—to create the opportunity for leaders and their followers to reveal their own information, accept feedback, and find a common alternative solution to a specific issue, and (3) organizational competitive advantages for substituting competitive and cooperative working methods with the collaborative method as a new form of leadership to create new competitive advantages (Snow, 2015).

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare they have no conflict of interest.

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