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Impact of leadership on hotel employee motivation in crisis and post-crisis environments

ABSTRACT

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

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The dissertation was submitted for discussion at the Departmental Council, where it was directed for defense by the decision of the the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski".

The disertation is presented in a total of 225 pages and contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion (195 pages in total), appendices (14 pages), a list of figures (4 pages, 49 figures), a list of tables (2 pages, 18 tables) and a bibliography (8 pages, 136 sources).

Four publications have been made on the topic of the thesis - three independent and one co-authored.

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The public defense of the dissertation will take place on 11.10.2024, at 16:00 in Room 126, Rectorate of University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski".

The author of the dissertation is a part-time PhD student at the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at Paisii Hilendarski University.

Materials for the defense are available to interested parties on the official website of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski University (<https://uni-plovdiv.bg>).

1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

1.1. Relevance and significance of the dissertation topic

The relevance of the dissertation topic is dictated by the new realities in business organizations requiring modern models of interaction between leader and followers. Employee desires and needs at the workplace are becoming multilayered, creating new challenges in these relationships. The literature reviewed for the dissertation is rich in theories of leadership and motivation, highlighting gaps regarding the interrelationship between these management aspects, particularly how the dominant use of a leadership style during crisis and post-crisis periods affects employee motivation. Although many authors outline management through motivation as one of the leader's main tools, this area presents a niche and opportunities for further research. Contemporary organizations and their employees increasingly prioritize non-material factors for satisfaction, necessitating the exploration of new ways to ensure high motivation.

The significance of the topic is also reflected in the current state of the Bulgarian economy, considering the cyclical transition from one crisis to another. The crisis associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 exemplifies a strategic event that changes the external environment for many business organizations, notably affecting companies in the hotel sector. Soon after, the world witnessed another crisis related to the Russia-Ukraine war. Given the geopolitical situation and fragmentation, mobility, population density growth, and technological advancement, it is anticipated that similar events will intensify globally, encompassing various types – military, political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, etc. This inevitably leads to increased dynamism, a primary characteristic emphasizing the uncertainty of the external environment. In summary, the relevance and importance of the study of the correlation between leadership styles, environmental characteristics and employee motivation can be pointed out in the following main aspects:

- Insufficient preparedness of Bulgarian managers for flexible leadership through the imposition of different leadership styles.
- The global COVID-19 crisis as a strategic event leading to high environmental uncertainty for organizations.
- The need for measuring employee motivation and maintaining high motivation levels as an organizational priority.
- The global workforce structure's shift towards increased demands for employee knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- The growing competition among enterprises for hiring qualified employees.

1.2. Research object

The object of the study are the accommodation facilities, which are categorized with three, four or five stars, having more than one hundred beds, located on the territory of Thracian Tourist Region, Rhodope Tourist Region, Tourist Region "Valley of Roses" and Rilo-Pyrinski Tourist Region, separated on the basis of the Order № T-RD-14-63/15.05.2015 of the Minister of Tourism. The choice of these particular four regions from a total of nine presented in the concept of tourist zoning is motivated by two main factors:

First of all, these are the areas with a higher share of year-round hotels and a correspondingly lower level of seasonality, which would lead to correct conclusions when comparing different periods of crisis and post-crisis environment.

Secondly, these are areas with a higher proportion of sites that have not been forced to close their doors for an extended period of time, which allows for a more objective examination of employee motivation at the different periods examined.

1.3. Subject of the study

The research subject is the study of the impact of the leadership style applied by managers during a crisis and in the post-crisis period on the motivation level of their followers in business organizations.

1.4. Objective of the study

The primary research objective is to develop a methodology and methodological tools for assessing leadership styles under specific environmental conditions and their impact on employee motivation. Achieving this objective would mean testing this methodology and presenting an applied model that Bulgarian hotel managers can successfully use to guide the leadership style they aim to exhibit during crisis and post-crisis periods to enhance organizational effectiveness.

1.5. Research objectives

In order to achieve the main objective of the study, the following research tasks were set:

1. A study of current literature that addresses the major theoretical propositions of leadership and theories of organizations' external environment and crisis, fixing them in a clear logical framework and selecting theories that serve the methodology. Exploring theories of motivation and presenting models for measuring motivation in the service of methodology. Explore areas of overlap and coupling between the groups of theories listed above. Identifying key controversies and research niches that the topics of leadership and motivation suggest in the context of a changing external environment.
2. Creation of methodology and methodological provisions for the study of the impact of leadership style on employee motivation in crisis and post-crisis period, characterized by different levels of environmental uncertainty for Bulgarian accommodation.
3. Implementation of sector analysis of the hotel industry to confirm its impact by the COVID-19 crisis, its leading influence compared to other crisis events, and justify two specific periods for study based on hotel performance indicators.
4. Conduct an empirical study within the study site to confirm and validate the applicability of the methodology in practice.
5. Identifying optimal leadership styles in crisis and post-crisis environments to increase follower motivation and, if possible and to create a model to assist Bulgarian hotel managers.

1.6. Research thesis

Finding a clear correlation between leadership styles during crisis and post-crisis environments, characterized by varying levels of uncertainty, will influence the motivation levels of followers in business organizations. Identifying specific dependencies between leadership style (and accompanying behaviors) and motivation levels may lead managers to adopt different approaches during crisis and post-crisis periods to maximize employee motivation.

1.7. Methodology, methods and approaches

The dissertation relies on concepts, approaches, and methods from management, economics, and organizational psychology to confirm or refute the research thesis. The approaches used include quantitative, qualitative, systemic, and situational. A variety of methodological tools ensure the validation of obtained results. Methods include analysis and synthesis, theoretical, comparative, graphical, sector analysis, expert opinion evaluation, and others. etc.

In order to answer the research questions, the following research toolkit can be presented:

1. Survey (structured interview). An author-made questionnaire aimed at managers was created, measuring the level of crisisiness (uncertainty of the environment) as well as the assessment of the leadership style from the perspective of the manager himself. Questions are set to highlight the leader's followers from other employees. The survey is supplemented with a second questionnaire to be distributed to middle and lower managers of the organization to establish the level of motivation, as well as with questions whose answer determines the leadership style that characterizes their leader.

2. In-depth interview. In-depth interviews are conducted with senior, middle and lower management to confirm through qualitative research method the data obtained from quantitative methods. The objects of confirmation are the leadership style inherent in their leader and their level of motivation.

3. Sector analysis through secondary data analysis. An analysis of the indicators of the hotel industry in Bulgaria is carried out in order to identify periods of crisis and post-crisis environment on the one hand, and on the other hand - to check the impact of the crisis on the hotel industry by comparing its indicators with those of the rest of the Bulgarian economy in both periods.

1.8. Assumed limitations

The following limitations were adopted in the study to increase the validity of the results obtained:

- **Limitation of organization types.** This dissertation focuses on organisations representing places of accommodation as defined by the Tourism Act and relevant regulation.
- **Restriction by specific area.** Business organizations operating in Bulgaria and located on the territory of Thracian Tourist Region, Rhodope Tourist Region, Tourist Region "Valley of the Roses" and Rilo-Pyrinski Tourist Region are studied. This limitation allows working with data from four out of nine tourist regions.
- **Period restriction.** The period studied is between the second quarter of 2020 and the end of 2023. Adopting such a time period allows for the measurement of crisis and post-crisis environments relevant to the Covid-19 pandemic, whose huge impact on the hotel sector is to be demonstrated.
- **The organisations surveyed are only accommodation establishments with 3, 4 and 5 star categorisation** within the meaning of the *Ordinance on the requirements for accommodation and catering establishments and the procedure for categorisation, refusal, downgrading, suspension and termination of the category.*
- **The surveys concern business establishments representing accommodation with 100 beds or more**, with accommodation with a capacity between 80 and 99 beds being eligible for the survey only if the establishment is categorised as 4 or 5 stars.
- A limitation is perceived on accommodations that have general managers who managed hotels in both crisis (2020) and post-crisis environments (2023).
- The followers studied in the middle and lower management ranks must have worked in the hotel during the crisis and in the post-crisis environment adopted in the methodology.

1.9. Preliminary considerations

1. The object of the study comprises accommodation establishments with 3, 4 and 5 star categorisation with capacity of 100 beds or more. As the vast majority of these tourist establishments are categorised as hotels, the terms 'accommodation' and 'hotels' will be seen as interchangeable, and the totality of hotels in Bulgaria can be referred to as the 'hotel industry' for the purposes of the thesis.

2. Perceived leaders are those hotel managers who have employees who perceive them to be leaders. Accordingly, a follower is any employee who perceives their manager as a leader.

3. Environmental uncertainty refers to this aggregate indicator, which is a function of the levels of complexity, dynamism and resource provisioning of the external environment. The uncertainty of the

environment makes it possible to distinguish two periods of study - crisis and post-crisis. The two periods are previously identified by a sectoral analysis of the hotel industry, examining activity indicators.

4. Leadership styles refer to the basic categories of leader behavior. It is assumed that a leader can choose which leadership style to move towards by changing his/her behaviour. The study does not advocate that leaders are born with a style and cannot change it. Yet, it is assumed that leadership behaviors may include behaviors characteristic of different styles, but are dominated by one core, changeable leadership style.

5. The consideration is that different followers of the same leader may evaluate his leadership style as different and may change their motivation according to the leadership style and its dynamics perceived only by them in the two periods.

6. The change in the level of employee motivation is a consequence of the change in the leadership style - level of uncertainty (crisis) of the external environment.

1.10. Sources of information

In the dissertation work are used both up-to-date literature sources, and fundamental scientific works, enabling the information support of the author's work and the implementation of the research tasks:

- Literature review of publications and studies by Bulgarian and foreign researchers.
- Primary data from an empirical study, part of the dissertation, conducted by the author.
- Secondary data from NSI, Infostat, UNWTO, data from validation of questionnaires used in other countries, etc.

2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation contains an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, appendices, list of figures, list of tables and bibliography.

The text is structured as follows:

1. CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP, EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, CRISIS, MOTIVATION

1.1. Leadership and leadership styles

- 1.1.1. Leader and leadership - defining the concept
- 1.1.2. Typology of research on leadership
- 1.1.3. Conclusions and generalizations in the context of leadership issues

1.2. External environment, environmental uncertainty and crisis

- 1.2.1. External environment of the business organisation
- 1.2.2. Uncertainty of the external environment and uncertainty characteristics
- 1.2.3. Crisis and crisis management of business organizations

1.3. Motivation

- 1.3.1. Nature of motivation and motivational theories
- 1.3.2. Content and process motivational theories
- 1.3.3. Measuring motivation
- 1.4. A model for the relationship between theories of leadership, crisis and motivation

2. CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGICAL PROVISIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS PERIOD

- 2.1. A conceptual model of the theories of leadership, crisis and motivation
- 2.2. Key research questions
- 2.3. Study design and methodological provisions
- 2.4. Sample selection and objects of study
- 2.5. Registration of data
- 2.6. Data analysis

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND ANALYSES OF THE RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS ENVIRONMENTS

- 3.1. Sector analysis of the tourism and hotel industry
- 3.2. Empirical data and analysis obtained from the survey and in-depth interviews
- 3.3. Statistical processing and analysis of empirical research results of leaders and followers
- 3.4. Analysis of the leaders
- 3.5. Analysis of followers
- 3.6. Analysis of the relationship between leaders and followers
- 3.7. Summary results of in-depth interviews with leaders and followers
- 3.8. A model for increasing motivation in crisis and post-crisis environments by applying different leadership styles

CONCLUSION AND HIGHLIGHTING RESULTS

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

LITERATURE USED

3. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

The introduction presents the relevance and significance of the issues addressed in the dissertation topic. The research object and subject are outlined, and the goal and tasks of the dissertation are defined. The research thesis, methodology, approaches, limitations, and preliminary considerations are stated.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP, EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT, CRISIS, MOTIVATION

Chapter One is devoted to the completion of the first research task, presenting the main advances in scientific thought in the categories of leadership, external environment, crisis and motivation. It sets the theoretical framework of the issues under study, aiming to present, analyse and isolate these propositions, as well as their relations and relationships.

1.1. Leadership and leadership styles

The introductory part of chapter one focuses on the main theories and approaches to leadership, touching on both traditional theories in the field and contemporary but already established ones. The aim of this part of the study is to answer the main research question related to the discovery of a theory representing an appropriate set of leadership styles to implement the research methodology.

1.1.1. Leader and leadership - defining the concept

In order to explore the meaning of the phenomenon of leadership, the dilemma suggested by the etymology of the word must be addressed - the concept of manager (leader) is synonymous with the concept of leader or just the opposite. This dilemma is almost without exception addressed in the Bulgarian scientific literature problematizing leadership. The extreme importance of the topic of the differences and overlapping of the notions between manager/manager on the one hand and leader on the other is confirmed by the authoritative opinion of numerous Bulgarian authors.

The word leadership has English origins. Going into its etymology, one comes to the word Leadership, the root of which is Lead - to lead, guide and Lieder - leader, supervisor. Many Bulgarian authors make different translations and interpretations of the English word, some defining it as leadership, others as guidance, others with the foreign word "leadership", which is also adopted in this dissertation

"Leader" and "manager" are different concepts with prominent areas of overlap and incongruence, represented differently by researchers. Often the two concepts can be perceived as competing because of the thesis that leaders and managers are different types of people with different personality characteristics. This theoretical study sets out to propose a method for distinguishing a 'leader' from a 'manager'. Such a separation is important in order to distinguish and therefore study only followers of the leader and not all direct subordinates of the manager. On the basis of the conducted literature survey of leading domestic and foreign authors, a classification can be made regarding the similarities and differences between leaders and managers, as well as setting criteria for distinguishing between them, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Similarities and differences between the concepts of leader and manager

Similarities between leaders and managers	
Manage people	
Take important decisions	
Main coordinator and integrator in the team	
Bear responsibility	
Dependent on external and internal environmental factors	
Strive to meet goals	
Differences	
Leaders	Managers
Leaders lead through emotions and establish trust.	Managers enforce orders and follow procedures.
Leaders lead their followers because of naturally earned cooperation.	Managers manage employees by virtue of their formal right and position.
Leaders are held accountable by meeting the needs of the people.	Managers enforce authority by adhering to rules and standards.
Leaders inspire achievement.	Managers demand results.
Leaders stimulate by demonstrating recognition, individual significance and belonging.	Managers reward through external incentives - usually material rewards.
Leaders give support.	Managers impose control.
Leaders drift toward idealistic change affecting the personality of each follower.	Managers implement a change plan subordinated to specific tasks.
Leaders captivate through a vision of the future, inspiring present action with a possible future outcome.	Managers reward after a job is done. They evaluate employees' work most often in its completed form
Leaders are dependent on the situation and the mental dynamics of the followers.	Managers are dependent on formal group symbols and legal authority.
Leaders ask the "why and what" questions.	Managers ask the questions "how much, when and how".
Criteria for distinguishing a follower from an employee within the organization	
1. A follower is an employee who communicates regularly with the manager, having a human, informal relationship with the manager through which he or she perceives vision, belonging, caring, and individual attention.	
2. A follower is an employee who has received the trust of the leader and is given direct and immediate responsibilities and tasks, some of which are motivated by individual and emotional attitudes.	
3. In order to have a two-way relationship, followers must be employees with high responsibility, in close proximity within the management structure, so that the influence process is mutual and immediate.	

Based on the review, the following author's definition of *leadership* is proposed for the purpose of this dissertation:

Leadership is the role behaviour of a group member in a specific situation, exerting influence, including through motivation, over other members. The process of leadership elevates the effectiveness of the business organization to a higher and sustainable level to achieve its goals.

1.1.2. Typology of research on leadership

Researchers interest in leadership-related issues after the turn of the twenty-first century is understandable, given that these issues are part of the more general fields of management, military science, organizational behavior, and social psychology, which are undoubtedly gaining more weight over time. The large number of leadership theories, concepts and models suggests classifying them into several groups according to their ideological and chronological similarity.

This gives the author of the dissertation a reason to derive the main categories from the classifications listed so far and to complement them with his different view, corresponding to the topic of the research. Such a classification of leadership theories is necessary, on the one hand, to comply with the scientific tradition at the international and national level, and on the other hand, to substantiate the priorities of the dissertation. An author's classification of leadership theories is presented to support the opinion expressed:

- Early Trait Theories;
- Behavioral Theories;
- Situational Theories;
- Transformational and Transactional Leadership;
- Other New Leadership Theories;

1.1.3. Conclusions and generalizations in the context of leadership issues

Early trait theories have important theoretical significance but do not offer relevance to current times and modern perceptions of work, motivation and the need for leadership. This makes them unsuitable for the purposes of this dissertation.

Behavioral theories first perceived leader behavior as the basis for various outcomes. The formation of understandings of people-orientation and task-orientation is embraced by many modern theories. As a consequence of the analysis, it can be concluded that they do not possess the necessary situational element to introduce the different characteristic of the situation as a motivator for different leadership behaviour.

Situational theories are one of the theories with exceptional application in practice because of their flexibility to the different situations in which the leader finds himself.

Tanenbaum Schmid's Leadership Behaviour Continuum is a theory oriented towards the distribution of power and freedom within the organization given the situation. The theory proposes seven leadership behavior styles. This is one of the main reasons for the unsuitability of this theory to build a model demonstrating the leadership style - level of indeterminacy - motivation correlation.

Fred Fiedler's alternative theory as part of situational theories of leadership does not suggest a real possibility of the leader acting according to different situations with different leadership styles, as it assumes that the leader has a style that is uniquely and dominantly manifest and cannot be changed.

House's path-goal theory is highly transactional. It perceives followers' expectations about the occurrence of a given outcome of their work, instrumentality and valence as the main motivators for

followers. The author of this dissertation believes that the current work reality suggests a greater drive to motivate followers by satisfying needs at the higher levels of Maslow's pyramid. On the other hand, the theory proposes four basic leadership styles, and this would complicate the creation of a desirable model.

Hersey and Blanchard's situational life cycle theory is extremely practical and used in a large group of trainings and workshops. However, its situationality mainly covers the life cycle of followers and the phases they go through. Even after several revisions, improvements and enrichments, it does not address the importance of the external environment to the extent required, making it inapplicable for the purposes of the present development.

The decision tree model developed by Vroom, Yeaton and Iago sufficiently introduces the possibility that leadership style is influenced by the environment, the need for a quick decision, etc. This model has a rich research toolkit associated with questionnaire variations and would be appropriate for the purposes of the current development. In essence, it assumes five styles, which would burden the model significantly, and therefore it is not considered a suitable choice.

Bass's Transactional and Transformational leadership along with the non-interventionist leadership style within the full range leadership model - FRLM, combining Bass's work with that of Avolio and Bernard, is considered by the author of this thesis to be the best choice of leadership styles concept.

1.2. External environment, environmental uncertainty and crisis

1.2.1. External environment of the business organisation

The systems approach in business organizations is manifested in the fact that they are open systems and, on the other hand, are elements of larger systems. The external environment of the business organization can be taken as such a larger system. The situational approach allows the problems of the external environment to be seen from another perspective. In scientific thought, the thesis is addressed that the factors of the external and internal environment of the firm are the variables forming the situational element in this approach. The external environment encompasses the various factors influencing the outcome of the business organization. This division encompasses the general environment, which is hardly influenced by the actions of the organization or not influenced at all, and the specific environment, which is more influenced by the actions of the organization. These two types of external environments refer to two categories of factors - direct impact factors and indirect impact factors.

1.2.2. Uncertainty of the external environment and uncertainty characteristics

Uncertainty is one of the main qualitative characteristics of the external environment. The term "uncertainty" is a translation of the term "uncertainty" used by the English-speaking authors, which receives many different translations by the Bulgarian researchers who have entered and developed this issue. In order to clarify the meaning of the term uncertainty, it is good to be meaningfully linked to the presence or absence of a sufficient amount of information to allow leaders to make decisions.

The uncertainty characteristics of the external environment of business organizations are key to a comprehensive understanding of the nature of this concept. The author perceives three characteristics - complexity, dynamism and resourcing. The last characteristic has the closest relationship with crisis situations, which are important for this dissertation.



Figure 1. Characteristics of environmental uncertainty

Source: Authors work

1.2.3. Crisis and crisis management of business organizations

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica dictionary, a crisis is "a difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention". According to the Merial-Webster dictionary, one meaning is "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is imminent." This definition is supported by the author of this thesis and corresponds with the proposed definition in the context of leadership theories and the external environment:

A crisis is any trying situation of great significance and unexpected nature that challenges the leader intensely to make adequately informed decisions to adapt the functioning of the organization to the changed external environment in order to maximize benefit.

It is noteworthy that the proposed definition does not perceive crisis as a phenomenon that poses unambiguous threats to the organisation. Rather, it is a period with a high level of environmental uncertainty, a lack of an established response model and a small amount of information that can lead to unambiguously correct managerial decisions. The author supports the understanding of the pragmatists who argue that in a crisis situation the leader must work with the available information as it is.

In the dissertation Bulgarian and foreign authors present different theories of the crisis and models describing them. Dennis Smith problematizes crises by arguing that there are three phases of development: the *crisis formation phase* (where the causes leading to signals in the environment emerge), the *operational phase of the crisis* and the *post-crisis phase*. These phases are often included in *Smith's so-called three-phase crisis model*. They have also gained publicity in the literature through the following names: phase one - crisis of management, phase two - crisis of operability and phase three - crisis of legitimacy.

For the purposes of this thesis, the author adopts an adaptation of the simplest and at the same time widely known model - namely that of Smith, problematizing three stages - the *crisis formation phase*, the *operational phase of the crisis* and the *post-crisis phase*. Given that the impact of the crisis associated with the Covid-19 pandemic is considered, only two of the phases presented - the *operational phase* (referred to as ***the crisis period*** for brevity) and the *post-crisis phase* (referred to as ***the post-crisis period***) - will be adopted for simplicity. Leadership styles and their impact on motivation will not be examined in the first phase, since the whole economic and social life in Bulgaria was minimally affected by this phase of the crisis, and the phase itself is relatively short.

The above discussion strongly underlines the conclusion that indeterminacy is a fundamental characteristic of crises and measuring the indeterminacy of the external environment would provide an assessment of the "crisisiness" of a given moment or situation. Crisis perceived in two stages and crisisness described by the concept of environmental indeterminacy enable the application of different leadership styles. The effectiveness of the interaction of leader and followers would affect the level of employee motivation.

1.3. Motivation

Follower motivation is one of the key aspects of leadership as a core function of management. Despite the prevailing notions viewing motivation as a phenomenon of human behaviour, a narrower scope of the concept will be seen within the thesis with a focus on work motivation.

The author perceives motivation as a characteristic state of followers in which they optimize the results of their work, in which the organization is more effective in meeting its goals. In this context, the meaning of the concept of motivation can be approximated to concepts such as "motivation", "activation of personal potential" and "effectiveness of human factor". The need to study motivation is inescapable given that it is part of the "leadership style - stages of crisis - level of motivation" model.

1.3.1. Nature of motivation and motivational theories

Needs occupy a central place in the development of theories of motivation. These are states of a physiological, social and psychological nature, manifesting an imbalance internal to the individual, driving their behaviour.

Values are often seen as a map deciphering the meaning of different needs for different individuals, i.e. each individual has been psychologically shaped in a particular environment and has adopted a set of values that can influence the strength and interrelationships between the needs that shape them.

Motives are "something that initiates movement". From this perspective, motives can be seen as the building blocks of the motivation process. A motive can be the result of the clash of an unsatisfied need, an external stimulus and/or the internal characteristics of the individual and is the internal result of the external reason for performing an activity.

Incentives are external, purposeful influences on an individual's motivation. In the organizational context, they are the leaders' tools for externally influencing the behavior of their followers. However, their impact is not guaranteed, as their influence depends on the subjective perception of the individual.

1.3.2. Content and process motivational theories

Different classifications of theories are possible, and there is no single recognized classification. What is remarkable is the unanimity regarding the importance of content theories - they refer to needs as the main source of motivation. Process or procedural theories, on the other hand, emphasize the process of thinking, cognition, and psychodynamics that influence one's behavior. They explain how a particular type of behavior is initiated, maintained, and terminated, as well as the influence of this behavior by the environment external to the individual.

Among the content theories, *Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory*, *Clayton Alderfer's ERG theory*, *Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory*, and *McClelland's achievement-affiliation-power theory* all find a place. Recognizable process theories are *Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory*, *Adams' Equity Theory*, *Skinner's Affirmation Theory*, and *Locke's Goal Setting Theory*.

1.3.3. Measuring motivation

Measuring motivation is critical to diagnosing the effectiveness of the work factor in a business organization. In the context of this dissertation, the measurement of motivation is extremely important as it appears as one of the 3 main elements of the correlation model "leadership style - level of environmental uncertainty - level of motivation". Among the internationally recognized approaches to measure motivation, the following surveys and questionnaires are most commonly used:

-Job Descriptive Index (JDI) - one of the oldest and most commonly used questionnaires to measure job satisfaction.

-Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) - measures job satisfaction based on 20 aspects, divided into the categories of internal and external factors.

-Motivation Sources Inventory (MSI) - measures six sources of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, internal task, external personality projection, goal identification and internalization.

-Employee Motivation Questionnaire (EMQ) - assesses factors such as autonomy, competence, recognition and development opportunities that are key to employee motivation.

-Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) is a questionnaire that measures employee satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, including pay, working conditions and relationships with co-workers. It is one of the questionnaires with the highest level of overlap between the topics of motivation and team relationships.

In summary, the presented international and Bulgarian questionnaires for measuring motivation do not allow their direct use in the research methodology. The reason is rooted in the insufficient clarity regarding employee satisfaction with various factors measured through the prism of leadership influence. The latter judgement obliged the author to develop his own questionnaire to establish motivation.

1.4. A model for the relationship between theories of leadership, crisis and motivation

The Relationship Model aims to represent the main conceptual categories of leadership, crisis and motivation, as well as to provide a clear visual argument of the logical relationships between their structural elements. The model does not aim at exhaustiveness of the theories presented, but at highlighting interrelationships and proximities between some of them.

The relationships, represented by orange solid lines and arrows, show the relationships between different representatives of theories of crisis and environment on the one hand, and theories of leadership that perceive the environment as an element of the situation. Blue lines and arrows represent the relationships between leadership theories approaching ideas of authoritarianism, transactionalism, task orientation and their relation to specific (low) levels of needs in different motivational theories.

On the other hand, green arrows highlight the relationships between leadership theories encompassing styles related to democratic, transformational, people-oriented, and attitudes toward specific (high) levels of needs in motivational theories.

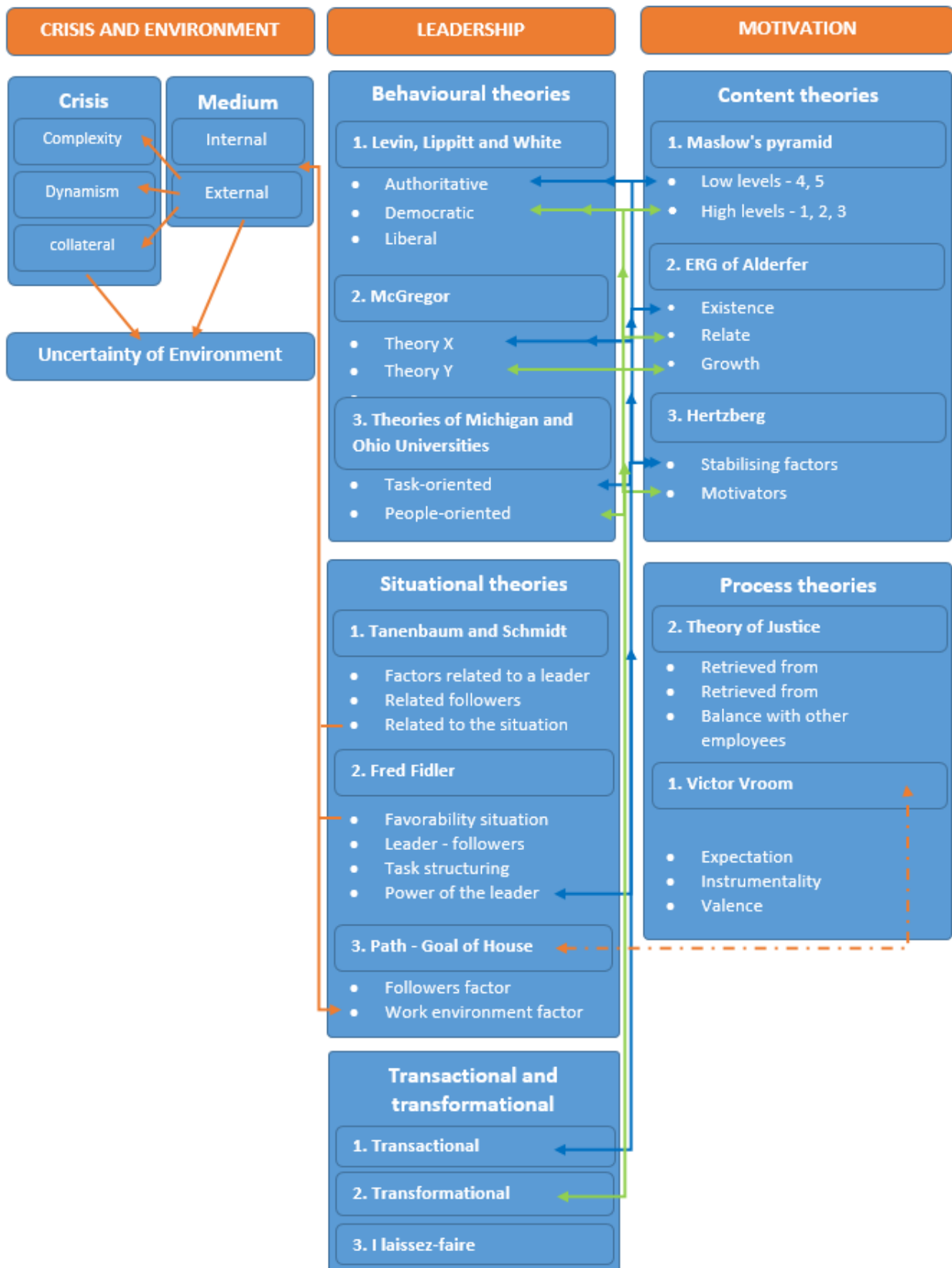


Figure 2. Summary model of the relationships between the theories of leadership, environment and motivation

Source: Author's elaboration

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGICAL PROVISIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS PERIOD

This chapter covers the design and methodology of the research, originating from the analysis of the propositions of leadership, crisis and motivation presented in chapter one. Its content is essentially a response to research task two. The chapter introduces the research questions, with corresponding hypotheses for each. The quantitative and qualitative methods used for the study are justified in detail in order to establish whether there is a relationship between the leadership styles outlined in chapter one - transactional, transformational and non-interventionist on the one hand, and employee motivation during and in the aftermath of a crisis on the other. The chapter includes a conceptual model encompassing the leadership styles highlighted in chapter one, the motivational categories and the selected crisis characteristic that enables measurement. A rationale is provided for the selection of the specific research sample, approaches used and methods of data registration and analysis from primary and secondary sources. A rationale is provided for surveys of leader and followers in the accommodation industry and a structure for a sector analysis of the hospitality industry.

2.1. Conceptual model of the theories of leadership, crisis and motivation

On the basis of the critical analysis and synthesis made in the first chapter and the distinguished conclusions and generalizations, a conceptual model is proposed as a basis for the formation of a research methodology. The model presents only those parts of the scientific propositions on crisis, leadership and motivation that are directly relevant to the research methodology. It is based on a deductive analysis of the generalizations about the listed scientific categories applied in chapter one of the dissertation.

Subordinate relationships between the elements of the model are denoted by green and relationships between the different elements are denoted by orange, demonstrating the relationships perceived in the research methodology. Evident in the visualization is the use of the concepts of crisis in establishing the two periods to which to refer the study, but at the same time the components of environmental uncertainty and level of awareness are also highlighted as measures of subjective perception of crisis.

In the interest of realising the conceptual model, the following highlights can be drawn based on the analysis of theory from the literature review set out in Chapter One:

- Two periods are justified for the study - crisis and post-crisis, which need to be validated through objective economic indicators (sector analysis) and the subjective perception of leaders (perception of uncertainty of the environment).
- The FRLM model is presented to identify and measure leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and noninterventionist, and their nine characteristics) through a follower questionnaire examining the styles for the two study periods. Further validation was provided through a questionnaire assessing leadership style from the managers' perspective.
- The need to create a questionnaire to measure motivation based on ten categories of motivational factors related to the two periods of the study is argued .
- The relationships between the theories explored in the study are indicated in the conceptual model in orange. These are located between the three leadership styles on the one hand, the two periods of crisis (with different levels of environmental uncertainty) on the second hand, and the different levels of follower motivation on the third hand.

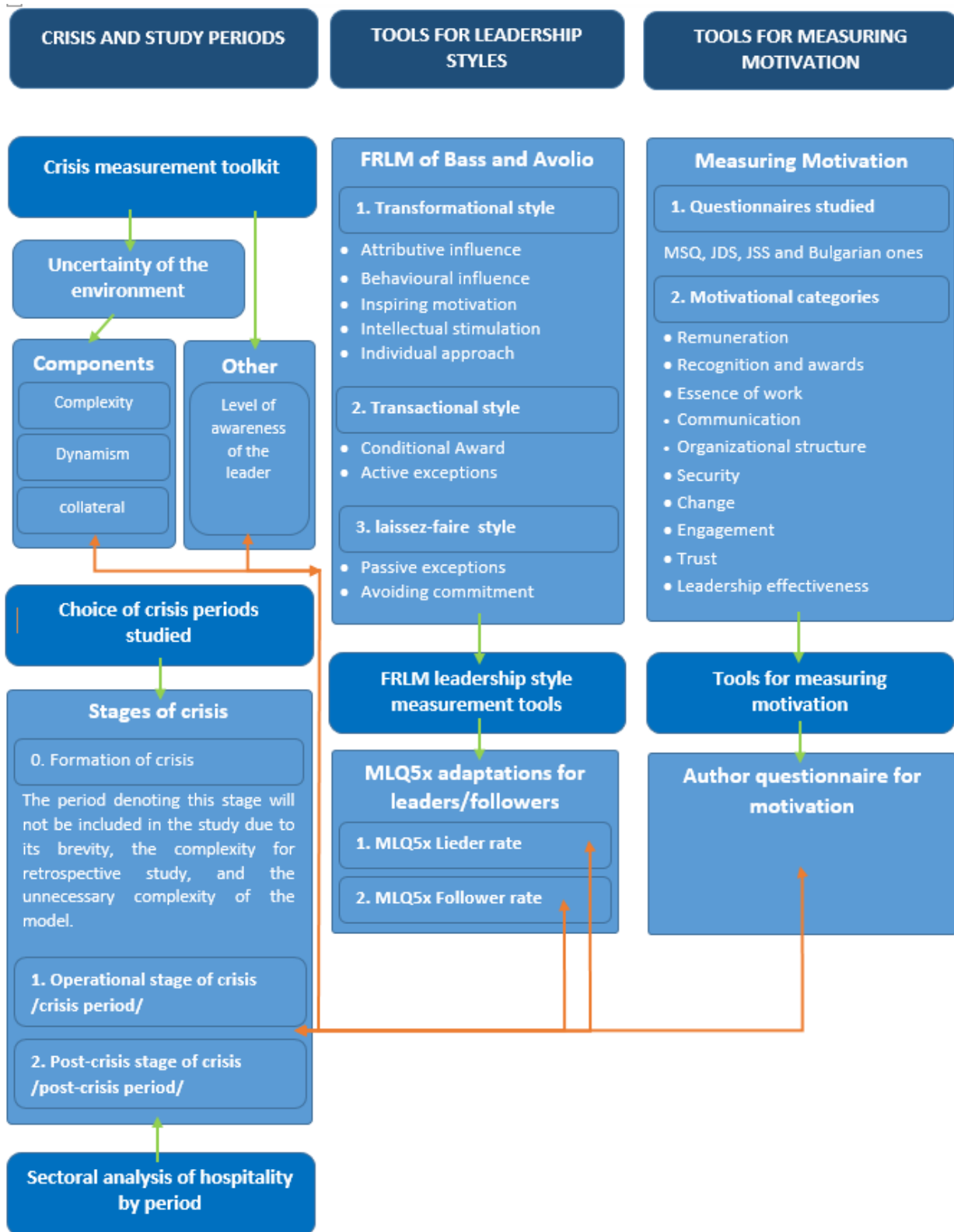


Figure 3. Conceptual model of the theories of/on leadership, crisis and motivation

Author's elaboration

2.2. Key research questions

Research question 1: *Which type of leadership is most significantly present in the leaders managing Bulgarian hotels - as a dominant style, on the one hand, and as a percentage, on the other?*

Research question 2: *How do transformational, transactional and non-intervention leadership differ in terms of their impact on motivation?*

Research Question 3: *Does the level of environmental uncertainty (in crisis and post-crisis environments) change the way transformational, transactional and non-interventionist leadership influence follower motivation?*

Research Question 4: *How does transformational leadership affect motivation in the crisis (high uncertainty) and post-crisis (low uncertainty) stages?*

Research question 5: *How does transactional leadership affect motivation in crisis (high uncertainty) and post-crisis (low uncertainty)?*

Research question six: *How does non-interfering leadership affect follower motivation under high and low levels of environmental uncertainty?*

Research Question 7: *Can the findings of the study be integrated into an applied model that is easy to use in practice?*

2.3. Research design and methodological provisions

Different methods of researching leadership styles and motivation are widespread. Among them, we can list survey, in-depth interview, observation, experiment, motivational profile, expert evaluation, case studies, etc. In order to distinguish the research methods required for the purpose of this dissertation and to outline the research design, the methodological toolkit needs to be framed. We can represent the design through the following table:

Table 2. Methods for studying leaders and followers by leadership styles and stages

Leadership style → Stages of crisis ↓	Transformational leadership style (surveys and in-depth interviews to leader and followers, comparison with norm of American managers)	Transactional leadership style (surveys and in-depth interviews to leader and followers, comparison with norm of American managers)	Non-intrusive leadership style (surveys and in-depth interviews to leader and followers, comparison with norm of American managers)
Operational stage - period of crisis (questionnaire and in-depth interview to leader, sector analysis)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)

Post-crisis stage - period after crisis (questionnaire and in-depth interview to leader, sector analysis by periods)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)	Follower Motivation (survey and in-depth follower interview)
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Source: Author's elaboration.

2.4. Sample selection and objects of study

-Focus is placed on organizations representing accommodation facilities as defined by the Tourism Act, located on the territory of Thracian Tourist Region (31 municipalities), Rhodope Tourist Region (32 municipalities), Tourist Region "Valley of the Roses" (17 municipalities) and Rila-Pirin Region (23 municipalities). These tourist regions are characterised by a large number of year-round urban and spa hotels and a moderate number of establishments combining ski and spa tourism.

-The surveyed business organisations include only accommodation establishments with 3, 4 and 5 star categorisation according to the meaning of the Regulation on the requirements for accommodation and catering establishments and the procedure for determining the category, refusal, downgrading, suspension and termination of the category.

-The surveys concern only business establishments representing accommodation with 100 beds or more within the meaning of the quoted categorisation regulation. Accommodation with more than 80 beds is also included in the scope, but only if they are 4 and 5 stars, to ensure again the professional management and strict management structure that are not typical of low-category establishments with a small volume of beds.

-Only establishments that have operated as year-round establishments for at least half of the last 10 years are surveyed .

2.5. Data registration

Data in the study were recorded using the methods described in the study design. Among them, we can highlight: instruments aimed at registering data from the leader, those aimed at the followers and, on the third hand, sector analysis as a representative of the instruments related to the use of secondary data. Survey and in-depth interview are used to study leaders. The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify which employees are followers and therefore can be surveyed, as well as how the leader evaluates his own style in the two periods with different levels of environmental uncertainty. The in-depth interview should confirm, through a qualitative approach, the results of the quantitative survey and account for different nuances and limitations not visible or poorly covered in the quantitative measurement.

A survey and in-depth interview are also used to survey followers. The survey should measure their own motivation during the two periods - crisis and post-crisis. Such research is possible by integrating questions from proven instruments such as motivational profile questionnaires and scales. On the other hand, the leadership style for both periods should be assessed and classified as transformational, transactional or non-interventionist type of leadership, and this implies integrating adapted questions from validated questionnaires such as Mind Garden's MLQ5x already mentioned. In-depth interviews aim to elicit the different perspectives of followers, add their hard-to-measure personality traits, specificity of attitudes towards the leader, and mark limitations in the application of the survey itself.

The sectoral analysis aims to identify differences in economic performance between the hospitality industry and the rest of the economy. On the other hand, the analysis aims to validate the two periods, crisis and post-crisis, by identifying significant differences in secondary data for the sector.

2.6. Data analysis

Process of registration of primary information through surveys and in-depth interviews:

- Selection of a list of accommodations that fall within the eligibility criteria for the scope of the study;
- Digitizing surveys for leaders and followers and using LimeSurvey as a platform to distribute surveys to the correct recipients and register responses;
- First conversations with the general managers of the accommodation sites under study in order to filter out those that do not meet the criteria that cannot be identified in point 1. If eligibility is detected - arrange for information to be provided for participation in the survey;
- Conduct a longer telephone or videoconference call involving the dissertation author and the general manager of the accommodation. Provide via email a link to the digital survey platform and provide instructions for completion;
- Survey completion by managers. Confirmation of the completed survey on the LimeSurvey digital survey platform;
- Completion of a second part of a survey to determine if there are any employees at the hotel who could be considered followers who worked at the hotel during the two different periods. Establish the presence, number and names of employees in the accommodation who will be surveyed as followers of the leader;
- Arranging and conducting in-depth interviews with responding hotel general managers. Establishing qualitative characteristics of their perception. Identifying reasons for lack of names completed in the second part of the survey, if this is a fact. Collecting the contacts of the employees who were on all three lists in the second part of the survey;
- Provide a survey link to followers for all employees who fell into the three leader survey lists. A different link is prepared for each accommodation and sent out to the leader's followers at the hotel. The principle of respondents is used, as the anonymity requirement does not allow for any other approach, given the lack of information about which employee did and did not complete the survey;
- Conducting an in-depth interview with the followers highlighted from the three lists at all sites where such are represented, using the principle of responders;
- Exporting the data from LimeSurvey and processing the survey results using SPSS;
- Summary of the data obtained and processed from the leader and follower surveys. Analyzing the data and establishing conclusions from the research;
- Presentation of the results of the study through graphs;
- Summary of all results. Highlight conclusions and recommendations for the study;

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND ANALYSES OF THE RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS ENVIRONMENTS

The availability of methodology and the rich scope of the literature review enable the realisation of the third and fourth research tasks set out in the introductory part of the thesis. The aim is to conduct an empirical study and analysis to establish the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation in two periods with different levels of environmental uncertainty. In order to confirm the mentioned periods, a sector analysis is implemented to establish the dynamics of key indicators for the hotel industry by processing secondary data from public sources. Primary data from surveys and in-depth interviews are used to measure the leadership style of managers and its influence on the level of followers' motivation according to the methodology and design set out in chapter two.

3.1. Sector analysis of tourism and hotel industry

The sectoral analysis of tourism and the hotel industry aims to fulfill the third task of the dissertation by helping to identify periods of crisis and post-crisis environments by comparing data from the activities of accommodation establishments. On the other hand, the data from the sector analysis allows to compare the performance of the hotel industry and the economy as a whole to validate accommodation establishments as severely affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

Figure 4 presents data showing that, in terms of international arrivals, 2023 is the last year of recovery, with 2024 projected to outperform 2019 by 2%. The figure demonstrates the dynamics of international tourism at the global level and provides a reason to view 2020 as the year with the categorically highest manifestation of the crisis according to the indicators presented, and to view 2023 as the year of normalization of indicators relative to 2019 levels.



Figure 4. International travel 2020-2023 and expectations for 2024.

Source: UNWTO World Tourism 2024

Figure 5 presents the World Bank's GDP data for Bulgaria in real terms (calculated in dollars) for the last six years. The following trend is visible - a steady increase for all years without exception. The last year 2023 is presented in the World Bank data in a different colour as the data are not final. In 2019, GDP in real terms is \$68.8 billion and the year marked by the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020, is represented by a GDP of \$70.3 billion.

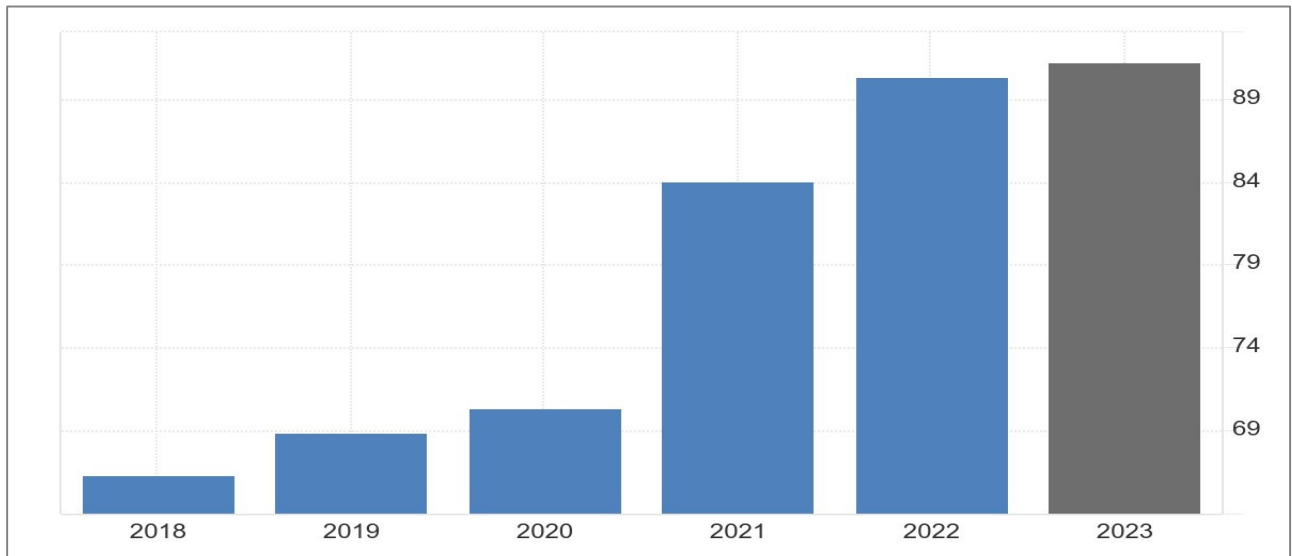


Figure 5: Real GDP of Bulgaria in USD

Source: World Bank, author's calculations

Figure 6 presents the NSI data on the revenue from overnight stays of accommodation establishments in Bulgaria with more than 10 beds for the period 2019-2023 in BGN according to the "activity of accommodation establishments by statistical zones, statistical regions and by districts". In 2019, the revenue is BGN 1.521 billion, while in the year of the pandemic declaration in Bulgaria by Covid-19 (2020), the revenue from accommodation is worth BGN 645.5 million. It is noteworthy that in 2023 the revenues exceed those of 2019 and are worth BGN 2.080 billion, although the period under consideration 2019-2023 is marked by significant inflation, which changes the base value upwards. It can be concluded that, as with the international tourism data, the year 2020 is the lowest year for overnight revenue generated in Bulgaria, with the recovery starting in 2022, when revenue is higher than the 2019 base year of BGN 1.675 billion.

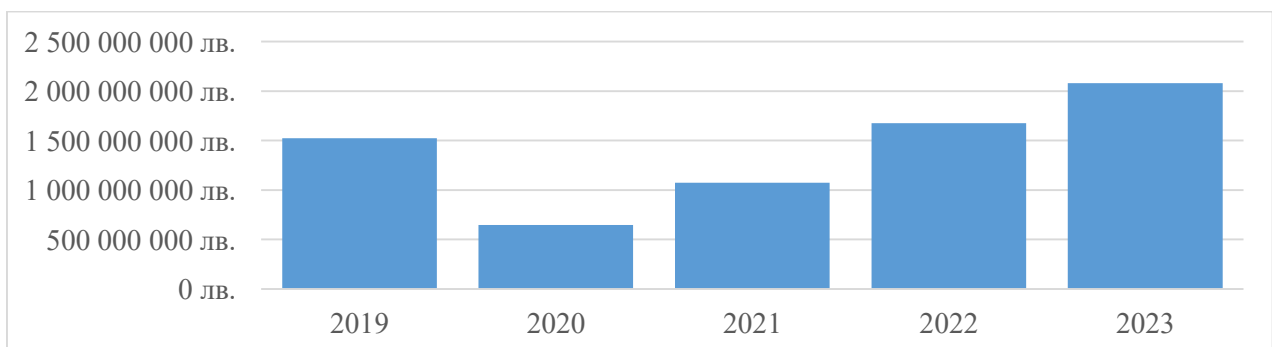


Figure 6: Revenue from overnight stays in accommodation with ten or more rooms

Source: National Statistical Institute, author's calculations

Another important indicator allowing for an in-depth analysis of the sector is related to the number of overnight stays by Bulgarians and foreigners, presented in Figure 7. It is noteworthy that the total number of overnight stays in 2019 is 27.12 million, and this number is not recovered in the last reported year 2023, when the number reaches 26.86 million. Most significant is again the decline in the number of overnight stays in 2020, when 11.97 million overnight stays are realized, which is only 44% of the number of overnight stays of the pre-pandemic year 2019, and in each of the following years the number of overnight stays increases.

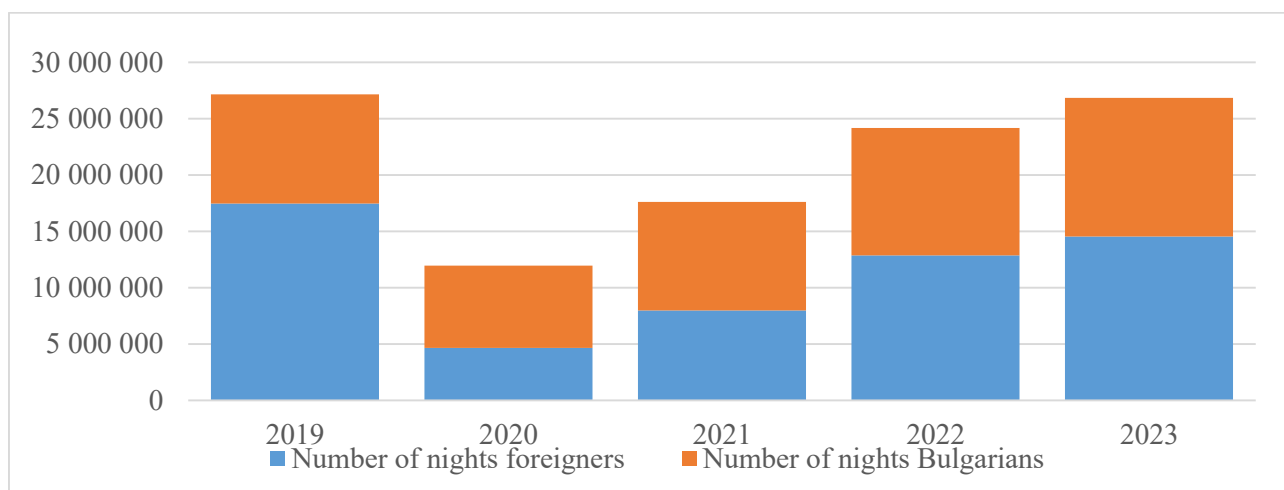


Figure 7. Overnight stays by Bulgarians and foreigners

Source: National Statistical Institute, author's calculations

3.2. Empirical data and analyses obtained from the survey and in-depth interviews

The process of recording data according to the methodology comprises several stages, the rationale for which includes these results

- Selection by external attributes of a list of accommodation eligible for the scope of the study according to the NTR (National Tourist Register). Filtering information from publicly available sources (websites, social networks, specialized hotel platforms).
- The second stage of the study involved contacting a representative of the site to identify the general manager and invite participation in the study. The stage also includes verification of eligibility of managers, who, according to the methodology's intended sample size, must have worked during the pandemic and be working in the same position at the time of contact.
- The third stage involves the completion of an online survey for leaders, the questions from which are presented in the methodology of this thesis, and the full survey is visible in Appendix 1. Based on the principle of respondents, the LimeSurvey survey was completed by 31 hotel managers. The second part of the survey provides the three lists of peers detailed with the methodology to identify the leader's followers and distinguish them from other employees.

3.3. Statistical processing and analysis of empirical research results of leaders and followers

This part of the dissertation realizes the fourth research task related to the approbation of the created methodology among leaders and followers in accommodation in Bulgaria with categories of 3, 4 and 5 stars and the presentation of processed results. A model of information presentation related to the two main categories of respondents in the primary research - leaders and followers - was adopted. The chronological

priority of considering the leader category of respondents is determined by the need for validation of the two periods (crisis - second to fourth quarter of 2020 and post-crisis period - 2023).

3.4. Analysis of leaders

The analysis establishes that there is a clear difference in the values for the uncertainty of the environment in favour of the crisis period, where the values are higher compared to the results of the post-crisis period. The synthesis validates the two periods assumed in the study as the "crisis" period during the pandemic for the second, third and fourth quarters of 2020 and the "post-crisis" period during the implementation of the study in 2023, in confirmation of the indicators on the performance of accommodation facilities from the sector analysis, which testify to the same.

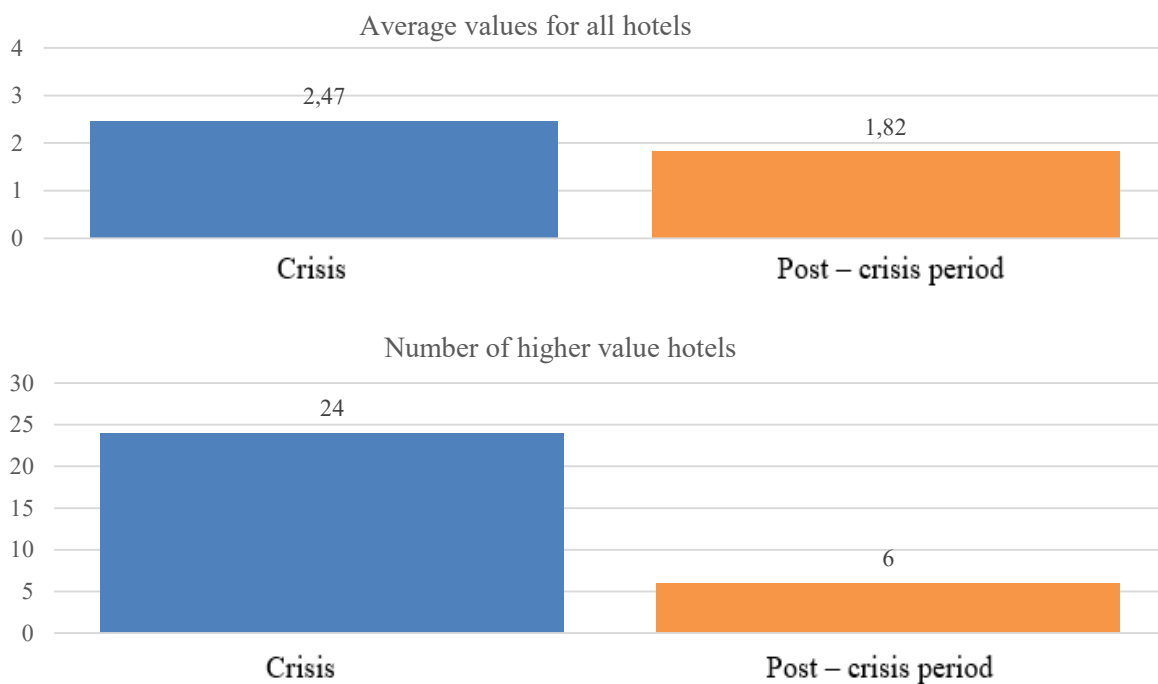


Figure 8: Average perception of environmental uncertainty in crisis and post-crisis periods and number of hotels with higher or lower perceptions of environmental uncertainty for both periods

Source: Author's data

The study of leadership management style in periods of crisis and post-crisis environment, as mentioned in the research methodology, was conducted using questions adapted in terms of content and reduced in terms of number from the MLQ5x questionnaire of Mind Garden. The survey results show that in the post-crisis period the predominant leadership style is transformational with 81% or 25 of all hotels as rated by their managers. Next with 19% or 6 hotel managers was the transactional leadership style, followed by the non-interventionist style, which did not occur in any case.

3.5. Follower analysis

According to the methodology, it is perceived that each follower may have a different perception of the hotel manager's leadership style and demonstrate a different level of motivation. This fact allows for an analysis of the manager's leadership style, both on the group dimension (within the whole accommodation) and on the individual one (for each individual follower adopting a specific leadership style and having a specific motivation towards it).

The analysis of leadership style in crisis and post-crisis period presents 10 hotel managers whose leadership style was assessed by questions 1 - 36 of the follower survey, and the average perception of all about the leadership style on a scale of 0 - 4. The result is presented graphically in Figure 9:

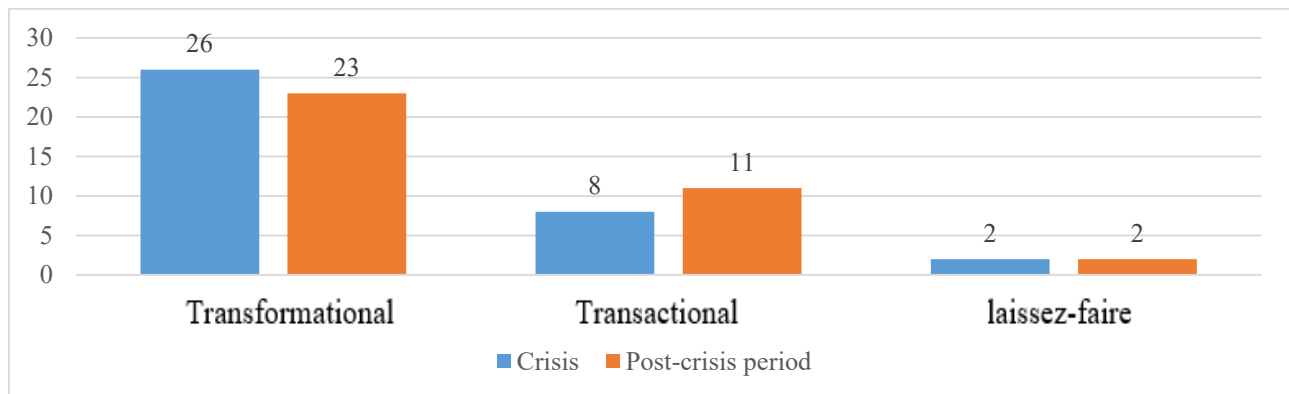


Figure 9. Number of dominant styles from followers' perspective by period

Source: Authors estimations

The results in Figure 9 show a marked difference in the number of dominant leadership styles in the pre-crisis and post-crisis periods. In the crisis period, the transformational style is more pronounced with 72.2% (26 followers) compared to the post-crisis period when the share of this leadership style is 63.9% (23 followers). There is a decline of 8.3 percentage points spilling over to the transactional leadership style, increasing its share from 22.2% to 30.5%. There is no significant change for the non-interventionist style for the crisis and post-crisis period, with this style maintaining its share of 5.6% (2 followers).

The averages of the different leadership styles during a crisis and in a post-crisis period through the perspective of the followers are visualized in Figure 10.

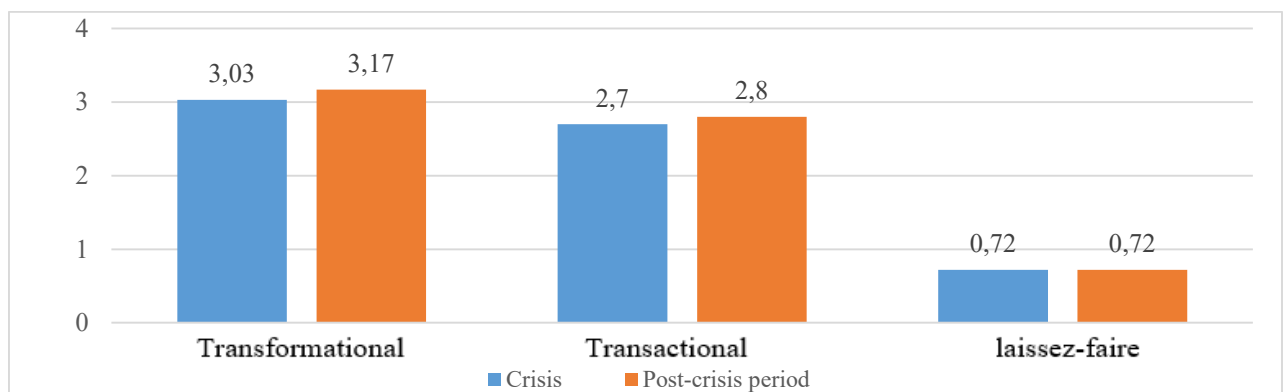


Figure 10. Mean value of leadership styles expression from the followers' perspective in crisis and post-crisis period

Source: Authors estimations

The data in Figure 10 allow highlighting the following conclusions:

- First, transactional and transformational styles have lower values in the crisis period compared to the post-crisis period, similar to the reported decline in values in the leadership survey analysed.
- Second, the transformative style score in the post-crisis period has the largest difference (0.14 points) compared to the crisis period. This finding is similar to the leadership survey results, but the trend is reversed.

- Third, the transactional style score in the post-crisis period is 0.10 points higher than in the crisis period. The proportion observed in the values of the leadership survey is maintained, where the difference is in the same magnitude - 0.10 points, but the trend is with the opposite sign.

- Fourth, there was no change in the score for the non-interfering style, with an average question score of 0.72 for both periods. This result is not significantly different from the minimal difference of 0.3 points in the leadership survey.

Analysis of the influence of leadership style on follower motivation

This analysis is central to the design of the study, as the impact of different leadership styles on the level of follower motivation in periods of crisis and post-crisis environments is the essence of the research subject embedded in the methodology. Given the more precise identification of leadership styles that can be presented when measured from the perspective of followers versus that of leaders, the results are of central importance.

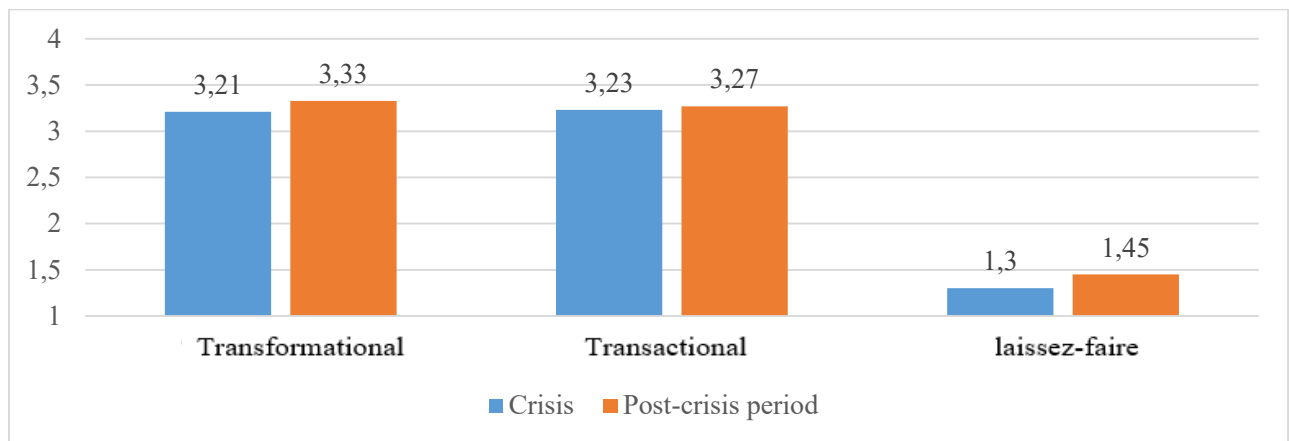


Figure 11. Mean value of motivation expression by leadership style according to followers in crisis and post-crisis period

Source: Autohor's data

Figure 11 presents the average follower motivation calculated from the scores of all motivational factors. This average is relative to leadership style as measured by the followers' perspective of their leaders for crisis and post-crisis environments.

The results show that the style leading to the highest motivation among followers in the post-crisis environment is the transformational style with an average motivational value of 3.33. The transactional style came second with a difference of 0.06 points, with 3.27 points. In third place is the non-interfering leadership style, with a significant difference of 1.45 points.

In the crisis period, the style with the highest motivation among the followers was the transactional style with 3.23 points, followed by the transformational style with 3.21 points, the last place was taken by the non-interventional style with 1.30 points.

3.6. Analysis of the relationship between leaders and followers

Figure 12 presents the differences between the means of each style for leaders and the means of the leadership styles from the followers' perspective for the two periods. The results unambiguously show that each style is reflected with a higher mean value for leaders than for followers. The above considerations allow drawing the following conclusions:

- The smallest differences between leaders and followers are in the assessment of transformational type of leadership in times of crisis. In a post-crisis environment, the difference is about twice as small compared to a crisis environment.
- Transactional leadership is also characterized by small differences between followers and leaders themselves, with the difference being larger in the post-crisis period.
- Assessments of the noninterventionist behaviors of leaders and their followers in and out of crisis have the most significant differences. Leaders rate a higher level of noninterfering leadership than followers. This can be taken as an argument for leadership quality and self-criticism, as the significantly lower rating was given by followers, whose motivation by this leadership style was lowest.

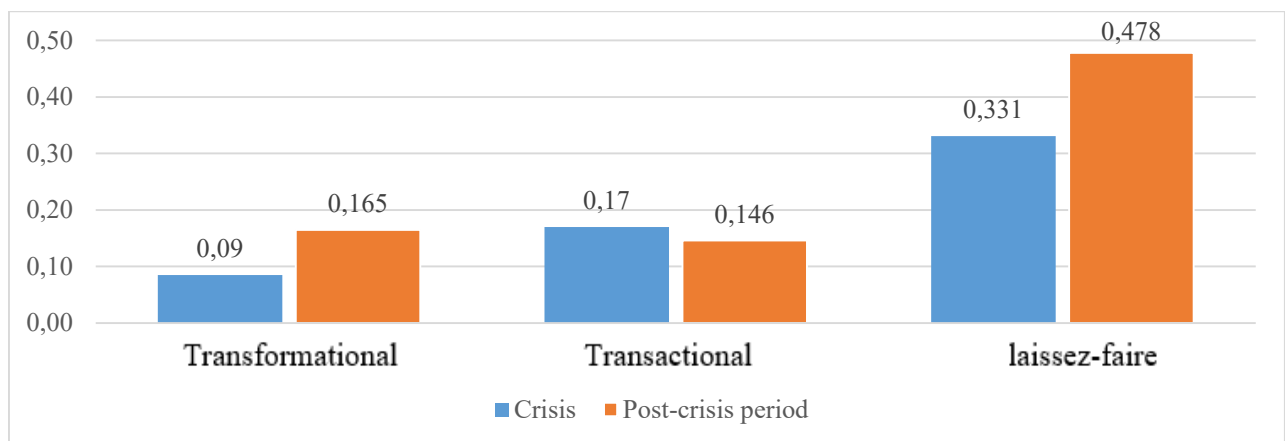


Figure 12. Difference between the values of the expression of leadership styles of followers and leaders in periods of crisis and post-crisis environment

Source: Authors estimations

3.7. Summarized results of in-depth interviews with leaders and followers

This part of the study provides an opportunity to confirm the theses derived from the surveys. It is found that overwhelmingly, the theses of leaders and followers in answering the questions represent a more circumstantial and complete narrative, validating the main findings highlighted in the survey. To these are added details of reality that cannot be registered in the surveys - *staff turnover in accommodation, change of ownership of hotels, non-normative seasonality during the crisis*

3.8.A model for increasing motivation in crisis and post-crisis environments by applying different leadership styles

The findings from the statistical data processing can be used to create a model that can be applied by hotel managers in Bulgaria as a benchmark to increase follower motivation in periods with different levels of environmental uncertainty. The realisation of this thesis is related to the fulfilment of the fifth research task set out in the introductory part of the study. In order to create such a model, it is necessary to present the following arguments derived through the synthesis of the statistical analysis of the surveys, the in-depth interviews, the sector analysis and the theoretical propositions in chapter one:

- Transformational leadership has the highest overall potential to increase follower motivation if the external environment and associated periods of crisis and post-crisis environments are not taken into account. Behaviors from this type of leadership should be maximized in both crisis and high uncertainty and lower uncertainty environments characteristic of post-crisis periods.
- Transactional leadership finds its application for increasing motivation for both periods, but is more effective for increasing motivation during a crisis. Even in a crisis environment, transformational-type behaviors should not be limited, but only supplemented with transactional ones. In support of this thesis, it can be argued that there is a high level of unidirectional positive expression between the two types of leadership according to correlation analysis, which allows them to be combined.
- Non-intentional type of leadership should be avoided both in periods with higher level of uncertainty and in periods with low environmental uncertainty. This style is characterized by a particularly negative impact on follower motivation during times of crisis, when a combination of transformational and transactional styles has a much more positive impact on motivation.

In general terms, the following matrix can be presented as a visualization of the follower motivation optimization model for the two study periods:

Crisis → ↓ Dominant leadership style	Crisis environment	Post-crisis environment	References
Behaviours of transformative Leadership	+++	++++	Maximizing transformational leadership behaviors in a post-crisis environment and using a limited number in a crisis environment
Behaviours from transactional leadership	++	+	Using a greater number of transactional behaviours during a crisis environment and avoiding them in principle during a post-crisis environment
Behaviour from non-interfering leadership	----	--	Minimize non-interfering behaviors. Particular care should be taken to avoid during a crisis environment

Figure 13. A model for increasing motivation in crisis and post-crisis environments by applying different leadership styles

Source: Author's generated model

4. CONCLUSION AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was fulfilled by developing a methodology and methodological provisions for assessing leadership style in crisis and post-crisis conditions. This methodology was approbated among the object of the research - accommodation places categorized with 3, 4 and 5 stars in 4 out of 9 tourist regions. The implemented sector analysis of the hotel industry, as well as surveys and in-depth interviews with leaders and followers, found results confirming the research thesis. These results

validated the following findings in the validation of the methodology on the research object by answering the research questions and related hypotheses:

1. The most significant leadership style among accommodation managers in Bulgaria is the transformational style, with a huge lead (in terms of number of dominant appearances, both at the level of followers' opinions and at the level of accommodation) over other styles. In terms of the percentage of leadership behaviours exhibited within the sample, the transformational style again ranks first, followed by the transactional style by a small margin, with both styles more heavily represented in the sample than the non-intervention style. This result provides a direct answer to the first research question.

2. Transformational, transactional and non-intervention leadership have different impact on follower motivation. The highest motivating style for followers is transformational, with a small lead over transactional, with non-interventional leadership style in third place by a significant margin. The result answers the second research question.

3. The level of environmental uncertainty in crisis and post-crisis changes how transformational, transactional and non-interventionist leadership influence follower motivation. We observe both differences in overall motivation in the two periods and dynamics in the different factors of motivation for the periods, answering the third research question. Although the differences are not overwhelming, they rank the effectiveness of different leadership styles under the two periods studied differently.

4. Transformational leadership style increases follower motivation in both crisis and post-crisis environments. It was found that behaviors from this style can be effectively combined with behaviors from the transactional style, but not with those from the noninterventional leadership style, if an increase in follower motivation is intended. Transformational leadership led to the highest motivation in the post-crisis period, with a small lead over transactional leadership. These findings answer a fourth research question.

5. Transactional leadership positively influences motivation in crisis and post-crisis period. Behaviors of this type can be combined with behaviors of the transformational leadership style, but not with behaviors of the noninterventionist style when a desire to increase follower motivation. Transactional leadership behaviors were found to lead to the highest motivation during crisis with little difference over transformational style leadership. These generalizations answer research question five.

6. Non-assertive leadership negatively affects motivation, both during and after a crisis. This leadership style has significantly lower potential for employee motivation than the transformational and transactional styles. Measured motivation values for this style are more than twice as low as each of the old styles in both periods studied, with a particularly negative impact of this style on motivation during crisis. The conclusion answers the sixth research question.

7. The findings from all the results are integrated into an applied model that provides guidance for choosing a leadership style in environments with different levels of uncertainty in order to increase follower motivation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

1. Establishing a crisis management system, including a crisis response team and rules of engagement. The work of the team should start with setting indicators to identify emerging crises. Given the increased impact of crisis events on the performance of accommodation (highlighted in the sector analysis), registering an emerging crisis is critical. For larger establishments, it is recommended that a comprehensive system of external environmental scanning be put in place, of which the crisis management system should be a part.

2. Accommodation managers need to choose and adopt a leadership style that reflects the specifics of the external environment and its levels of uncertainty. This includes prioritizing their leadership behaviors

with the model presented above to enhance employee motivation and hence the related organizational effectiveness.

3. Develop and implement a policy to establish the level of corporate motivation in the accommodation and maintain it at a high level, including the selection of an appropriate leadership style. This policy should cover regular motivation surveys using motivational profiles with questions exploring leadership style and satisfaction.

4. Accommodation managers should monitor indicators of environmental uncertainty (including those of emerging crisis), the results of motivational profiles and adapt their leadership behaviours to them. At a higher level of uncertainty, adopt more transactional behaviours (in combination with transformational behaviours), and at a lower level of uncertainty rely mainly on transformational leadership approaches.

5. When clear perceptions of non-interfering leadership are identified in motivational profiles, managers should limit their behaviors related to it as much as possible.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The realization of the aim of the dissertation through the accomplishment of the research tasks and the confirmation of the research thesis provide opportunities to present the main contributions, both in scientific and applied fields.

The following scientific contributions are presented:

1. A theoretical study of the categories of leadership, crisis, environment and motivation is made and on the basis of the analysis and synthesis resulting from it a model of the relationships between the elements of these theoretical categories is proposed.

2. A conceptual model has been developed, allowing to create a methodology for studying the impact of the chosen leadership style on motivation in periods of crisis and post-crisis environment.

3. A research methodology has been established, encompassing methods and approaches including: a sector analysis of the hotel industry, questionnaires and in-depth interview questionnaires for both leaders and followers. The methodology allows for the study of hotel industry indicators and the identification of periods of crisis and post-crisis environments, the study of the perceived level of environmental uncertainty by leaders, an assessment of leadership style from the perspective of leaders themselves, an assessment of leadership style from the perspective of followers, and an assessment of follower motivation from their own perspective.

4. The leading importance of transactional leadership style behaviors in enhancing follower motivation during a crisis has been established. This contribution is assessed as promising, but needs further research in larger samples as well as in studies of other sectors of the economy to validate and develop it.

The following scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation are awarded:

1. An applied model of leadership style selection by accommodation managers to enhance employee motivation in environments with different levels of uncertainty is proposed. This model is a tool to help managers to adopt different leadership styles in order to achieve higher employee motivation and thus increase the performance and efficiency of accommodations.

2. An empirical study of the accommodation facilities in Bulgaria, the subject of the research, has been carried out and the following results have been derived:

- The leadership styles part of the FRLM model and their dullness among Bulgarian accommodation managers are identified. This is the first study of leadership styles according to this model for the hotel industry and the tourism sector in Bulgaria as a whole.

-The influence of the three leadership styles from the FRLM model on the motivation of the followers of the first-time accommodation managers in Bulgaria was assessed.

-An analysis is conducted to compare the perception of leadership styles from the perspective of leaders on the one hand and from the perspective of their followers on the other. The analysis again relates to the FRLM model with the three types of leadership styles applied to accommodation for the first time in Bulgaria.

3. A sectoral analysis of the hotel industry in Bulgaria has been carried out in order to compare and contrast the main indicators of the hotel industry, identifying phases of crisis and post-crisis environment within the period 2020 - 2023.

7. GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC

After presenting the contributions of the dissertation, it is necessary to outline directions for the development of the more promising ones in order to reach even higher scientific relevance and validity. Guidelines for future research by researchers with an interest close to the dissertation topic are summarized as follows:

-Adopting other crisis events of strategic importance, other than the Covid-19 pandemic, to test the methodology, to validate the results of the studies conducted and to convey a higher level of validity and universality of the results and conclusions.

-Increase the sample size by increasing the number of tourist areas surveyed. It is recommended that this is done in combination with the adoption of another crisis event to allow validity and reliability of the results with a larger sample.

-Adaptation of the methodology to organizations from other sectors beyond the hotel and tourism industry to establish the universality of the presented findings, taking into account the specificity of each sector and the peculiarities of relationships and interrelationships between managers and employees.

-Research on business organizations in other countries and cultures by adapting the proposed methodological and methodological toolkit to identify the importance of the mentality of leaders and followers on the impact of different leadership styles on follower motivation.

-Conduct further research to develop the contribution related to the leading role of transactional type leadership on employee motivation during crisis. Such research would place significant emphasis on the situational characterization of styles from the FRLM model.

8. SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Zhelev, D. (2023) "Applying an effective leadership style in the context of crisis breakdown and recovery periods", Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference "Trends and Strategies for Recovery of the Economic and Social System after the COVID-19 Pandemic", pp. 211-221, UNWE, ISBN 978-619-232-750-7.

2. Zhelev, D. (2024) "Leadership as a factor for sustainable development of tourism organizations: empirical results". Proceedings of XXI International Scientific Congress Winter Session "Machines. Technologies. Materials", Year VII, ISSUE 1 (28), pp. 145-148, ISSN 2535-0021 (PRINT), ISSN 2535-003X (ONLINE).

3. Angelova, M. Research Design, International Scientific Journal "Science. Business. Society", 9 (1): 18-21, ISSN 2534-8485.
4. Zhelev, D. (2024) "Prerequisites for increasing employee motivation through the application of an effective leadership style". Under seal, service note.

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