

**Thesis of doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

**THE ROLE OF THE COACHING APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION,  
WITH SPECIAL REGARDS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES**

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*„The best teachers are those who show you  
where to look, not what to see.”*  
(Alexandra K. Trenfor, 2014)

## **1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are witnessing significant global, economic and technological changes – just think of the global economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russian-Ukrainian war. As a result, the role of higher education has undergone significant changes in recent decades and continues to evolve. Universities face a number of challenges, including diverse global issues, financial and accessibility challenges, the relevance and quality of education, and the need to develop appropriate response strategies to these issues. Higher education institutions are under constant pressure to attract students with outstanding abilities and knowledge and to produce graduates who meet the needs of the labour market after completing their studies.

Students today are much more diverse, new educational technologies have been introduced, and teachers are more accountable and demonstrate a higher level of professionalism. As a result of changes taking place around the world, the roles of educators have also undergone significant changes: the traditional frontal transfer of knowledge has been replaced by new roles. In my research, I examine the spread of these new roles, seeking to explore the extent to which the roles of mentor, facilitator and coach have become widespread in higher education around the world and in Hungary, and how they contribute to student development.

Our knowledge-based society demands new skills from all its participants, including entrepreneurs. Key entrepreneurial skills in the 21st century include adaptability and innovation, communication and social skills, problem solving and decision making, as well as resource management and leadership.

The roles of mentor and facilitator, as well as the coaching approach, develop the competences of educators, can elevate teachers to role models in the eyes of their students, and can contribute to strengthening entrepreneurial competences in new ways. Based on the predictions of recent studies, the focus in higher education will shift from traditional teaching to facilitation and mentoring, where educators learn alongside their students and provide them with guidance. The aim of my research is to demonstrate the validity of new teaching roles by examining entrepreneurship education. First, within the framework of secondary

research, I review the international and domestic literature related to the topic. Subsequently, in primary research, I use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the stakeholders of master's programmes in business development in Hungary.

The fundamental hypothesis to be proven in my research is that novel teaching roles, particularly the coaching approach, promote the development of entrepreneurial competencies in master's programmes in business development. The **theoretical** significance of the topic is that it aims to explore the relationships between coaching, mentoring and facilitation and their impact on the development of entrepreneurial competencies in higher education, with a particular focus on the role of the coaching approach. From a **practical** point of view, the secondary research (comprehensive review of domestic and international literature) enriches the topic with Hungarian-language literature sources from which further research directions can be determined. Thanks to studies conducted in the domestic environment, the correlations based on primary research can be directly incorporated into higher education practice and applied in business development training.

Building on my previous studies and work experience, I have set myself the research topic of examining the presence and impact of novel teaching roles (coaching, mentoring, facilitation) in the world of higher education (Master's programmes in Business Development), with a particular focus on the development of entrepreneurial competences.

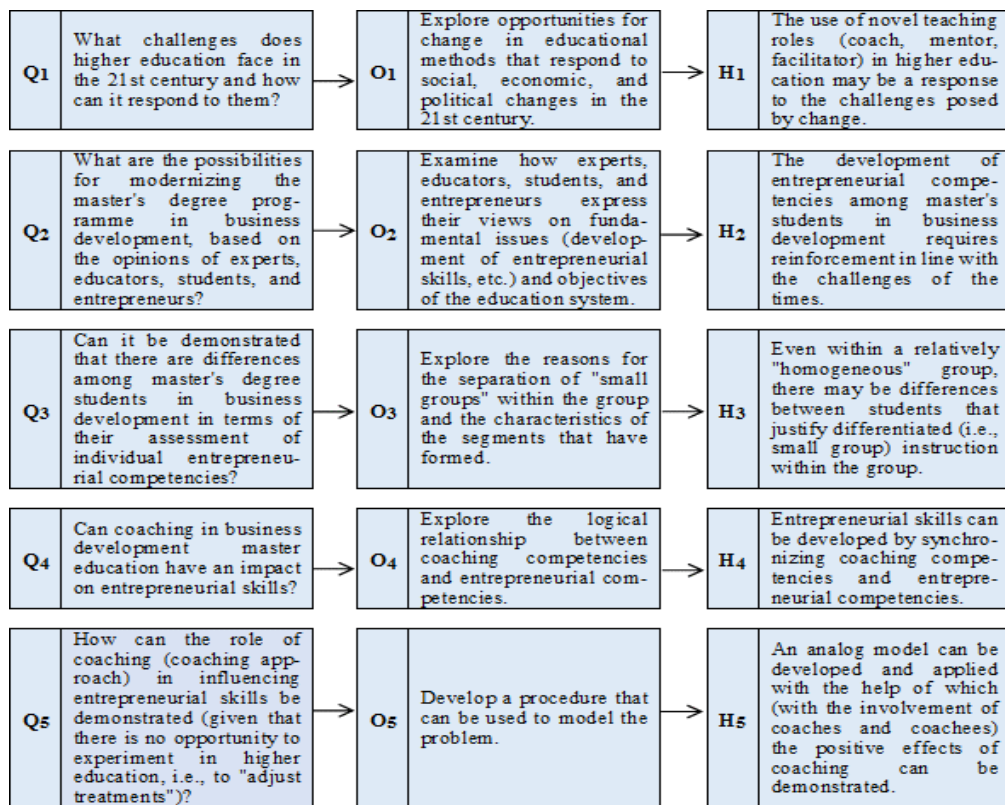
The aim of my research is to explore, in general terms, how the heads of departments, lecturers, students and entrepreneurs at universities/faculties in Hungary offering accredited Master's degrees in Business Development (13 institutions: Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest Business University, University of Debrecen, Eötvös Loránd University, Kodolányi János University, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Miskolc, Budapest Metropolitan University, University of Óbuda, University of Sopron, University of Szeged, Tokaj-Hegyalja University, University of Pécs) see the possibilities for necessary adaptation and development in response to economic, social and political changes in relation to the programme.

The above-mentioned roles could serve as a kind of response to the educational challenges of the 21st century.

**The specific questions, objectives and hypotheses** of the research are presented in the flowchart below (*Figure 1*).

One group of research questions (Q<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>2</sub>) primarily aims to explore the problems and opportunities related to the topic under investigation, while the other category (Q<sub>3</sub>, Q<sub>4</sub>, Q<sub>5</sub>) aims to present and validate suitable solutions and best practices for the area under investigation.

The multidisciplinary topic of the dissertation fits into the programme of the Doctoral School of Economics and Business. The research deals with an area of university human resource management that is increasingly coming into focus today: the development and improvement of entrepreneurial competences, with particular emphasis on good practices that support development and offer benefits to both individuals and organisations (universities and future employers) (e.g. improving academic performance, retaining students, reducing dropout rates, facilitating integration into the workplace). Students' skills, abilities and mindsets need to be developed so that they can be successful in facing future (currently unknown) challenges (workplace, everyday life).



**Note:** O<sub>1</sub>: secondary research objective (qualitative), O<sub>2</sub>: primary research objective (qualitative), O<sub>3</sub>, O<sub>4</sub>, O<sub>5</sub>: primary research objectives (qualitative, quantitative)

**Source:** own compilation, 2023

**Figure 1: Research questions, objectives and hypotheses**

In my research, I focus on university lecturers as the leaders of the training process, as they play a fundamental role in shaping entrepreneurial competences. Furthermore, lecturers play a decisive role in terms of their teaching roles, and they must naturally be supported in this new task by the heads of institutions. It is clear that the task of educators is increasingly shifting from the transfer of information to the coordination of knowledge acquisition and the teaching of "critical thinking" and learning. The new teaching roles are likely to prepare students for their own future (see: future orientation, which is an important feature of the coaching process), teach them to develop reliable navigation tools, and equip them to navigate the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) /SHAFFER & ZALEWSKI, 2011/ and BANI (fragile, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible) world /TERJÉKI & NAGY-FÖLDI, 2024/. The introduction of new procedures into university education can provide an opportunity to create an environment that gives students space to become active ("acting") participants (which also means strengthening their entrepreneurial competences).

In addition to educators, the analyses also include the subjects of the training process, students, and external stakeholders (entrepreneurs, coaches, coachees) (for comparison, verification, etc.).

The introduction of new procedures into university education can provide an opportunity to create an environment that encourages students to become active ("hands-on") participants (which also means strengthening their entrepreneurial skills).

Taking the above into account, it can be concluded that the research emphasises the relationship between the individual and organisational (university, labour market actors) effects of entrepreneurial competencies and places it in the context of new trends in higher education (competence-focused education). The preparatory and supportive activities of university lecturers in this area are particularly important for the benefit of future employees.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATABASE AND METHODS USED

In my work, I conducted **qualitative** and **quantitative** research, using **primary and secondary** studies. As part of the **secondary** research, I collected and organised (according to the main research questions) and then analysed domestic and international publications during a review of the literature. My aim in reviewing the domestic and international literature was to substantiate **the significance and relevance of the topic of the thesis**, focusing on the most important areas (teaching roles /Table 1/; business, entrepreneur, entrepreneurial competencies; innovative methods in entrepreneurship education; coaching and coaching approach, measuring the effectiveness of coaching), as well as to lay **the foundations for primary research**.

**Table 1: Teaching roles**

Teaching roles	Main characteristics of the roles
Knowledge transferor	The traditional teaching role – conveying information, knowledge and understanding to students about a subject.
Expert	Possesses deep, validated professional knowledge and uses this knowledge in teaching.
Community builder	Collaborates with colleagues, supports them in their development, and sets a good example.
Pedagogical expert	Defines and clearly communicates appropriate learning objectives. Demonstrates a positive attitude towards learners: trusts them and works continuously to help them overcome obstacles to learning.
Innovator	Places significant emphasis on the methodological and professional development of education.
Facilitator	Adapts teaching tools to the goals of students and develops the teacher-student relationship.
Mentor	Supports students in both their professional and personal development.
Evaluator – feedback provider	Evaluates students not only with grades, but also with useful advice and comments.
Research	Conducts academic or scientific research – persistent, curious, precise, dedicated and creative.

*Source: own compilation based on CUB CTE, 2023*

I used scientific publications, various specialist books and articles, as well as other descriptions of the educational process of the Master's programme in Business Development and research reports as sources of data. I then drew conclusions, with particular regard to the novel teaching roles (coach, mentor, facilitator /Table 2/) and the applicability of the coaching approach /Table 3/ in business development education (= its role in the development of entrepreneurial competencies).

**Table 2: Characteristics of new teaching roles**

Coaching (C)	Facilitation (F)	Mentoring (M)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is associated with shorter-term performance focus and is represented as process-based expertise (STOKES et al., 2021).</li> <li>• It often involves a coach who provides guidance and opportunities for reflection on experiences (LEE et al., 2016).</li> <li>• It is used as a development tool to link theory and practice in coaching education (McQUADE et al., 2015).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It plays a role in mentoring relationships and contributes to new learning, especially in the area of attitude learning (LEE et al., 2016).</li> <li>• It helps to identify difficulties, reach consensus decisions and develop plans that bring real solutions (AFH, 2024).</li> <li>• It is neutral in terms of content but expert in terms of process (AFH, 2024).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has a longer-term holistic focus, and the mentor has direct experience and knowledge of the mentee's operating environment (STOKES et al., 2021).</li> <li>• It involves knowledge sharing and transfer between the mentor and the mentee, using practices such as coaching, facilitation, guidance and reflection on experiences (LEE et al., 2016).</li> <li>• It is used in various contexts, such as business, education, nursing and youth development programmes (SALTER-GANNON, 2015; MALHOTRA-GRIFFITHS, 2023; EASTCOTT, 2016; SMITH-LYNCH, 2014).</li> </ul>
C - M	C - F	F - M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both coaching and mentoring are considered important interventions in human resource development (SALTER-GANNON, 2015).</li> <li>• In different contexts, coaching and mentoring practitioners use both common and different approaches, emphasising the specific aspects characteristic of each context (SALTER-GANNON, 2015).</li> <li>• Both are seen as processes that serve learning and are used for professional development in various fields (EASTCOTT, 2016; SMITH-LYNCH, 2014).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most important similarities between coaching and facilitation can be summarised in the following keywords: safety, partnership, questioning, effective communication, neutrality, trust, listening, integrity, presence, professional standards, contracting (IAF, 2016).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both mentoring and facilitation are people-centred approaches that focus on developing the capabilities of individuals or groups.</li> <li>• Their goal is to promote individual or group development, whether in a professional or personal context.</li> <li>• Active listening is key in both mentoring and facilitation in order to understand and respond to the needs of individuals or groups (SCRUM.ORG, 2024).</li> </ul>

**Explanation:** 1. C, F, M → activities related to the three novel teaching roles

2. C-F, F-M, C-M → the most significant similarities between the novel teaching roles

**Source:** own compilation based on the literature, 2024

**Table 3: Characteristics of coaching, the coaching approach and ICF coaching competencies**

Coaching	Coaching approach (coaching mindset)	ICF coaching competencies
<p>"A collaborative partnership with the client, a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires the client to maximise their personal and professional potential." (ICF, n.d.) According to COPE (2007), during the coaching process, the coach takes responsibility for the process, but change depends primarily on the client.</p>	<p>The essence of coaching is not to teach or direct individuals or groups, but to accompany, support and develop them in finding their own resources, internal motivations and solutions (WHITMORE, 1992). The coaching approach is based on trust, partnership and active listening, and its goal is to promote development and self-reflection.</p> <p>The main characteristics of the coaching approach are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question-based: it does not give direct advice, but helps individuals find their own answers through open-ended questions.</li> <li>• Solution-focused: it focuses on opportunities, goals and steps rather than problems.</li> <li>• Assumes a partnership: there is an equal, supportive relationship between the coach and the client.</li> <li>• Empirages responsibility: the client is responsible for their own development, the coach is only a guide.</li> </ul>	<p>The ICF coaching competencies (i.e. the competencies defined by the International Coach Federation) are a set of professional principles and skills that define the practice of professional coaching.</p> <p>The eight ICF competencies are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaves ethically</li> <li>• Operates with a coaching approach</li> <li>• Makes agreements and keeps them</li> <li>• Promotes and maintains trust and security</li> <li>• Is consciously present</li> <li>• Listens actively</li> <li>• Promotes awareness</li> <li>• Promotes/facilitates the development of the listener</li> </ul>

*Source: own compilation based on the literature, 2024*

**The conclusions that can be drawn from the review of the literature** – based on the results to date and the literature to date – **can be summarised as follows:**

- **The theoretical methodological results from abroad related to new teaching roles** are significant. I use these results on the one hand, and on the other hand, I build on them to conduct research in specific areas of the topic.
- **The methodological findings in the field of business development are very far-reaching** in both domestic and international literature. Several researchers and research groups have achieved significant and useful results. However, few have dealt specifically with adaptation to the higher education training process.

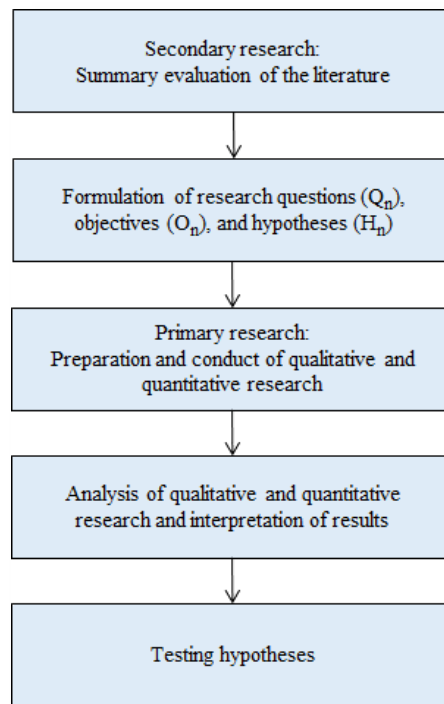
- There is little work examining novel teaching roles that **explore the possibilities for application in entrepreneurship education.**
- Among the activities related to novel roles, several Hungarian and foreign researchers have discussed the general context of coaching. I have drawn heavily on the literature in this field. However, **the background knowledge of coaching studied within the university framework** is limited, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative studies. In my research, I consider it my task to conduct studies relevant to this field and to apply qualitative and quantitative approaches and analysis.
- Among the gaps in research, it is important to note that **there are few studies** on this topic, i.e. I found few sources in the literature that **examine the role of the coaching approach in entrepreneurship education and establish a connection with the development of entrepreneurial competencies.**

A significant research gap can be identified in the topic I am analysing, as most of the literature sources I have found do not provide answers **to the logical relationship between coaching competence areas and entrepreneurial competencies, or the role that the coaching approach can play in the development of entrepreneurial competencies.**

The fundamental objective of my research is to contribute to filling this gap by creating an **analogue model** that is suitable **for synchronising coaching competencies and entrepreneurial competencies**, thereby answering the research questions. The research therefore aims to expand on the results achieved so far in this field.

Secondary research and qualitative primary studies together contributed to identifying the research gap and establishing the research task (questions, objectives, hypotheses).

The most important steps of the research work are shown in *Figure 2*:



*Source: own compilation, 2023*

**Figure 2: Main phases of the research work**

The literature review, the identification of good and bad practices, the **qualitative surveys** conducted among experts (= programme leaders) **using in-depth interviews**, and the **quantitative questionnaire survey** (educators, students, entrepreneurs, coaches, coachees) gradually contributed to the development of a method capable of examining the educational process of the Master's programme in Entrepreneurship, with particular regard to the issue of developing entrepreneurial competences.

In my work, I kept in mind that the validity of research results is significantly influenced by **the nature of the research approach** (**inductive**: creates new knowledge as a generalized result of conclusions based on empirical information, or **deductive**: formulates new knowledge as a result of conclusions based on knowledge already accepted as true) and **the research methodology applied** (GHAURI – GRONHAUG, 2011; BRYMAN-BELL, 2015; PERNECKY, 2016; BABBIE, 2020). GÖRÖG (2022, 2025) emphasizes that inductive and deductive research are not mutually exclusive approaches in management science, but rather build on each other according to the knowledge development spiral.

During my research, I primarily relied on **exploratory** research (which provides an excellent starting point for subsequent deductive research) (MALHOTRA, 2002). Since I set out to explore an area that has not been widely explored in theory, but especially in practice, it was necessary to gain a detailed understanding of the process. In other cases (interaction of factors, etc.), my research is characterized by **explanatory** research (aimed at exploring logical relationships). At the same time, the research is also **descriptive** (created for the purpose of reporting on a given situation), which seeks to understand a phenomenon—the coaching, mentoring, and facilitation process—in detail using qualitative methods.

The **qualitative** questioning took the form of semi-structured **interviews**. My goal was for the interviewees to share as much information as possible about their programmes during the interviews. This allowed them to focus on aspects of the topic that were important to them and created an opportunity for lively interviews. (When planning the interviews, I estimated that they would last 50-60 minutes and cover the entire topic). When selecting the sample, the primary criterion for inclusion was that the interviewee should be part of the Master's programme in Business Development. As a result, seven highly experienced experts from the group of 13 programme leader educators were included in the sample. I conducted the interviews using the Microsoft Teams application. Transcripts were made of what was said during the interviews, and I then independently processed and summarised the most important conclusions.

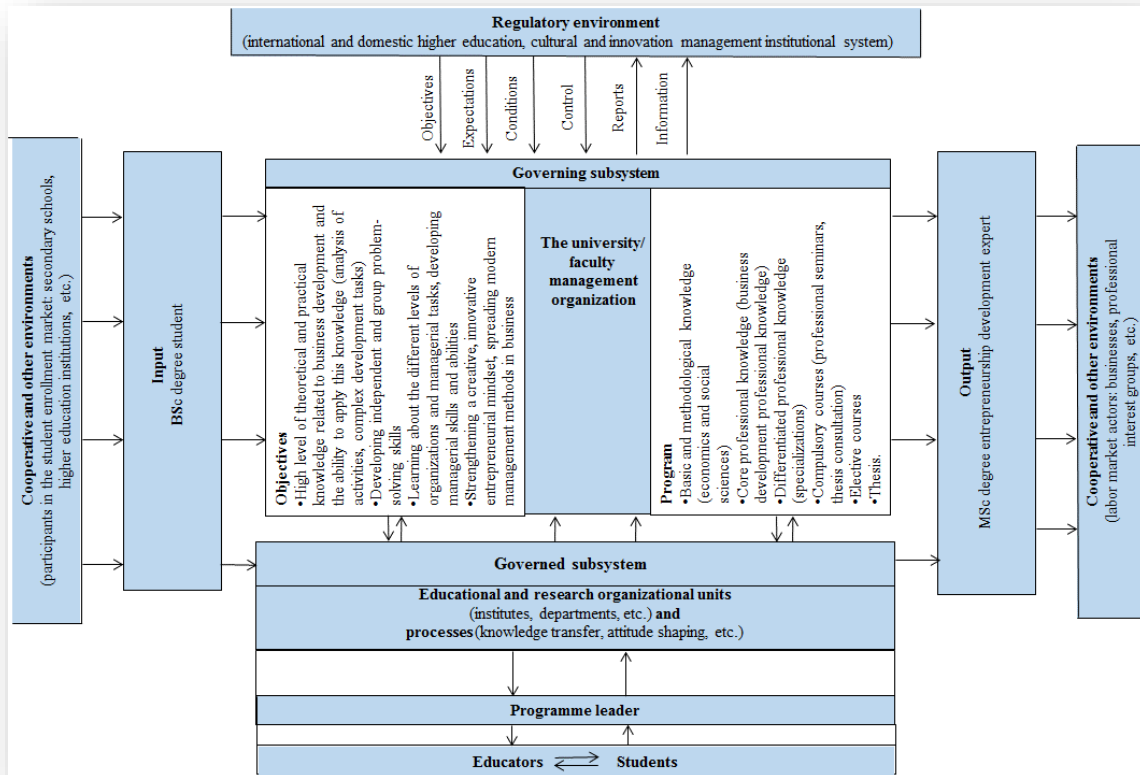
During the **quantitative questionnaire survey**, a short explanatory description consisting of a few sentences was included in the questionnaires to clarify the meaning of each concept. Data collection was carried out anonymously and online using questionnaires compiled by me (5 questionnaires: educators, students, entrepreneurs, coaches, coachees). It took approximately 10-15 minutes to answer the questions. With regard to educators and students, my goal was to examine the entire community (i.e., the population) of educators teaching in the master's programme in business development and students participating in the training. (According to my estimates, this represents approximately 130 educators, of whom 115 responded to the questionnaire. This reflects a selection rate of nearly 89%.) In the case of students, the willingness to complete the questionnaire was lower, with a participation rate of 45-50% out of 195 students. In the case of target groups outside the university (entrepreneurs, coaches, coachees), the

sample size is based on random sampling. (Here, the goal was to ensure the information needs of the model studies (see analogue model).

I processed the data using the SPSS 29 mathematical-statistical programme, performing single- and multi-variable analyses. Based on the options provided by the scale, I examined mean values, dispersion indicators (range of dispersion, standard deviation, relative standard deviation) and relative frequency. I used **factor analysis** (SVÁB, 1979; DINYA, 1987; SZŰCS et al., 2002; SAJTOS – MITEV, 2007; SIMON et al., 2024) to reduce the number of variables and explore the relationships between them, and **cluster analysis** (DINYA, 1987; SZŰCS et al., 2002; SAJTOS – MITEV, 2007; SIMON et al., 2024) to group the observation units (cluster formation) and **discriminant analysis** (SZŰCS et al., 2002) to separate the different groups.

From a professional and methodological point of view, it is worth noting that as a starting point for my work – for approaching the research task – I created an analytical model, a systems-based model of the training process for the Master's programme in Business Development (*Figure 3*). With the help of this model, I examine the input of the system, the relationship and interaction of its components, and the output, with particular regard to changes in the environment (control, support). I used a type of symbolic (formal) model, the logical model, which uses diagrams to show the structure, elements, connections, relationships and functioning of the object under investigation. First, the theoretical model (which appears in conceptual or verbal form) was created, on the basis of which the symbolic model could be constructed.

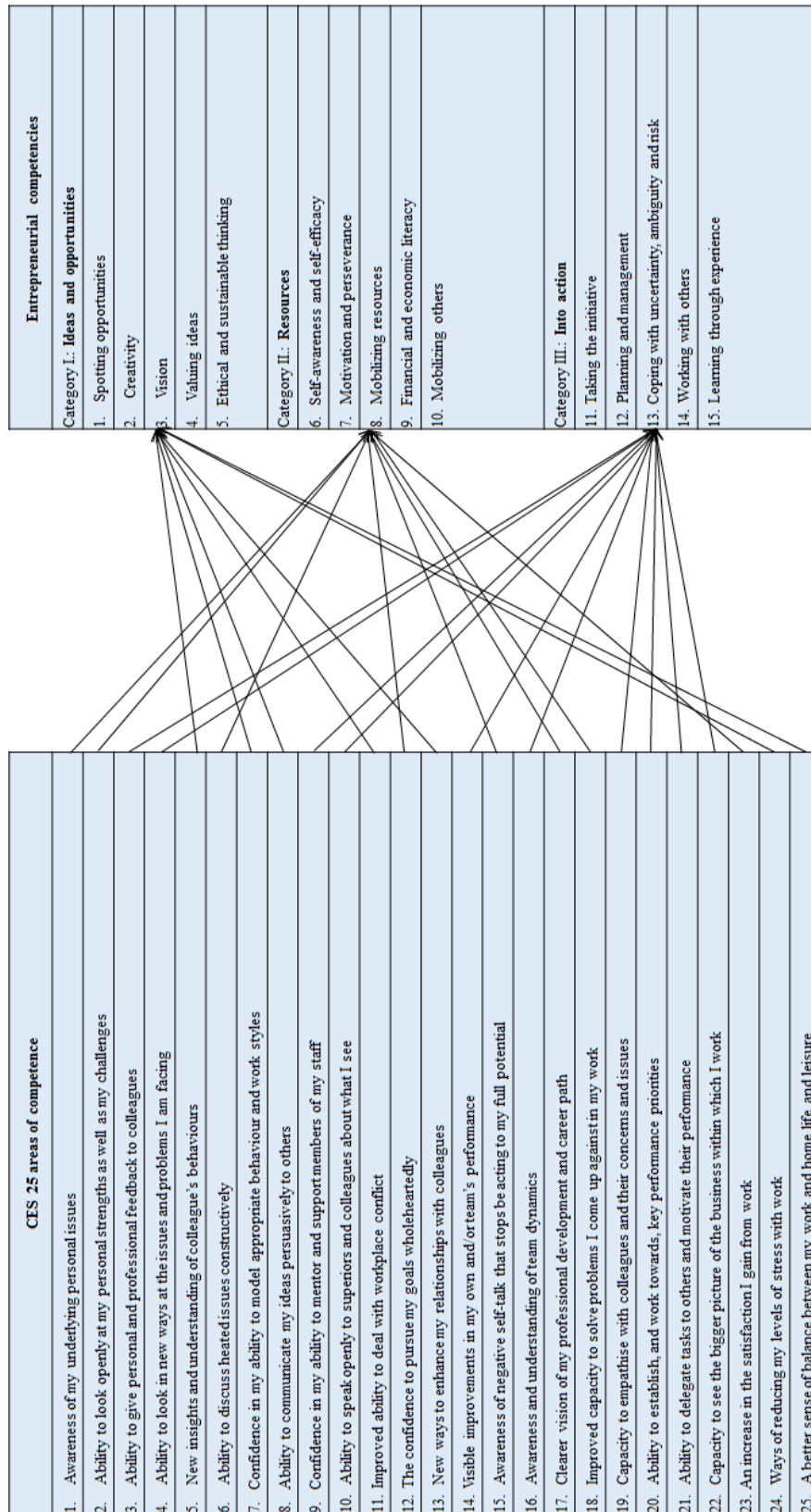
On the other hand, it should be mentioned that I designed the online questionnaires for the five target groups in such a way that there are "overlaps" and interdependencies (output-input relationships) in terms of the questions. This ensures that the thesis and its message are structured "along a single arc" (coach approach). Furthermore, this also makes it possible to explore the current situation of the Master's programme in Business Development and future development opportunities.



Source: own compilation based on university data, 2023

**Figure 3: Systemic model of the training process for the Master's programme in Business Development**

Thirdly, an important feature of some of the analyses is that they are based on an analogue model, which made it possible to explore the potential impact of coach-based training. This solution was necessary because in the Master's programme in Business Development, it is not possible in reality to "conduct experiments", i.e. to "set up treatments". In the analogue model I created, which is a modified version of the systems approach model, I replace the educator-student cooperation with the coach-coachee interaction, which can serve as a basis for examining the possible effects of applying the coaching approach. Thus, with the help of the analogue model, I relate the benefits of the coach ↔ coachee relationship back to the educator ↔ student relationship. The analogue model also provides a solution for synchronising coach competence areas and entrepreneurial competencies (Figure 4).



Source: own compilation, 2025

**Figure 4: Structure of the "competence synchronisation model" (CSM: Competence Synchronisation Model)**

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, I detail the results relating to the questions, objectives and hypotheses formulated at the beginning of my thesis, with particular regard to the data supporting the acceptance (or rejection) of each hypothesis and the methods used.

*Table 4* summarises and presents the information or methods proving the acceptance/rejection of the hypotheses.

**Table 4: Verification/rejection of hypotheses**

Row number	Hypothesis	Based on a review of the literature	Based on own test results	Confirmed/ Rejected
H <sub>1</sub> :	The use of novel teaching roles (coach, mentor, facilitator) in higher education may be a response to the challenges posed by change.	Chapter 2.2 Chapter 2.4 Chapter 2.7 Chapter 2.8	Chapter 4.1 Chapter 4.2	Confirmed
H <sub>2</sub> :	The development of entrepreneurial competencies among students enrolled in master's programmes in business development requires reinforcement in line with the challenges of the age.	Chapter 2.2 Chapter 2.6	Chapter 4.1	Confirmed
H <sub>3</sub>	Even within a "relatively homogeneous" group, there may be differences between students that justify differentiated (i.e. small group) teaching within the group.	Chapter 2.5 Chapter 2.6	Chapter 4.2.2	Confirmed
H <sub>4</sub> :	An analogue model can be developed and applied to demonstrate the positive effects of coaching (with the involvement of coaches and coachees).	Chapter 2.5 Chapter 2.7	Chapter 4.3 Chapter 4.3.1 Chapter 4.3.2	Confirmed
H <sub>5</sub>	Entrepreneurial skills can be developed by synchronising coaching competencies and entrepreneurial competencies.	Chapter 2.5 Chapter 2.7	Chapter 4.3.3	Confirmed

*Source: own compilation, 2025*

Q<sub>1</sub>: What challenges does higher education face in the 21st century and how can it respond to them?

O<sub>1</sub>: To explore opportunities for change in educational methods that can respond to social, economic and technological changes in the 21st century.

My goal was to analyse what new teaching roles could be effectively applied to overcome the challenges caused by these changes. An analysis of the literature confirmed that, as a result of the changes taking place in the world, the roles of educators must also undergo significant transformation: the traditional frontal transfer of knowledge must be replaced by new roles that can better promote the development of students and help them become adaptable entrepreneurs. The basic entrepreneurial skills of the 21st century include adaptability and innovation, communication and social skills, problem solving and decision making, as well as resource management and leadership. New teaching roles (mentor, facilitator and coach) develop students' competencies.

H<sub>1</sub>: The changing social, cultural and economic environment has created tension between traditional teaching methods and the expectations of modern students, leading to a need for innovation in teaching practices. Novel teaching roles can elevate teachers to role models in the eyes of their students and contribute to the strengthening of entrepreneurial competences in novel ways. Based on the predictions of recent studies, the focus in higher education will shift from traditional teaching to innovative methods, where educators learn alongside their students and provide them with guidance. By analysing entrepreneurship education, based on relevant literature, I have been able to demonstrate the validity of innovative teaching roles.

My own qualitative and quantitative studies support the assumption that one element of strategies responding to challenges may be the application of innovative teaching methods, which can provide opportunities for creating an enabling environment and help students become active ("acting") participants. In a knowledge-based society, new skills are needed to succeed, and teaching these skills requires new teaching roles.

- Q<sub>2</sub>: What are the possibilities for modernising the Master's programme in Business Development, based on the opinions of experts (= programme leaders), lecturers, students and entrepreneurs?
- O<sub>2</sub>: Examine how experts (= programme leaders), lecturers, students and entrepreneurs express their views on fundamental issues (development of entrepreneurial skills, etc.) and objectives of the education system.

My research emphasises the relationship between the individual and organisational effects of entrepreneurial competencies and places it in the context of new trends in higher education (competency-focused education). The preparatory and supportive activities of university lecturers in this area are particularly important for the benefit of future employees. Higher education plays a significant role in determining the knowledge, skills (competencies) and attitudes with which future generations will enter the labour market. This encourages universities to participate in employability and skills development initiatives. Research also shows that there is a mismatch between the skills developed by students at university and those required by the labour market, highlighting the need for universities to address this 'gap', i.e. to strengthen the development of competences in line with the challenges of the age.

- H<sub>2</sub>: It is clear from the above that educators in the 21st century face very different challenges than in the past and need to respond to them. Rapid changes require universities to equip students with the tools they need to survive and thrive in an uncertain future.

Among the skills necessary for success in the new millennium, entrepreneurial skills are key: that is, the competencies necessary for the success of a business. Strengthening entrepreneurial skills is therefore a fundamental task in education.

This is confirmed by my research findings (both qualitative and quantitative), which are based on the opinions of experts (= programme leaders), lecturers, students and entrepreneurs.

Adapting to the changes predicted by the literature requires the strengthening of entrepreneurial competencies.

Q<sub>3</sub>: Is there evidence of differences in the assessment of individual entrepreneurial competencies among students of the Master's programme in Business Development?

O<sub>3</sub>: Explore the reasons for the separation of "small groups" within the group and the characteristics of the segments that have formed.

During my research, I also conducted studies on students, which focused on a "relatively homogeneous" group to identify differences among students and their causes.

H<sub>3</sub>: The studies were conducted using factor analysis and subsequent cluster analysis methods. The aim of the latter was to classify the individuals forming the set into different groups (different in terms of learning/teaching). Four segments could be distinguished in the group of 45 students: "Ambitious innovators" (14 people), "Strategic leaders" (21 people), "Practical implementers" (8 people) and "Passive observers" (2 people). The names of the individual segments reflect the differences that characterise the individual "subgroups" in terms of the 15 entrepreneurial competencies and support the need for small group teaching (which goes against the current trend /=mass education/) due to the existing differences.

The hypothesis was therefore proven and accepted using multivariate mathematical-statistical methods.

Q<sub>4</sub>: How can the role of coaching (coach approach) in influencing entrepreneurial skills be demonstrated (given that there is no opportunity to experiment in higher education, i.e. to "adjust treatments")?

O<sub>4</sub>: To develop a procedure that can be used to model the problem.

The aim of my research was to create a testing method based on an analogue model, the application of which made it possible to explore the potential impact of coach-based training. This solution was necessary because, in reality, it is not possible to conduct "experiments", i.e. "set up different treatments", in the training process of the Master's programme in Business Development.

H<sub>4</sub>: In the analogue model I developed, I replaced the instructor ⇔ student cooperation with the coach ⇔ coachee interaction, thus making it possible to examine the potential effects of applying the coaching approach. Thus, using the analogue model, I related the measurable benefits (the benefits/returns of applying the coaching approach) derived from the coach ⇔ coachee relationship to the educator ⇔ student relationship, i.e. I demonstrated the positive effect of coaching, thereby proving the hypothesis, which was accepted.

Q<sub>5</sub>: Can the use of coaching in a master's programme in business development have an impact on entrepreneurial skills?

O<sub>5</sub>: To explore the logical relationship between coaching competence areas and entrepreneurial competences.

My goal was to analyse, based on my professional and coaching knowledge, whether there is a logical/substantive relationship between entrepreneurial competencies (EntreComp 15) and coaching competency areas (CES 25). In my opinion, there is, since the goal of both systems is to strengthen individual development, cooperation with others, etc.

H<sub>5</sub>: In my work, I examined content compliance by pairing key competencies, which resulted in the development of a model symbolising the process (CSM = Competence Synchronisation Model) (*Figure 4*).

I tested the "competence synchronisation model" with coaches and entrepreneurs using discriminant analysis, thus proving and accepting the hypothesis that entrepreneurial skills can be developed through CES 25.

#### 4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE THESIS

Taking into account the literature and based on my own detailed research results, I present the new and novel results of my work below:

- T<sub>1</sub>: The results of the research highlight that the use of novel teaching roles (coach, mentor, facilitator) in higher education can be a response to the challenges posed by changes (social, economic and technological).
- T<sub>2</sub>: The processed information obtained from the survey of those involved in entrepreneurship education (programme leaders, educators, students, entrepreneurs) confirms that the development of the entrepreneurial competences of master's students requires reinforcement in line with the challenges of the age.
- T<sub>3</sub>: Based on my analysis, it has been proven that even within a "relatively homogeneous" group of students, there may be differences between students that justify the need for differentiated (i.e. small group) teaching within the group.
- T<sub>4</sub>: I have succeeded in mapping out an analogue model that can be developed and applied (with the involvement of coaches and coachees) to demonstrate and utilise the positive effects of coaching in the training of entrepreneurs.
- T<sub>5</sub>: I successfully synchronised the coaching competence areas and entrepreneurial competence areas and created the so-called CSM: "Competence Synchronisation Model", which, through testing (coaches, entrepreneurs), proved the possibility of developing entrepreneurial skills through coaching competences.
- T<sub>6</sub>: I developed a multi-factor criteria system for the development of the Master's degree programme in Entrepreneurship, which, taking into account the opinions of all stakeholders, can form the basis for future planning activities related to the programme by decision-makers.

## 5. THEORETICAL/PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS

My aim in compiling this chapter was to summarise the results of my PhD research in terms of their outstanding theoretical and practical contributions. My goal was also to develop noteworthy recommendations from a practical perspective based on my primary (qualitative and quantitative) research results, which can be utilised by the leaders of the Master's programme in Business Development (university faculty leaders, subject coordinators) and programme implementers (coordinators) participants (students) in their professional development and operational activities.

In my opinion, the correlations based on primary research can be directly incorporated into higher education practice and applied in business development training, thanks to the studies conducted in the domestic environment.

The research conducted in my doctoral thesis is one of the few works that aims to contribute to a deeper exploration of the impact of the coaching approach on the development of entrepreneurial competencies, which is one of the most important challenges in entrepreneurial training today. My research contributes to the existing literature and practical knowledge by applying a complex approach that provides answers to the logical relationship between coaching competencies and entrepreneurial competencies, the role that coaching can play in the development of entrepreneurial competencies, thereby filling a significant research gap.

My research therefore complements and expands on the results achieved in this field to date. In the following, I summarize the findings of the dissertation that can be utilized from both theoretical and practical perspectives:

As part of the thesis, the complex theoretical framework identified as a result of reviewing the literature was modelled using exact mathematical and statistical methods. The most important practical contribution of the research is that, with the involvement of those involved in entrepreneurship education (educators, students, entrepreneurs, etc.), it has identified the current factors and relationships that fundamentally influence the effectiveness of entrepreneurial competence development.

My **qualitative research** revealed that programme leaders agree that global and local social, economic and technological trends have a significant impact on entrepreneurship

education and require the development of new skills and abilities. They emphasise that different stakeholders have very diverse expectations of the Master's programme in Entrepreneurship. According to them, the key entrepreneurial competencies that the programme aims to develop include strategic thinking, innovation management, teamwork and leadership skills, problem-oriented thinking and digital competencies. They already consider the coaching approach to be important, but they attach even greater significance to it in education in the future.

According to the programme leaders, the areas of entrepreneurship education most in need of development are small group teaching, increased use of technology and hybrid teaching models.

In summary, it can be said that programme leaders face partly similar and partly different problems in their daily organisational and managerial work. However, thanks to their persistent work and professional dedication, they have all the necessary skills to respond to the professional and human challenges that will undoubtedly arise in the coming years, thus laying the foundations for the long-term future of master's programmes in business development in Hungary.

I summarise the most important findings of my **quantitative research** below.

Domestic master's programmes in business development have undergone significant development throughout their history. Although this is still the most important factor, today's students are no longer satisfied with the simple transfer of knowledge; they require a much more complex teaching presence.

Today, the most significant labour market expectations for master's programmes in business development are the transfer of flexibility and creative problem-solving skills, a focus on comprehensive soft skills such as communication and teamwork, and training aimed at developing specific technical knowledge. Students need education that is primarily practice-oriented and based on real-world problems, with personalised counselling and mentoring opportunities, meaning that they are very open to the use of mentors and coaches in teaching.

According to the programme leaders interviewed in my research, the most important entrepreneurial competencies to be developed within the framework of the Master's

programme in Entrepreneurship are clearly strategic thinking, innovation management, teamwork and leadership skills, financial knowledge, problem-oriented thinking, independence and responsibility, environmental analysis, digital competencies, cultural sensitivity and risk management.

As for the most important teaching roles used during the training courses, based on the responses of the educators, the most characteristic roles, in order of average score, **are knowledge transferor, evaluator and feedback provider, and mentor**. The students ranked these roles in a slightly different order: in their case, **the evaluator-feedback provider** role was among the top three, **alongside the expert and knowledge transferor roles**.

My research showed that the ranking of teaching roles indicates that both the educator and student groups clearly consider the **knowledge transferor** role to be the most characteristic. This result confirms that their primary, fundamental task is to impart knowledge, which is the basis of entrepreneurship education.

Based on the results obtained from the teachers' responses, the teaching roles that best develop entrepreneurial competencies are **knowledge transferor** and **expert**, while students considered the **evaluator-feedback provider** role to be the most prominent in terms of competency development, alongside the **expert role**.

Based on the responses to the question examining ICF coach competencies, it became clear that, according to both their own statements and student feedback, teachers currently use the **Behaves ethically** competency most in their work, and this competency is also of paramount importance to educators. Students, on the other hand, attribute the most significant role to the educators' **conscious presence** and their **promotion/facilitation of student development**.

In my opinion, the information from my quantitative research can be generalised to Hungary, as it reflects the opinions of nearly 90 per cent of highly qualified lecturers in the master's programme in business development and nearly 50 per cent of talented "entrepreneurial candidates" who already have a BSc degree.

The results of my research confirm that the fundamental role of educators continues to be the transfer of knowledge, but students are increasingly demanding practice-oriented

approaches that focus on problem solving and personal development. The integration of the ICF (International Coach Federation) coach competencies (8 competencies) into teaching, particularly in the areas of ethical behaviour, conscious presence and facilitation of development, can contribute significantly to improving the quality of training.

The research clearly showed that, from the students' perspective, the professional credibility of the teachers and the assessment and feedback process are of paramount importance. This highlights the importance of personalised mentoring and an interactive learning environment, as well as the need to incorporate entrepreneurial competencies such as strategic thinking, teamwork and risk management more prominently into teaching.

With regard to preparing educators for the future tasks of the profession, it can be concluded that educators need support in this process. From the responses regarding educator training – based on various aspects (frequency, form, trainer, topics, etc.) – it is clear that most universities need comprehensive, conscious and targeted development activities that would effectively influence students' entrepreneurial competences.

My research on students indicates that the coaching approach can play a role in developing entrepreneurial competence. The relationship between the 15 entrepreneurial competencies of EntreComp (Entrepreneurship Competence Framework) and the 8 coaching competencies of ICF is based on the fact that both are tools for development that build on individual strengths, awareness and effective collaboration. It can be concluded that this relationship enables the development of business development programmes (e.g. coaching-based business development, etc.) in which the coaching approach and entrepreneurial competence development reinforce each other.

With regard to small group teaching, I have identified the following necessity in relation to the subject: I have pointed out that even in relatively homogeneous groups of students, there are significant differences in terms of learning/teaching, which require different solutions, and this is only possible in small groups.

From the analysis of coach-coachee interactions, I concluded that the CES (Coaching Effectiveness Survey) was higher than average in all 25 areas of competence, which can be considered very favourable in terms of its applicability in education, and the resulting order of importance is even more noteworthy from the perspective of developing

entrepreneurial competencies. This is because the coached individuals felt a positive change in that they gained a deeper self-awareness, became more aware of their own strengths and challenges, and became more conscious of their internal processes and feelings. In addition, they gained a clearer picture of their professional development and career direction, indicating that coaching contributed significantly to increasing their personal and career awareness.

In my opinion, the successful practical application of the CSM (Competence Synchronisation Model), which synchronises CES 25 and EntreComp 15 (coaches, entrepreneurs), has proven that incorporating the coaching approach (CES) into entrepreneurial competence development plays a supportive role.

In the course of my research, I identified that the development of the programme requires the adaptation of a multi-factor criteria framework, including the development of learning and teaching methods; the integration of a coaching-oriented approach; mentoring, feedback, and relationship management; practical training and real-world experience; the development of professional and intercultural competences; teaching roles and institutional culture; as well as community building and inspiration.

I have found that the various target groups included in my study (educators, students, entrepreneurs, coaches) propose several similar or identical solutions regarding the current training situation and the necessary changes (in order to provide education that is more effectively aligned with the future needs and expectations of the entrepreneurial sphere), which reflects the commitment of all stakeholders to the development of the profession.

To conclude my work, I will list the limitations of the research and present my recommendations for future research directions.

Of the limitations that arose during the research, I would like to highlight a few, without claiming to be exhaustive. Among the methodological limitations, I would like to point out that, due to the fact that data collection was partly conducted online, I was not able to obtain feedback from all potential respondents. Furthermore, no matter how much we strive for generalisation, the interpretation of the results may be subjective, meaning that different experts may draw slightly different conclusions from the numerical data.

I summarise potential future research directions related to the topic separately based on the responses of teachers and students. Overall, it can be said that the importance of different teaching roles in education could also be examined in other disciplines, as different disciplines may be dominated by professionals with different professional backgrounds. It would be useful to extend the research described in this article to an international level (the entire Central and Eastern European region, etc.).

With regard to educators, it should be emphasised that, as the coaching approach can help to increase students' independence and sense of responsibility, according to the respondents, it may be worth examining what positive changes can be achieved by applying this methodology. As coaches, educators strive to contribute to the recognition and continuous development of students' competences by providing valuable feedback, so we could study the effects of feedback on individuals. Coaching can help students develop critical thinking skills and support them in setting goals, so we could even quantify the extent to which they succeed in achieving their goals. Professionally applied coaching also develops empathy, emotional intelligence and communication skills, and it is worth examining how these change. The introduction of a coaching approach can have a positive effect on the development of adaptability and flexibility.

Based on student evaluations, we could launch research into what changes different practices using the coaching approach can bring about in the student population. The coaching approach can develop students' teamwork skills, soft skills (communication skills, adaptability and empathy) and problem-solving skills. In the future, we could examine the extent to which these skills have developed as a result of applying this approach. It would also be worthwhile to conduct research on what kind of tasks and project work that encourage creative and innovative thinking have been induced by the application of the coaching approach in different courses.

Overall, the above are only the most important future research directions identified based on the feedback from the current research, which can be expanded within the framework of further brainstorming.

## 6. PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS

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### List of publications related to the dissertation

#### Articles, studies (5)

1. **Vizardák, K.**, Popovics, P. A.: Analysis of the current situation and development potential of university-level entrepreneurship education in the light of expert opinions.  
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6. **Vizdák, K.:** Coaching és MI - Az Út a Kiválósághoz: bevezető gondolatok - Hogyan született meg a cikk?  
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