



CHALMERS
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Exploring the Effects of Leadership and its Alternative Modes of Organising for Organisational Performance

Master's thesis in the master's programme Design and Construction Project Management

PETTER HAGLUND

KIN-SHAN PANG

Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
Division of Construction Management
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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Institutionen för arkitektur och samhällsbyggnadsteknik

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Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

Division of Construction Management

Chalmers University of Technology

SE-412 96 Göteborg

Sweden

Telephone: + 46 (0)31-772 1000

Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

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ABSTRACT

Leadership capabilities are commonly equated with the performance of an organisation and there is a general belief that a leader's individual capabilities can substantially affect the performance. Previous research contains limited support for this recurring assumption and the notion of leadership traits are criticised by numerous of leadership researchers. In contrast, they argue that leadership is a socially constructed process of influence towards common goals by a leader which a follower must voluntarily submit to the process of influence. Through a reflexive approach where leadership is not the only mode of organising, this study aims to explore leadership and its alternatives, and how they are linked to organisational performance.

Subsequently, this study acknowledges the paradigmatic assumptions of constructivism, but was carried out as a case study to enable the use of methods of inquiry which originates from other paradigms. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with five group managers and one executive at the company were conducted to identify how leadership and its alternative modes of organising were linked to organisational performance. Data from internal documents and monthly reports at the company supplemented the qualitative data.

The findings indicated ambiguous ideas of leadership and management among the alternative modes of organising. The region had achieved its revenue goals which seemed to originate from management, although management was not highlighted by the interviewees. The interviewees' definition of leadership overlapped to the one of management, although they regarded it as leadership. Consequently, the link between leadership and performance remained unclear. Additionally, no leadership deficit among the group managers was identified that had affected the performance negatively.

Rather, the findings suggest that there is a discrepancy between the company culture and the sub-cultures which have emerged within the groups. The authors believe this is a consequence of inadequacies with the organisation's vertical communication. Additionally, the group managers' role in the organisation requires clarification as it is relative in terms of being a leader or follower in relation to the different levels of management. The authors argue that this has consequences for the outcomes of goal achievement, hence also the organisational performance.

Key words: Leadership, Organisational Performance, Reflexive Leadership, Culture

En utredning om hur ledarskap och de alternativa formerna av organisering påverkar prestationen i en organisation

Examensarbete inom masterprogrammet Organisering och ledning i bygg- och fastighetssektorn

PETTER HAGLUND

KIN-SHAN PANG

Institutionen för arkitektur och samhällsbyggnadsteknik

Avdelningen för byggandets processer och organisering

Chalmers tekniska högskola

SAMMANFATTNING

Ledarskapsförmågor antas ofta korrelera med prestationen av en organisation och det finns generellt en övertro på ledarens individuella förmåga att påverka prestationen. I tidigare forskning finns det bristfälligt stöd för detta antagande och att idén om ledarskapsförmågor är kritiserad bland flertalet forskare inom ledarskapsområdet. Istället hävdar de att ledarskap är en socialt konstruerad påverkansprocess gentemot gemensamma mål mellan en ledare och en följare, där följaren måste frivilligt underkasta sig ledaren i påverkansprocessen. Genom ett reflexivt tillvägagångssätt där ledarskap inte är den enda formen av organisering, avser denna studie att utforska ledarskap och dess alternativ, samt hur dessa är kopplade till en organisations prestation.

Denna studie utgår från antaganden av de konstruktivistiska paradigmen, men genomfördes som en fallstudie för att möjliggöra användandet av datainsamlingsmetoder med grunder i andra forskningsparadigm. Semistrukturerade och djupgående intervjuer genomfördes med fem gruppchefer samt med en företagsledare för att identifiera hur ledarskap och dess alternativ var kopplade till organisationens prestation. Underlag från interna dokument och månadsrapporter på företaget kompletterade det kvalitativa materialet.

Resultaten indikerade tvetydigheter kring ledarskap och främst chefskap bland de alternativa formerna av organisering. Regionen hade uppnått omsättningsmålen där chefskap verkade varande den främst bidragande orsaken trots att chefskap inte ansågs som avgörande för prestation av intervjurespondenterna. Deras definition av ledarskap överlappade den av chefskap, men trots det ansågs det som ledarskap. Därmed förblev länken mellan ledarskap och prestation otydlig. Dessutom identifierades ingen brist i ledarskapet hos gruppcheferna som hade påverkat regionens prestation negativt.

Resultatet antyder snarare att de finns avvikelser mellan företags kultur och subkulturerna som bildats inom grupperna. Författarna anser att detta är en konsekvens av brister i den vertikala kommunikationen inom organisationen. Gruppchefens roll bör förtydligas eftersom den är relativ i förhållande till andra nivåer inom företaget. Författarna anser att detta har konsekvenser för hur framgångsrik regionen är i sin målpfyllelse, därav också sin prestation.

Nyckelord: Ledarskap, organisations prestation, Reflexivt ledarskap, kultur

Contents

ABSTRACT	I
SAMMANFATTNING	II
CONTENTS	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
NOTATIONS	VI
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 METHOD	3
2.1 Case Description	3
2.2 Research Strategy	4
2.3 Paradigmatic Assumptions	4
2.4 Case Study Design	5
2.5 Research Progression	6
2.6 Literature Review	7
2.7 Research Methods	7
2.7.1 Interviews	7
2.7.2 Supplemental data	8
2.8 Compilation of Results	8
2.9 Application of Theoretical Lens	9
2.10 Ethical Considerations	9
2.11 Quality Criteria	10
2.12 Delimitations	11
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
3.1 The Leadership – Performance Black Box	12
3.2 Leadership as a Social Process	13
3.3 Leadership and its Alternatives	14
3.4 Organisational Culture	16
3.5 Approaches to Achieve and Sustain High Organisational Performance	17
3.6 Systematic Organising of Leadership	20
4 RESULTS	24
4.1 An Executive’s Perspective of Leadership and Performance	24
4.2 Formal Leadership Framework and Responsibilities	25
CHALMERS <i>Architecture and Civil Engineering</i> , Master’s Thesis ACEX30-19-50	III

4.3	The Group Managers' Perspectives	26
4.3.1	Leadership and Performance	26
4.3.2	Leadership Alternatives and Performance	29
4.4	Financial Performance and Case Analysis	31
5	DISCUSSION	32
5.1	The Significance of Leadership for Performance	32
5.2	The Significance of Leadership Alternatives for Performance	35
5.3	Systematisation of Leadership and Performance	36
6	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	40
7	REFERENCES	42

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Petter Haglund and Kin-Shan Pang

Notations

ELR	Extra-Leadership Reflexivity
HCHP	High Commitment, High Performance
HIP	High Influential Person
ILR	Intra-Leadership Reflexivity
LIP	Low Influential Person
MIP	Medium Influential People
MLC	Management and Leadership Capabilities
MLD	Management and Leadership Development
NIP	No Influencing People
SAL	System Approach to Leadership

Figures

Figure 2.1	Analytical Generalisation	9
Figure 3.1	Overlap Between Each Mode of Organising	15
Figure 3.2	The High Commitment, High Performance System	19
Figure 3.3	Three Levels of an Organisation	22

Tables

Table 2.1	Research Paradigms	5
Table 3.1	Modes of Organising	15
Table 3.2	5P Framework	16

1 Introduction

There is a tendency among researchers and practitioners to assume leadership as something beyond the ordinary of people's daily practises. However, leadership appears to be fairly mundane tasks performed by managers and instead it is recognised as leadership due to their formal position as managers (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2003). This entails struggles for those attempting to determine a framework of leadership as leadership becomes everything a manager do in their daily work. Therefore, because of the need for a definition of leadership still remains, it has to be narrow enough to not include everything (Alvesson, Blom, & Svenningsson, 2017). A narrow definition of leadership naturally entails inadequacies as leadership is largely contingent upon the situation and context (Conger, 2004).

Therefore, a definition of leadership must be kept flexible enough to enable its manifestation despite the fact of its situational and contextual dependence (Alvesson et al., 2017). Hence, Alvesson et al. (2017) define leadership as a social process of influence towards common goals by a leader which requires voluntary submission by a follower. This definition provides a distinction of leadership from other daily activities pursued by managers, such as management and exercising power, which are two alternative modes of organising work in addition to leadership.

How the performance of an organisation can be derived to the development and capabilities of its leaders contains limited support in previous research (Bolden, Hawkins, & Gosling, 2011). Individual leadership development intending to enhance leadership capabilities does not seem to correlate with the organisational performance. Yet, at the organisational level, there seems to be a slight correlation between the development of leadership capabilities and how such capabilities contribute to organisational performance (Burgoyne, Hirsh, & William, 2004). On the contrary, Beer (2009) argues that leadership is ascribed too much responsibilities for organisational performance, but similarly to the view of Alvesson et al. (2017) he argues that leadership is still crucial for the long-term success of an organisation.

The organisational performance is commonly equated with the development and competencies of managers and their leadership skills (Burgoyne et al., 2004). The trait-based approach to leadership research assumes that certain leadership competencies are ideal to generate a high performing organisation has led to the adoption of over-simplified ideas of what leadership is and how it contributes to organisational performance among leadership practitioners and researchers (Alvesson et al., 2017). The complexity inherent within the context is often neglected in these individualistic notions of leadership (Bolden & Gosling, 2006). In contrast, Bolden and Gosling (2006) suggest an approach to leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon where leadership is viewed more inclusively and collectively.

Alvesson et al. (2017) suggest that leadership concepts are necessary but that one must avoid being over-committed to these. In an organisational context, leadership is instead viewed as one mode of organising since there are alternative modes that do the organising rather than leadership by itself. Consequently, leadership cannot be measured and therefore not equated with organisational outcomes. However, they argue that leadership is still crucial for organisation and it may contribute to the success of an organisation, although in combination with the alternative modes which are as significant as leadership for organisational performance (ibid.).

The objective of the case study is to comprehend patterns of leadership practices and other alternative modes of organising among group managers in the region to determine if and how leadership may be the central mode for organisational performance. The study aims to answer the following research question:

- *How does leadership and its alternative modes of organising contribute to organisational performance?*

A case study will be conducted with the intention to determine how group managers' leadership practices and its alternative modes of organising affects the groups' performance, and consequently the regional performance. The study aims to investigate on how leadership contributes to organisational performance and to explore how the region can generate and sustain a high level of performance to meet the company's financial requirements by aligning the leadership practices and other alternative modes of organising to current and future needs of the organisation.

2 Method

In this chapter, the case is introduced, the research strategy is described along with clarifications of which paradigmatic assumptions and the corresponding methods of inquiry which the authors worked with. Ethical considerations are described, along with a description of validity and reliability of the study considering the type of data that was collected, which methodology that was used, and consequently which method that was used. This chapter aims to provide readers with a logic of why a certain type of literature was chosen, why the case study method was used, and how data collection was carried out.

2.1 Case Description

The case study was an in-depth study of a technical consultancy company. Performance was determined primarily by three metrics: revenue, profit, and billing ratio. The regional management utilised these metrics to determine the financial performance of the civil engineering business area. However, other performance metrics such as employee turnover and revenue per employee contributed to the understanding of other aspects of regional performance.

The study was delimited to the civil engineering business area. The civil engineering business area in the company is divided into six different regions and consequently, the regions are subdivided into independent business units in different cities. Each group is operated by a group manager which holds accountable for the group's performance while simultaneously meeting the business area and the company's revenue and profit margin requirements.

The organisation is operating in a growing region with the potential of gaining more market shares. The region expects to grow in the coming years as there are plans for major development in the infrastructure sector in the region.

For several years the groups in the region had experienced difficulties in achieving its required yearly profit margin. The regional management had identified issues regarding efficiency and collaboration both within the groups in the eastern business area and across other business areas. Regional management wanted to utilise potential synergies from combining the expertise of groups to tender for larger projects to increase revenue, while retaining internal efficiency to ensure an adequate profit margin.

Regional management concluded that in order to obtain and sustain a high level of performance, it was essential to ensure functional groups, efficient collaboration between groups within the region and with other units within the company. Additionally, effective leadership development programmes aiming to contribute to adequate leadership capabilities among employees in managerial positions. The goal was to enable the region to collaborate more effectively on the group level and implement a corporate leadership culture as regional management believed this had the potential to bring functional synergies that would have a positive effect on regional performance.

Leadership was viewed by regional management as the primary change lever for obtaining and sustaining a high level of performance. Group managers had previously been given a considerable amount of discretion in how they conduct business and lead their team. To establish a universal business culture, the company has mandatory leadership development training for all managers which aims to ensure high levels of leadership capabilities throughout the company.

2.2 Research Strategy

The case study was conducted in the spring semester 2019 between January 21st to June 5th, focusing on the group managers in the east region of a large technical consultancy company. The study was explorative and aimed to initiate an investigation on how leadership and its alternative modes contribute to organisational performance and to gain insight in how the region had developed from underperforming to higher performance organisation within the evaluated time period. The study of the region underwent continuously during the time period to understand what had caused the deficient performance in the first place, what had changed, and how this had contributed to the region's increased performance.

The approach to the case study was to initially develop a basic understand for the topic which was to be integrated with the inquiry for a deeper understanding of already observed phenomena by the regional management of the technical consultancy company. Therefore, the study progressed with an abductive approach in combination and where the aim to be an explorative study remained.

2.3 Paradigmatic Assumptions

Bryman and Stephens (1996) argue that the study of leadership should always begin with a description of the contextual influences on leadership. They claim that if leadership and culture are socially constructed phenomena, they restrict what can be considered leadership and culture in that context, hence they cannot be understood if not the context is initially defined. This study was carried out as a case study to recognise the imperatives of contextual detail which is required in leadership research (Bryman & Stephens, 1996; Klenke, Martin, & Wallace, 2016). Leadership is complex and should not be reduced to over-simplified theories, as argued by Alvesson et al. (2017), and it is a holistic process where contextual factors play a crucial role (Klenke et al., 2016).

The description by Bryman and Stephens (1996) is part of the constructionistic paradigm in qualitative research which assumes reality to be relativistic and is based on living experiences from which we build our understanding of the world. The opposing paradigm is positivism which assumes reality to be objective and separated from our experiences of it. The former is, as stated, the foundation of which qualitative research rests on while the latter is the base for quantitative research. The positivistic paradigm has for long dominated the study of leadership, but its tendency to increase theoretical rigour and decrease relevance to practice has led to a paradigm-shift towards the more constructionistic approach (Klenke et al., 2016). Table 2.1 describes constructivism and positivism with their ontological and epistemological assumptions and typical research methods of each paradigm. In the table, the space in between constructivism and positivism is a continuum of paradigms comprising of interpretivism, symbolic interactionism, and pragmatism.

When quantitative research methods are used in leadership research, the study typically includes randomised sampling of large quantities of data where it is primarily the cause-and-effect relationship between phenomena that is being studied. Context is not of great importance in quantitative research and it is believed that the knowledge acquired may be generalised and detached from both time and the context (Klenke et al., 2016). The study of leadership is more appropriate to carried out through qualitative research due to its appreciation of various paradigmatic and epistemological assumptions in contrast

to quantitative research where such assumptions and their effects ought to be minimised (ibid.).

Table 2.1 Research Paradigms (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 20).

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Research methods
Constructivism	Relativistic—reality is socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature	Knowledge consists of mental constructions about which there is relative consensus	Case studies, interviews
Interpretivism	Researcher and reality are inseparable	Knowledge is based on abstract descriptions of meanings and constituted through a person's lived experience	Case studies, interviews, phenomenology, ethnography, ethnomethodology
Symbolic interactionism	Researcher and reality are intertwined	Knowledge is created through social interactions and the meanings that arise from them	Grounded theory
Pragmatism	Reality is equivocal but grounded in terms of language, history, culture	Knowledge is derived from experience; researcher as reconstructor of the subjectively intended and "objective" meaning of the actions of others	Interviews, cases, surveys
Positivism	Reality is objective and apprehendable	Knowledge acquisition is value-neutral and stripped of moral content	Surveys, experiments, quasi-experiments

The authors of this study did not intend to advocate one paradigm over the other, however the paradigmatic assumptions were needed to be clarified to ensure credibility of the study (Klenke et al., 2016). This is in coherence with being reflexive, self-aware, and self-reflective as a leadership researcher (Alvesson et al., 2017). The research methods and literature used in this case study indicate that the paradigmatic assumptions are towards constructivism (Klenke et al., 2016). Consequently, the authors believed that the phenomena observed in the study are to a certain degree socially constructed and embedded within the context which is reflected by the choice of literature in the theoretical framework and the data inquiry method in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Other data collection methods used in the study were examination of internal documents at the company and analysis of performance metrics of primarily financial information, allowing triangulation of data which is preferred when conducting a case study (Klenke et al., 2016). The data gathering process is described in detail later in this chapter.

In relation to the aim of the study, which was to study how leadership is linked to organisational performance, both qualitative and quantitative data were required although the emphasis was on qualitative data. Leadership research is favourably carried out through qualitative research, but organisational performance cannot be measured solely by qualitative data. Therefore, as a case study permits several methods of data gathering with foundations in various research paradigms (Klenke et al., 2016), the study proceeded as a case study.

2.4 Case Study Design

Certain characteristics are typical for case studies: small sample size, contextual detail, natural setting, temporal and spatial boundaries, and a working hypothesis where the research process is described (Klenke et al., 2016). The sample size of this study was not predefined nor did the authors plan to use statistical sampling methods. Furthermore, the study was delimited to a region which is part of a larger company and the prerequisites qualify within the spatial boundaries. The temporal boundaries are equal to the start and finish of the case study, which took place between January 21st and June 5th during 2019. However, early review of literature and other initiations for the case study were done during the fall of 2018 and in January prior to the official start of the study.

The main interest in the study was the link between leadership and its alternative modes of organising, and how these contribute to organisational performance. The purpose of the theory used to analyse, compare, and the contrast was to explain the empirical material and to identify gaps in theory needed to be filled, as these are the main purpose for doing a case study (Klenke et al., 2016). Hence, the study was an intrinsic case study which is defined as “*interest in studying the specific case itself*” and its opposite, the instrumental case study aims to “*understand more than just what is observed*” where it is common that the aim is to develop new theory (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 62).

This study was not carried out inductively, which is encouraged when conducting qualitative research (Klenke et al., 2016). It would seem inappropriate for the authors to adopt such a strategy that requires a vast amount of knowledge and experience of leadership research and methodological skills to reach a conclusion without a rigorous theoretical foundation. Furthermore, to develop theory and/or reach an adequate conclusion through an inductive approach, more data would have to be gathered which most certainly would have required more time. Instead, critical theories on leadership was selected along with an abductive approach, where data gathering, and development of theories was carried out continuously.

The theory served three purposes, as advocated by Klenke et al. (2016): (1) provided the authors with a guide to design the case study and formulate data inquiries, (2) was developed in iterations and continuously with an increased amount of data gathered, and (3) was used in the analysis, discussion, and conclusion. The theoretical lens applied in the analysis of this study is primarily obtained from scholars with critical views to the traditional and trait-based theories of leadership competencies such as Alvesson et al. (2017) and Bolden et al. (2011).

The authors believe the case study design, in combination with the clarification of paradigmatic assumptions, contributed to increasing the level of transparency of the study. This is crucial in qualitative research where much of the outcome depend on the personal experiences and opinions of the authors (Klenke et al., 2016). To answer the research question “*How does leadership and its alternative modes of organising contribute to organisational performance?*”, the paradigmatic assumptions were clarified to avoid oversimplified interpretations of the observed phenomena that are frequently come across in leadership research (Alvesson et al., 2017).

2.5 Research Progression

In November 2018 the authors initiated a meeting with the company’s supervisor to further discuss and determine the research area. When the research area was defined, the authors began with the literature review in December 2018 to gain more insight into the topic and to establish a plan for the study. A proposal was formulated and attempted to fulfil the academic requirements while aligning with the company’s interest. The official start of the project began in January 2019 where a start-up meeting with the company’s supervisor was held and access to the facility and the company’s system was given to the authors.

The first three months from the official start of the project, the authors concentrated on literature review, chose research methods, and became acquainted with the company’s culture, internal documents, and overall operations in the company. Thereafter, an interview with the company’s executive was conducted in late February 2019 to get an overview of the organisation and a better insight of leadership in the company. Further, it was complemented with examinations of leadership guidelines and development

material. The interview with the company's executive contributed to clarification of the organisation's aim and goals. These appeared to be significant for the authors in order to proceed the case study forward regarding theories and preparations for the interviews with the group managers. The group managers were strategically selected by the deputy regional manager which was based on their experience and technical disciplines. The interviews with the group managers were conducted in the beginning of April 2019. Furthermore, access to monthly reports regarding key figures throughout 2018 until March 2019 was available for the authors to examine the financial performance in the groups.

The qualitative data gathered from internal documents and interviews were compiled, examined, and narratively analysed to discover outstanding features that might have influenced the organisational performance and if there were other potential modes of organising that had contributed to organisational performance. The findings are summarised and analysed in section 4 which is followed by discussion and conclusion.

2.6 Literature Review

A literature review was performed through thorough reading of academic articles and leadership literature. The databases used in the literature search were Google Scholar and Chalmers Library. Key words and phrases used in the search were *leadership*, *leadership and performance*, *organisational culture*, *organisational dynamics*, *discursive leadership*, *leadership research*, *employeeeship*, *systems approach to leadership*. Literature and articles from the courses at Chalmers *Leadership and Communication*, *Service Management for Construction and Facilities*, and *Strategy Creation and Change* were also used along with literature recommended by the supervisor at Chalmers. A literature list was developed during the progression of the study. The theoretical framework constituted of the most relevant literature selected from the list, and additional literature that was found to be appropriate during the case study.

The leadership literature reviewed in this study is characterised by acknowledging leadership as a socially constructed phenomena in line with the paradigmatic assumption.

2.7 Research Methods

This section describes the research methods used in the data inquiry that are based on the paradigmatic assumptions of the thesis and subsequently the methodology.

2.7.1 Interviews

The main data gathering process constituted of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five group managers and one company executive. Semi-structured interviews as a research method rely on the methodological assumption that the interviewer and the interviewee co-construct a narrative of the social world. Therefore, the purpose of conducting interviews is not to explore and transfer knowledge from the interviewee to the interviewer. Rather, it is a process of constructing reality in the context of a conversation and ascribing it with meaning, which is fundamental in the social constructivist research paradigm (Klenke et al., 2016). Furthermore, semi-structured interviewing is not solely a method of data-inquiry as it requires some analysis during the interview process. In-depth interviewing allows the researcher to explore the interviewees' perspective through a more interactive form of inquiry. The interviewee asks main questions related to the research topic, followed by probing questions to

induce more depth in the response than the main questions related to the research topic (ibid.).

The interviewee was sent a pre-defined set of questions before the interview which also included a description of the study, purpose of the interview, and information about other interviews that were planned. The interviews were approximately one hour each where the interviewees were guaranteed anonymity, were recorded in consent by the interviewee and was complemented with notes. The interview with the executive comprised of nine and the group managers comprised of fifteen main questions, which was complemented with probing questions seeking to further explain certain features in the interviewee's responses. The interviews were not transcribed or coded using any specific method, but the analysis of raw data was performed through listening, reflection, discussion, and reasoning by the authors. A narration was produced based on the interviews with the group managers and with the executive drawing on key findings from the sessions. The goal was to find the dominant narrative, where similar patterns or contrasting elements would appear in the interviews that might had a significant impact on the organisational performance which were to be compared with the theory.

2.7.2 Supplemental data

The authors were provided access to confidential documents and reports to gain deeper insight of the organisation and how the region has been operating. The given material was concerning the regional business plan, monthly reports, and leadership training programmes which are exclusively offered to group managers at the company. The leadership material provided to group manager covers the company's definition of leadership, organisational goals, group manager practices, supporting practical tools and guidelines on how to lead its employees by example.

Monthly reports within the specified period between January 2018 – March 2019 were provided to the authors to investigate the results for each month and to comprehend the development in the region. The key figures utilised in this study were primarily revenue, profit, and billing ration which is the ratio between billable hours in relation to the total hours of attendance for employees. The monthly reports enabled the authors to establish a good understanding of the groups' and the region's performance, both historically and the current situation to be able to gain additional insights from the interviews with the group managers.

2.8 Compilation of Results

The results comprised of an aggregation of data retrieved from the interviews, internal documents, and monthly reports. The internal documents and monthly reports supplemented the qualitative data from the interviews which were compiled in the results section. The internal documents described the company's formal definition of leadership and a group manager's area of responsibility.

The results and analysis were interwoven in this section, which is common in case studies (Klenke et al., 2016). The data from the interviews was reduced to the central concepts being examined in this study, i.e. leadership, modes of organising, and their link to performance. Subsequently, the central concepts being studied and represented in the results were derived from the theoretical positioning of the thesis. The reduction and reorganisation data were made to enable a concise narrative inquiry, suitable for published material (SAGE, 2014). The data analysis was carried out as a narrative-type narrative inquiry meaning that the interviews were analysed and reflected upon, but

without categorising the data, to create a story explaining the case being examined from the authors' point of view.

Interviews were recorded, listened to, and reflected upon by both authors. Subsequently, the findings were summarised in an excel sheet to get a holistic view of the findings and to easier observe dominant narratives and/or contrasting answers. The data retrieved from the interviews were interpreted in congruence with performance metrics to complement data from the interviews. However, compiling findings was not a straight-forward type of work but was executed as an iterative process where new insights and interpretations of the data were discovered during the analysis. Again, data was not coded or categorised in any specific way but analysed during the process of data compilation, which is emerging as a data analysis method in qualitative research (SAGE, 2014).

2.9 Application of Theoretical Lens

The theoretical lens defined in chapter 3 was applied through “analytical generalisation”, which is carried out by comparing case study findings with theory. This should always be performed in case studies and positivistic elements such as statistical generalisation should be avoided (Klenke et al., 2016). The study was based on existing literature and with the application of analytic generalisation, the authors were required to make logical arguments to explain how the results were either typical (supported) or atypical (contrasted) to the literature. To generalise findings, the authors were required to make logical arguments for how they could be replicated in another setting, as argued by Klenke et al. (2016). Figure 2.1 illustrates the logic of using analytical generalisation in qualitative research.

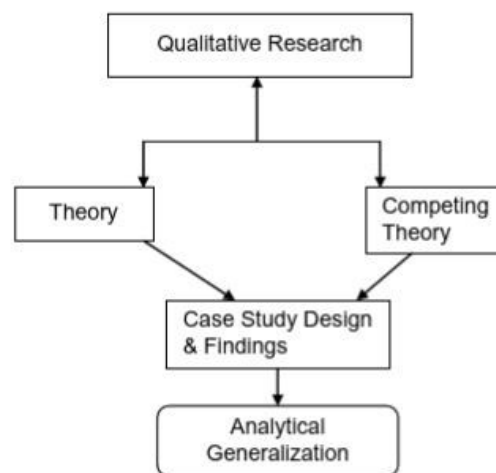


Figure 2.1 Analytical Generalisation (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 69).

2.10 Ethical Considerations

A significant part of the case study was to involve group managers to participate in an interview to get a deeper insight of their leadership practices and how it contributes to the organisational performance. Therefore, the authors are responsible for their anonymity when conducting the qualitative interviews, informing and explaining to the interviewees regarding the purpose of the thesis and how the data would be utilised. The interviewees were guaranteed full anonymity and all the data gathered from the interviews were treated with secrecy. The name of the company was not revealed in the

published version of the thesis or in the oral presentation to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sensitive information. All empirical material was therefore deleted after the completion of the thesis due to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

2.11 Quality Criteria

Validity and reliability are the central quality criteria in a quantitative research which these criteria do not apply as quality criteria in a qualitative research (Klenke et al., 2016). Instead, Klenke et al. (2016) advocates other quality criteria which are more appropriate in a qualitative research. Following, quality criteria in qualitative research are explained as (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 39):

- *Credibility*: The extent to which how believable the results are from the standpoint of the participant.
- *Transferability*: The extent to which results can be transferred to another context or setting.
- *Dependability*: The extent to which the same results can be obtained by an independent investigator.
- *Confirmability*: The extent to which results can be confirmed by another (through auditing raw data, analysis notes, reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, personal notes, and preliminary development information).

Hence, all the quality criteria stated above embraces the authenticity in a qualitative research (Klenke et al., 2016). It is essential to take credibility into consideration since the trustworthiness can be questioned in a qualitative research compared to a quantitative research where validity and reliability are applied. Credibility shall therefore consider the following issues (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 40):

- The theoretical positioning of the researchers which includes the ontological, epistemological assumptions as well as the values (axiology), motives, and personal history he or she brings to the study.
- The congruence between method and methodology.
- Strategies employed to establish rigour and quality.
- The analytic lens through which the data are examined.

To ensure credibility of this study, the authors clarified the paradigmatic assumptions which served as a foundation for the choice of method for data inquiry. The authors acknowledged the complexity and the context where leadership is done, and therefore the ontological and epistemological assumptions of social constructivism was adopted. This was believed to endorse the credibility of the study as the theoretical positioning of the authors is made transparent. The clarification of the paradigmatic assumptions and the use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews as the primary data gathering method was argued to enhance the congruence between methodology and method. The thesis has been subject to one peer-review and one opposition by two fellow students aiming to improve the quality of the thesis. The theoretical lens which was used to analyse the data was developed by the authors through extensive reading of leadership literature which was discussed and interwoven into a theoretical framework intended for this specific study.

The authors did not aim to transfer the findings to another setting and there is no guarantee that similar results would be obtained in for instance another technical

consultancy company within the same sector. On the other hand, by using the same method of inquiry, there is a possibility that an independent investigator would obtain similar results as in this study. However, the raw data, analysis, notes, and recordings made during the research process was deleted following the completion of the project due to GDPR and therefore they can never be audited.

2.12 Delimitations

The case study was executed in the eastern region in Sweden and delimited to the civil engineering business area in a large technical consultancy company. The participants in the interviews were strategically selected by the deputy regional manager based on their experience and technical discipline. The intention was to capture the differences between the group managers through in-depth interviews. Consequently, it is of importance to highlight that there are yet several group managers that did not get involved in this study since the deputy region manager considered that they are not relevant for this case study. Furthermore, the thesis emphasises on the connection between leadership and organisational performance which means that a deeper inquiry of organisational culture was not considered as it deviates from the primary scope of the study. A deeper study of the organisational culture would have required for example an ethnographic study during a longer period to observe the dynamics of a workplace in action.

3 Theoretical Framework

In this section the theoretical framework is described which is later applied to discuss the results. Firstly, existing literature of how leadership and performance are related is introduced, which is followed by definitions of leadership alternatives. Organisational culture and its relationship with leadership is described, and thereafter the focus shifts to what drives and sustains performance (where leadership is included). Lastly, leadership, its complexity, and relation to performance is described by a systematisation of leadership.

3.1 The Leadership – Performance Black Box

Leadership is frequently romanticised by practitioners, leadership training consultants, and even within academia. The commonly praised ideals of management and leadership are difficult to translate into practice and often remain as abstractions of what managers are supposed to be like (Alvesson et al., 2017). Nonetheless, leadership is considered as a key factor for generating organisational performance, but complications arise when attempting to unambiguously equate leadership to organisational outcomes (ibid.).

Bolden et al. (2011) describe the relationships between leadership development, capabilities, and performance as a “black box”. There is little evidence that the deficit in management/leadership skills constitutes potential for improving organisational performance, whether there is a link between leadership development and performance, and whether leadership development enhances organisational performance. Additionally, they argue that contextual factors influence the relationship between the three variables in the black box (ibid.). Struggles to define a leadership competency framework arise as organisations define performance and set goals in different ways, and that the context is never the same limiting the possibilities of applying a set of leadership capabilities to generate the intended performance (Burgoyne et al., 2004).

Burgoyne et al. (2004) suggest a two-link value chain bridging the three notions of Management and Leadership Development (MLD), Management and Leadership Capabilities (MLC), and performance. They argue that this representation acknowledges complexities due to the following: performance may be defined in different ways, MLC may constitute of different elements, there may be different processes of how MLC contributes to performance, MLD processes that develop MLC may look different between various organisations, and the context will always be different.

Bolden and Gosling (2006) highlight that complexity and context are often disregarded in more individualistic notions of leadership. Furthermore, they argue that because of the attributes and traits are intuitive and easy to grasp and that context complicates the notion of leadership, it is more appealing to view leadership as individual traits possessed by the leader and without relation to the context. Bryman and Stephens (1996) and Alvesson et al. (2017) emphasise the importance of context in leadership studies and practices. The context entails restrictions for leadership processes which may be problematic when scholars and practitioners attempt to search for, find, and do leadership regardless of the situation. In such cases, leadership could do more harm than good for organisational outcomes or for the understanding of when leadership is the appropriate mode of organising (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Regarding the complexity of context in terms of leadership, Conger and Ready (2004) states that the context is never the same, not even between functions of a single

organisation. Hence, universal models of leadership competencies may not be appropriate if applied across an organisation as they are heavily dependent on the situation; for instance, moving from an operational- to an executive manager position constitutes of a new level of situational complexity which may require new capabilities (ibid.).

3.2 Leadership as a Social Process

To overcome the issues inherent in a competency approach of leadership, Bolden and Gosling (2006) suggest a more discursive perspective of leadership. They emphasise a more inclusive and relational perspective on leadership where the essence of leadership is detached from the individual leader and instead viewed inclusively and collectively in the social context where the leader practices leadership. Further, they argue that the individualistic perspective on leadership limits leadership development to previous needs of the organisation as it intends to utilise previous knowledge of leadership. A more discursive, reflective, and experience-based approach could be aligned more closely to the current and future needs of the organisation, as similarly proposed by Conger and Ready (2004).

Likewise, Fairhurst (2008) compares discursive leadership with leadership psychology. However, here one approach is not favoured over the other but is seen as two different lenses which can be used for studying leadership. The object of study in discursive leadership is the discourse where communication between leadership actors is primarily considered. Instead of assigning leaders with certain traits, the leader-follower relationship is approached as a socially constructed phenomena without predefined notions of leadership. Thus, leadership is seen as a distributed process which includes several actors. In contrast, leadership psychology studies the traits of a leader alone which can be identified through objective analysis of an individual's thoughts and behaviour. However, context may be considered from the perspective of leadership psychology, such as by considering that individuals may practice situational leadership, but the essence of leadership is nevertheless located in the individual leader.

Although many descriptions of leadership are prescriptive, oversimplified, and characterised by theoretical rigour, a definition of leadership may still be useful if it is kept flexible and broad enough so that it can be used to describe leadership as it is experienced in organisations. This is the view argued for by Bolden et al. (2011) who describe leadership as a social process of influence to mobilise behaviours, activities, and/or relationships among people towards common goal. This description allows leadership to be for specific individuals but also spread among group members. It can therefore be found in various situations and shifts the focus from the leader alone to the collective of the leader and its followers. Alvesson et al. (2017) emphasise a narrow description of leadership. They mention that if the definition of leadership is kept broad enough to include everything a manager does, it explains everything and therefore nothing. They define leadership as the cultural orientation, meaning, emotional and moral support provided by the leader. Leadership is a systematic process of influencing followers, in an asymmetrical relationship between the leader and the followers, towards a shared meaning.

Although Alvesson et al. (2017) emphasise a more precise definition, their description of leadership resembles to the one described by Bolden et al. (2011). The two definitions overlap in a few ways, even though Bolden et al. (2011) claim their definition is broad and Alvesson et al. (2017) claim theirs' is more precise. Both authors talk about "common goal" and "meaning", leaders and followers, and an influential

process by the leader to the followers to reach a common goal or regarding meaning. Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) argue that leadership as it is practiced includes, apart from being an influential process focusing on meaning, mundane activities such as talking and listening which are often overlooked and not included in the definition of leadership by leadership scholars and gurus. Also, they question the idea of mundane activities should be classified as leadership practices at all. Alvesson et al. (2017) explain a detailed view of how they define leadership and what they do not classify as leadership, which is described in the following section.

3.3 Leadership and its Alternatives

The general belief preached by some actors in the leadership industry tends to steer people into various of leadership style that seem to have solutions for everything. However, Alvesson et al. (2017) suggest that the use of leadership ideas is important, yet it is necessary to avoid being too committed to these. Instead, they advocate a reflexive approach of leadership. Alvesson et al. (2017, p.14), define reflexivity: “*as the ambition to carefully and systematically take a critical view of one’s own assumption, ideas and favoured vocabulary and to consider if alternative ones make sense*”.

The definition of reflexivity in this context accentuates to refrain from cultural conventions, norms and truths affiliated with tradition. It also encourages leaders to capture issues in a broader perspective and to think critically. Therefore, having this mindset, leaders might perceive issues differently and realise which action is possibly the most appropriate to carry out. Alvesson et al. (2017) state that theories and influential leaders in the leadership industry are fostering simplicity in leadership rather than acknowledging its complexity. Instead, acknowledging complexity may be beneficial for leaders to target issues from a different angle, where leadership is not the only mode of organising work. Consequently, the complex task is to find an approach to balance simplicity and complexity in which involved people acknowledge its complexity (ibid.).

There are two key themes in leadership adopting reflexivity approach: Extra-Leadership Reflexivity (ELR) and Intra-Leadership Reflexivity (ILR). In ELR, *leadership and its alternatives* are suggested to constitute a framework of five alternative modes of organising to leadership, while ILR focuses on *alternatives within leadership* (Alvesson et al., 2017).

According to Alvesson et al. (2017), it is often that the modes do the organising rather than leadership itself. Therefore, the framework of the practices are favourable supplements to leadership. The five alternative modes of organising including leadership are summarised in Table 3.1. These modes are categorised in vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal (egalitarian) dominant orientation, where vertical indicates relation between leader and its followers while horizontal is influenced informally by a mutual kind. For example, an experienced and respected employee in a horizontal based relationship might perform as an informal leader. In practice, the modes of organising are influencing leadership and often overlapping each other as seen in Figure 3.1. Each mode is presented as separate category in order to have a clear comprehension of it. To clarify the identities and the relations to each other involved in the categories, are defined as High Influential Person (HIP), Low Influence Persons (LIP), Medium Influencing People (MIP) and No Influencing People (NIP).

Table 3.1 Modes of Organising (Alvesson et al., 2017, p. 34).

Mode of organizing	Dominant orientation	Definition and meaning	Key identities	Examples of acts or settings
Leadership	Vertical Persuasion	Interpersonal influencing process in an asymmetrical relationship, targeting meaning, feelings and values	Leader (HIP) and follower (LIP)	Inspirational talk/behaviour in order to give direction, meaning and emotional and/or moral support. Exemplary behaviour
Management	Vertical Legitimate authority	Direction and control based on formal rights and hierarchy	Manager (HIP) and subordinate (LIP)	Planning, budgeting, supervision, schedules/rules/guidelines, and performance control/evaluation
Exercise of power	Vertical Anxiety	Authority based on force and/or political skills	Dominant (HIP) and less dominant actor (LIP) in a power game	Shows authority, uses threats and sanctions, promising rewards, mobilizing group pressure, use of client/patron networks.
Network (peer) influencing	Horizontal Persuasion/advice	Guidance and support from peers within the same occupational specialty/ community of practice (outside one's own work group/ organizational unit)	Respected and receptive colleagues (MIP)	Work in subject-matter expert networks, conferences or informal contacts/ad hoc problem solving. Informal meetings outside work meetings, lunches, etc.
Group work	Horizontal Persuasion or group pressure	Guidance and support from members of the work group	Responsible and responsive team members (MIP)	Co-decision making, team meetings and mutual adjustments on a daily basis
Autonomy	Horizontal Competence	Self-directed work processes	Autonomous professional (NIP)	Thinking for yourself, setting own standards, planning and evaluating your own work and performance. Reading and reflection reinforcing self-confidence and good judgement

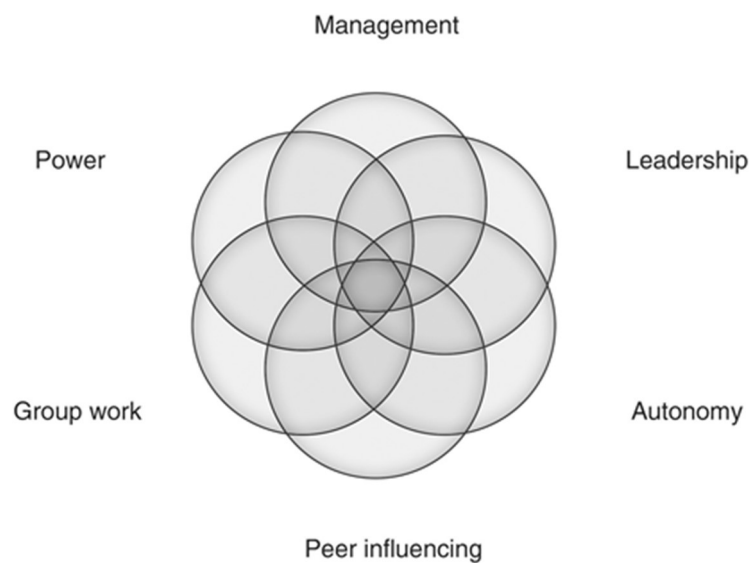


Figure 3.1 Overlap Between Each Mode of Organising (Alvesson et al., 2017, p. 39).

Leadership is a process of influence towards a common goal by a HIP and requires voluntary submission of a LIP. Consequently, HIPs and LIPs may interpret what happens, the quality of leadership, the relevance of leadership in the situation, and the value of leadership in the situation differently. The different ways HIPs and LIPs view leadership practices can be divided into two dimensions called “Value misfit” and “Construction misfit” (Alvesson et al., 2017). Value misfit occurs when both the HIP and LIP have similar views of how leadership is done and what it means, but they have diverging views of the purpose and how the quality of it is assessed. Construction misfit occurs when the HIP and the LIP have different views of which leadership is practiced, but they have similar views of the purpose and quality of it. The social constructivist approach to leadership, the HIP and the LIP may construct their reality differently and

that is what could cause the discrepancy in their view of leadership. High alignment between a HIP and a LIP occurs when they similarly construct and value leadership. Oppositely, multiple breakdown occurs when the HIP and the LIP neither constructs nor values leadership similarly (ibid.).

The second key theme emphasises on reflection of alternative practices in leadership. To describe the alternatives within leadership, ILR, Alvesson et al. (2017) distinguish five basic types of leadership work through metaphors which they call the “5P Framework”. The five types are: prosphering a vision, preaching values and morals, psychoterapethic intervention, party-hosting, and pedagogical work. Common for the five types is that there is an asymmetric relationship between leader and followers where the leader provide meaning and cultural direction, which is accepted by the followers’ of own will. The types of leadership work described by the 5P Framework are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 5P Framework (Alvesson et al., 2017, p. 109).

Type of leadership work	Characteristics	Tools/means	Personal characteristics	Nature of relation	Common weakness	Less flattering label/risk of stigmatizing attribution
Propheying a vision	Emphasizing the overall purpose and ambition	Rhetoric and symbolic action	Charismatic, convincing	Elevated and distant, superior insights	Limited relevance and credibility	Cliché fetishist
Preaching values and morals	Emphasizing morality and values	Moral example, rhetoric	Morally superior	Somewhat remote	Hypocrisy (in a world calling for moral compromise)	Bigot
Psychotherapeutic intervention influencing emotions	Interested in people and their inner life	Talk and more talk	Patient	Intimate, but in an asymmetrical way	Uninterested in work and performance	Shrink
Party-hosting, creating a positive work climate	Trying to create high spirits and make people happy	Social activities, jokes, being friendly	Cheerful, funny	Very close, buddy-like	Fun before profit, denial of bad news	Clown
Pedagogical work aiming to support learning and cognitive development	Trying to make people understand more/better	Training, group conferences, coaching	Lecturing	Medium to close	In need of less competent followers	School master

Understanding leadership and its intention can sometimes be confusing and misleading. It is necessary to have legitimate perception of what leadership is and the purpose of it. Leadership practices cannot be measured by organisational outcomes or other accomplishment. However, it cannot be excluded that leadership practices may have contributed to successfulness in various aspects (Alvesson et al., 2017). Nevertheless, leadership practices are not equal to organisational outcomes. A LIP (follower) does not necessarily acknowledge leadership because a HIP (manager) believes they are doing leadership, instead they are reacting to other causes that contribute to organisational outcomes, such as the five alternative modes of organising. In some cases, followers may even demand less leadership and instead more of e.g. exercise of power or management (ibid.).

3.4 Organisational Culture

In an organisational context, culture may be viewed as a mechanism of control. It is the common rules which both guide and influence behaviour in an organisation. Culture also includes the means by which it is formed and expressed, such as social interaction and tangible objects (Kunda, 1992). Culture and leadership have a close relationship where culture restricts and guides leadership. Culture may even determine what is

considered to be leadership in an organisation (Alvesson et al., 2017). In contrast to the view on leadership, widely adopted by many leadership consultants, practitioners, and scholars, Alvesson et al. (2017) suggest that leadership does not have a drastic effect on culture. However, it changes the culture through systematic alterations to the purpose, where purpose is defined as the meaning of doing something and what it symbolises (ibid.). Leadership can be applied to change the culture to what is considered most appropriate by the leader (Kunda, 1992).

Culture is essential to understand leadership. It is a part of the context where leadership processes occur and provides a frame of reference for leadership. In a professional organisation, where one can assume that a LIP possesses some degree of autonomy, there may be an established culture which does not require as much leadership by a HIP. Nonetheless, the HIP may be required to use other modes of organising to organise work, such as management, but with consequence of reducing the value of e.g. autonomy, group work, or network influencing. In general, such professional groups of people are not in a significant need of leadership. Another scenario for professional groups is where the HIP communicates the organisational culture to the group which in turn is carried out through autonomy, group work, or network influencing. The culture communicated is adopted or rejected depending on the professional culture of the group (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Organisational culture affects leadership and vice versa, as argued by Alvesson et al. (2017), but how this is linked to the functionality of the organisation remains unclear. Allcorn (2015) argues that this is only true for stable organisations as there is a possibility that leadership exists in the absence of culture and/or that subcultures within the organisation runs the organisation in the place of an absent or dysfunctional organisational culture.

3.5 Approaches to Achieve and Sustain High Organisational Performance

Perhaps leadership research has over-emphasised certain elements of leadership, while disregarding other elements, as argued by Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003). They stress the importance of studying what leaders actually do, which tends to be mundane activities. Such mundane activities are listening, informal chatting, and being cheerful. These activities have in previous research not been considered as leadership. In contrast, they suggest that these are a central aspect of leadership as they are practiced by managers. For example, managers who listen to employees makes employees more engaged and a feeling of belonging. Listening is mainly about the self-esteem of employees which is believed to be central in leadership practices. Likewise, informal chatting is directed towards employees' feelings and not about formal work. Being cheerful bears resemblance to the type of leadership work called *party hosting* in the 5P framework, as described by Alvesson et al. (2017).

Listening, chatting, and being cheerful are all mundane acts and leadership turn into something extraordinary beyond the seemingly every-day characteristics of the actions by managers. The everyday acts are legitimised by their formal position as a manager. Therefore, according to this definition, leadership depends on formal positions of leaders and followers. One may also question whether mundane acts are to be considered as leadership at all as leadership therefore becomes too broad (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2003).

Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, and Schlesinger (2008) utilise the notion of mundane acts as described by Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) to link these to the profit and growth of a company. Their work links leadership practices (along with other contributors) to the profit and growth of a company. According to them, mundane behaviour is a necessary element in leadership practice for the engagement among employees, which they argue plays a crucial role for the profit and growth of a company. A certain type of leadership where leaders provide legitimate attention to the feelings and thoughts of employees is essential for the success of the service profit chain. The purpose of the chain is to describe how internal service quality of the workplace is linked to profit and growth. Internal service quality is the feelings employees have towards their jobs, colleagues, and the prerequisites provided to employees to perform well at work. Such prerequisites are described as the ability the employee has to satisfy the customer. The better employees are at satisfying the customer, and in general do a good job, the more engaged they will be. The chain can be described as the link between how the quality of the workplace affect employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity. Employee productivity improves the external service quality for customers, which in turn increases the customers' satisfaction and customer retention, and lastly profit and growth (Heskett et al., 2008).

In the service-profit chain, a substantial amount of focus is directed towards the role of employees and customers for an organisations profit and growth. As stated, a certain type of leadership is indispensable for its success. Heskett et al. (2008) argue that customers and employees must be given legitimate attention by managers. Mundane activities such as listening to employees and customers is believed to be central aspects of leadership and crucial for organisational performance (ibid.). A noteworthy difference from Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) is that Heskett et al. (2008) emphasise the importance of mundane activities and recognises these as a key element for organisational performance. In contrast, Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) propose a more critical view of mundane activities and questions the notion of equating them with leadership practices. But regardless of what mundane activities can be classified as or not, they cannot be carried out by managers purposefully without the manager walking the talk by delegating responsibility to subordinates. The subordinate's role in leadership is often neglected (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2003; Møller, 1994).

Møller (1994) argues that employeeship is as important as leadership for organisational success. Employeeship is when an employee demonstrates commitment within three success areas: productivity, relations, and quality, in the interest of the organisation. Employeeship constitutes of three concepts: responsibility, loyalty, and initiative. These three elements make leadership not only necessary for employeeship, but they make leadership an essential aspect of employeeship. Furthermore, Møller (1994) argues that the three concepts are crucial for employees to demonstrate employeeship.

This resembles to the main attention of the employees by Heskett et al. (2008), where managers are the facilitators of organisational success and employees are the key resources vital for the long-term performance of an organisation. Møller (1994) argues for employeeship by stating that it is insufficient for a manager to delegate without an employee willing to take responsibility. Most often the manager's perspective is considered while the employee's is being neglected. Furthermore, he argues that employees who feel responsible is the foundation for being loyal and taking initiatives. From his standpoint, leadership is given far too much responsibility for the success or failure of organisations. Hence, he advocates the concept of employeeship to more

accurately explain why organisation perform as they do, however without undermining the importance of leadership.

Beer (2009) also argues for the idea that leadership is ascribed too much responsibility for organisational performance, but instead he sees leadership as one subsystem in his systems perspective of organisations. According to him, leadership is crucial for building a “high commitment, high performance system (HCHP system)”. Leadership is a necessary subsystem, but it is not enough for implementing and constantly adapting the entire system (i.e. organisation) to ever-changing conditions. Other subsystems that are to be considered in building the HCHP system are the learning and government system, strategic performance system, organising system, and human resource system. The learning and government system enable the top management team to openly communicate with the business unit and operating unit level to identify how the organisation is functioning and to create engagement within those levels. The strategic performance system is the execution of the company’s strategy and is the process of how goals are set and measured and how resources are allocated. The organising system is the process of defining how activities in the organisation are defined in terms of their role, responsibility, and relation to other activities. It also specifies how different activities can be combined. The final subsystem is the human resource system which is how the organisation handles employees in terms of recruitment, development, rewards, etc. The HCHP is illustrated in Figure 3.2. Furthermore, he argues that changes in the system should begin with top management and include the five subsystems, i.e. not only leadership, if one aims to build a system that generates and sustains high performance.

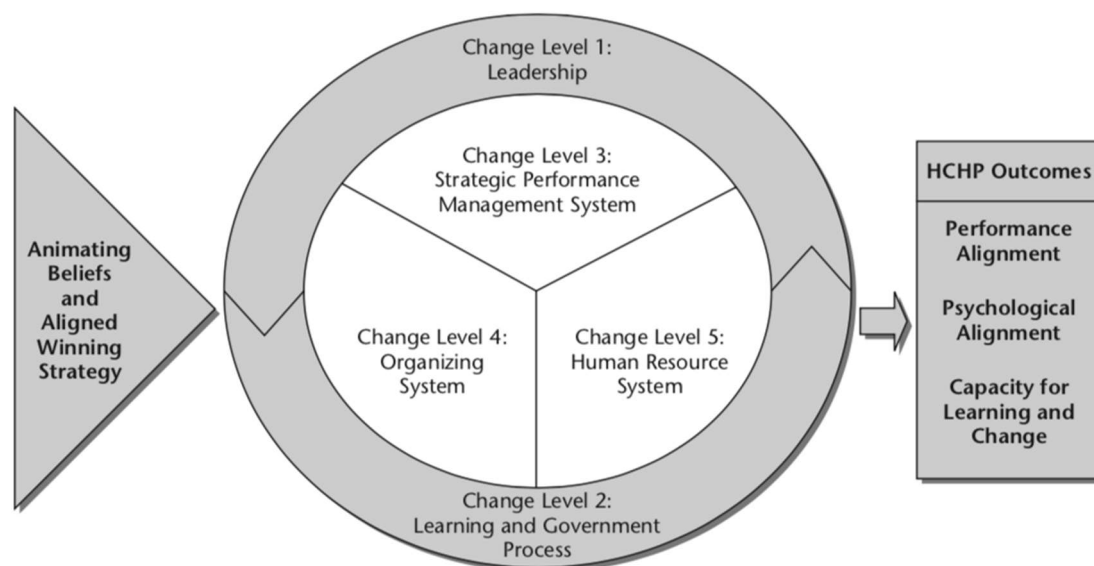


Figure 3.2 The High Commitment, High Performance System (Beer, 2009, p. 83).

The subsystems suggested by Beer (2009) bears a resemblance to the description of leadership and management by Alvesson et al. (2017). However, the suggestion by Beer (2009) is not entirely equal to leadership and the five alternative modes of organising suggested by Alvesson et al. (2017), but there are similarities in terms of the main message given by both authors. Both authors agree that leadership is crucial for building and sustaining organisational performance. Furthermore, they agree that leadership is not enough to organise work and to build, change, and sustain an organisations

performance. There are more processes, elements, and modes of organising that influence the organisational performance than leadership but regardless, leadership plays a crucial role. The outcomes which leadership can be accredited for depends on the contextual factors and on the events taking place in the context. To find this link between leadership and performance, leadership must first and foremost be narrowly defined so that it does not cover everything and hence nothing (Alvesson et al., 2017).

The system illustrated in Figure 3.2 aims to explain what must be considered when trying to implement a strategy in an organisation. As the figure illustrates, leadership and the learning and government process surrounds the other subsystems. It is usually these two change levers who support the other three change levers that are the reasons for unsuccessful strategy implementation, hence inadequate performance if it is assumed that the goal of an organisation is in fact high performance. The ways in which organisations tend to fail in strategy implementation are described by the *silent killers* (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000).

The silent killers are barriers of successfully implemented strategies commonly encountered but rarely accentuated publicly in organisation. The silent killers are divided into three categories: (1) Quality of direction comprising of *top-down or laissez-faire senior management, ineffective senior management team, and conflicting priorities resulting in* (2) Quality of learning comprising of *poor vertical communication, and* (3) Quality of implementation comprising of *poor coordination between functions, units or geographical regions and inadequate leadership development and skills* (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Therefore, there is a possibility that leadership is a barrier for strategy implementation and thus a reason for not achieving the intended performance (ibid.). However, there are six silent killers suggesting that there could be other “killers” than leadership limiting the performance of an organisation, as similarly advocated by Alvesson et al. (2017) and Bolden et al. (2011). Hence, leadership is not equal to organisational outcomes (Alvesson et al., 2017; Bolden et al., 2011; Burgoyne et al., 2004).

Leadership is a process of influencing followers to reach a common goal or provide meaning to the work (Alvesson et al., 2017; Bolden et al., 2011). How well a leader does in this process of influence may or may not have any correlation with the organisational performance and heavily depends on what the common goal is, the congruence of how the leader and its followers interprets/constructs a situation (Alvesson et al., 2017), and if there are employees within the organisation willing to take responsibility and initiatives (Møller, 1994). Leadership may increase organisational performance, but can only do so if it is precise, adapted to its context, and if complexity is acknowledged rather than simplicity (Alvesson et al., 2017; Bolden et al., 2011; Burgoyne et al., 2004).

3.6 Systematic Organising of Leadership

If the context where leadership practices take place plays a vital role for organisational performance as argued by Bolden et al. (2011), Bryman and Stephens (1996), and Burgoyne et al. (2004), the context has to be described in further detailed to adequately explain how leadership contributes to performance. The difficulty is in that the context is never the same and that each individual element in a case must be analysed by itself, complicating for the observer to grasp how elements interplay to generate organisational outcomes. Therefore, a systems approach to leadership (SAL) provides an explanation of how leadership is part of a larger whole, i.e. a system that must be viewed holistically if one aims to find explanations of why and how an organisation

achieves a certain result (Coffey, 2010). However, systems are themselves context dependent, but the SAL attempts to describe how this dependency functions by relating the organisation as a system to a larger system, the environment around the organisation and its stakeholders (ibid.).

The SAL framework aims to link leadership in action to individual development, organisational development, and finally long-term organisational performance. The systems approach contains three levels of abstraction by viewing a leader, organisation, or another entity from three perspectives: the activity, the process, and the systems perspective. Coffey (2010) argues that this approach enables observations of a dynamic organisation in action, rather than trying to determine what is supposed to occur and assuming organisations are static entities, i.e. the systems approach is a step away from a deterministic view and towards the naturalistic paradigm. Consequently, acknowledging a naturalistic approach and considering everything from the whole organisation to each member of it independently, is assumed to provide a more accurate understanding of how performance is generated (ibid.).

The activity perspective comprises of the thoughts and actions by individuals, for instance what people say to each other and how they react to what people say. The point of considering the elements an organisation at this level of detail is to avoid the common assumption, either made consciously or unconsciously, that people will undisputedly accept and adopt strategical management decisions. Assumptions in the activity level cannot be made as it has consequences for the process perspective, which is the next level and is a higher level of abstraction relative to the activity level and consists of chains of activities, and subsequently processes (Coffey, 2010).

The process level is divided into two categories: business processes and social processes. Business processes are, as the name reveals, related to work tasks and the flow of information that is part of the formal business practices. Social processes are the activities related to personal relationships in the organisation such as resolving conflicts (Coffey, 2010).

The systems level is the highest level of abstraction and consists of a clustering of activities, processes, individuals, and other elements. Although the systems perspective consists of simplifications of its elements, it enables for viewing an organisation either as a system itself or a component in a system according to the naturalistic paradigm. By acknowledging the systems perspective, one immediately must consider the activity and process level to be able to construct the systems level. The consequence for this is that an organisation, and the context in which it exists in, can be viewed as a whole and with a naturalistic approach, in contrast to the deterministic approach to leadership which is commonly assumed (Coffey, 2010).

Furthermore, Coffey (2010) argues that by applying the systems approach to leadership in what he calls the “Cognitive-Systems Model of Organisation Performance”, individuals are viewed as a system themselves which exists within a larger system, i.e. the organisation. The organisation exists within an even larger system which is the environment around the organisation and the organisations stakeholders. He argues that individual thinking has a significant effect on the actions pursued by a leader and that this is linked to long-term organisational performance. The logic behind this is the emphasis of individual thinking and feeling is a prerequisite for leader action and constitutes the first system which is the individual leader in action. Therefore, an individual’s cognitive processes have a substantial effect on their actions which in turn affects the whole organisational system, the dynamics of the organisational system, thus

the organisational performance of the system. Additionally, he defines performance as the results over a longer period to all the organisation's stakeholders. Hence, performance includes financial, social, and environmental aspects (ibid.).

Furthermore, an organisation or business unit can be viewed as three different levels as illustrated in Figure 3.3: individual, work unit, and business unit or entire organisation. The individual level consists of task related and social factors. Task related factors are those associated with executing work that is either value-adding or not value-adding for the client or the organisations stakeholders. Social factors comprise of the satisfaction and motivation of individuals in their work. "Satisfiers" are defined as tangible factors such as adequate pay and terms of employment. "Motivators" are defined as more intangible factors such as discretion and variety of work tasks, feedback, and emotional support (Coffey, 2010).

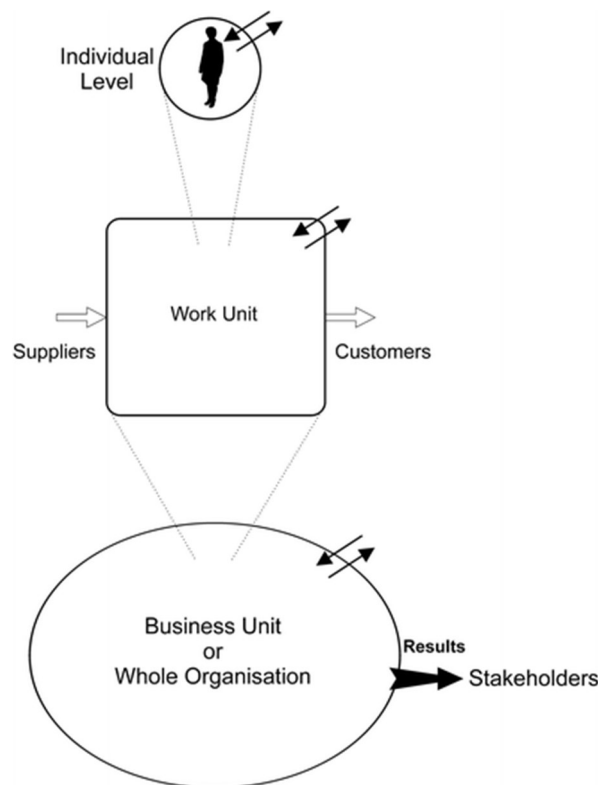


Figure 3.3 Three Levels of an Organisation (Coffey, 2010, p. 182).

The work unit level is the clustering of the individual system level into groups of people and business processes. According to Coffey (2010), high performance at this level depends on three principles: creating a self-sustained work unit, facilitating decision-making on the activity level e.g. through action strategies, and integrating the individual elements of the work unit to facilitate behaviour in the interest of the individual and the organisation as also encouraged by Møller (1994) in his description of employeeship.

The business unit or organisational level is where the work units are integrated into a single unit. A crucial aspect at this level is adapting the task environment to the organisational environment where work units and subsequently individuals' systems operates. This adaption is carried out through continuous strategy development and implementation. Strategy development aims to align the organisation (task environment) to both trends and contingencies, while strategy implementation aims to integrate work units into a single system. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) utilise the notion of the silent killers to describe how strategy development and implementation usually

fail which is brought up in section 3.5. Other activities at this level are the ongoing optimisation of the system to sustain performance, setting the cultural orientation of the organisation (n.b. according to Alvesson et al. (2017), leadership and cultural orientation are mutually dependant), and meeting external requirements such as legislative, environmental, and social obligations (Coffey, 2010).

How the individual level of an organisation affects the work unit, and subsequently the whole organisation or the business unit corresponds to the logic behind the service profit chain described by Heskett et al. (2008). The element *internal service quality of a workplace* and the *individual level of an organisation* comprising of task and social factors propose similar success factors generating organisational performance and they both have a complex and seemingly far-fetched connection to organisational performance. However, the importance of delivering value to the end-customer and how this may be achieved is recurring in both concepts. The main difference between the two concepts is in that the service profit chain describes in how satisfied and loyal employees produce good outcomes for the organisation, while the SAL does so by acknowledging details and complexity but considers it all as an entire system containing all its internal actors and external influences.

When comparing the systems approach to leadership to the modes of organising advocated by Alvesson et al. (2017), the former does not have a clear description of leadership while the latter defines leadership narrowly. By combining the two, a description of leadership and its relation to performance can be made by utilising the description of leadership provided by Alvesson et al. (2017), and placing leadership as a part of a larger whole which is the systems approach provided by Coffey (2010). The common denominator these authors have is their acknowledgment of a complex environment and where leadership is viewed in action, which is also emphasised in Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003).

There are key differences between the SAL and the more discursive approaches to leadership advocated by Alvesson et al. (2017) and Fairhurst (2008). Using the discursive approach, one aims to observe social patterns by studying communication between leaders and followers. On the contrary, the SAL includes both the actions (e.g. leader – follower communication) and the cognitive processes of individuals as the latter is a presumption for the former to occur (Coffey, 2010). Therefore, with the SAL approach it is not enough to recognise the discursive aspect of leadership.

Although the SAL acknowledges the cognitive processes of individuals, it also allows leadership to be defined as a social process in line with for instance Alvesson et al. (2017), Bolden et al. (2011), and Fairhurst (2008). Also, Coffey (2010) makes a clear distinction between social processes and business processes, which resembles to leadership and the alternative modes of organising advocated by Alvesson et al. (2017). More specifically, the definitions of businesses processes (Coffey, 2010) and management as a mode of organising (Alvesson et al., 2017) are particularly identical.

Furthermore, Coffey (2010) argues that leaders are capable of influencing on the system level, and that their ability to influence depends on their formal position as a manager, consistent with Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) who propose that leadership is the extra-ordinarisation of the mundane that is legitimised by the formal position of a manager.

4 Results

The interviews with the company's executive and the group managers along with the company's internal documents is featured in this chapter. Their perspective of leadership, performance, and leadership alternatives are compiled and presented separately. The internal documents regarding formal description of a group manager's responsibilities, leadership framework and each groups' monthly reports were examined.

4.1 An Executive's Perspective of Leadership and Performance

This initial section consists of reflections from an interview with the chief executive officer at the company. The executive has a background within the IT and telecom industry and has always enjoyed working close to the client, primarily with services. In the company where the executive previously worked, there was a clear structure which enabled them to work with a broad service offering to their clients. Although the executive identified a similar width at the technical consultancy company, the challenge is in how to manage these different disciplines and aligning them in working towards a common goal.

Throughout the company, the goal is to work closely to the client, their needs, and with a width of services. Working with width means to work with the entire spectrum of societal development, not being limited to a technical consultancy company within civil engineering. Managers are expected to be drivers of innovation in collaboration with the client by using the width in the organisation to satisfy the client's needs, which are ever-changing and difficult to meet by working solely with the technical discipline of civil engineering. By combining the expertise of various specialists with engineering expertise in to combined service offerings, the company aims to meet requirements from new types of customers with new requirements whom the executive have identified through emerging trends locally and globally.

The company strives to be an agile organisation, operating in accordance to the decentralised model, where the term "employeehip" is central, but with clear expectations on attracting new business and achieving good results. The purpose of an agile organisation is to rig it for upcoming trends, for example to meet a new client's expectations, climate change, urbanisation, globalisation, digitalisation, etc. Furthermore, its purpose is to drive societal development and innovation by operating closer to the client's business.

According to the executive, an agile organisation is when employees and managers are in direct contact with the client and align business practices to client needs resulting the achievement of financial goals. However, the amount of discretion given to managers does not justify doing whatever it takes to fulfil financial goals and reach the intended performance. Managers are expected to be drivers of innovation, facilitate client satisfaction, and to facilitate employee satisfaction. The executive differentiates what is defined as *good leadership* and *bad leadership* at the company. Good leadership is working with three elements constituting their leadership framework. The framework is described in section 4.2. The executive describes bad leadership as when a manager exercises power to reach intended goals.

Managers are obliged to undergo various leadership development programmes depending on their management level, and in total there are four programmes. The first

programme is a course provided to newly recruited managers in the company. Content in the course aims to provide an insight of the role and provide practical knowledge for managers to lead. The second programme is a course for group managers who are new in this role. This course focuses on the foundation of leadership and behaviour, communication, group behaviour and dynamic, personal coaching to the group manager. The third is a leadership development programme for experienced group managers and office managers. The purpose of this programme is developing leaders is to secure and sustain future for growth and profitable business while working towards the company's strategy and build a stronger branding. The fourth is a development programme for regional managers. It focuses on regional manager's daily activities including long term strategic perspective to develop the business and their employees.

Clear expectations are recurrent in the discussion of leadership in the company and the subtle border between leadership and power is brought up. The difference in exercising leadership or power may depend on only a slight variation in an undertone during a conversation, how a manager asks questions to employees, or how a manager communicates in general with employees. A manager should be aware of this slight difference between leadership and power.

There is a need to both fulfil internal requirements while delivering a width of services to the client by taking responsibility for more than the individual group. Hence, the financial performance of a group is not necessarily more important than client satisfaction. One does not invalidate the other, but in this case, they are both two crucial elements when defining success. By applying leadership practices, managers are expected to consider both activities simultaneously, which is the basis for the company's leadership model.

Additionally, the executive highlight that managers are expected to delegate and consider employeeship by making employees aware of the business. The executive emphasises the importance of employee engagement in doing and driving businesses with clients. Employees should express great care about the financial performance of their group, region, and company.

4.2 Formal Leadership Framework and Responsibilities

As a part of a large organisation, the company has subdivided its operation in Sweden into different business unit across the country and each region is managed by a region manager. The region level is composed with numerous of groups with different technical disciplines that are managed by appointed group managers. The group managers are accountable for managing their group's operation and administration. Further, they are also responsible to ensure that their group will meet and are aligned accordingly with the company's overall goal and achieve financial requirements in order to sustain profitable growth.

To ensure that the group managers are acting and leading accordingly, the company provides a leadership framework that has been developed explicit for them and it has been modified several times over the years. The leadership framework consists of three elements: *building relationships, managing performance, and enabling development*. It defines the elements that are highly valued by the company while simultaneously serving as a guideline for group managers in order to become successful and intertwined with the company's definition of what good leadership is. Each element has a central importance and are interrelated to each other affiliated to leaders' daily work. The

elements advocate in how and what practices and behaviours a leader is expected to do in their daily work.

Building long-term relationships with customer and employees demonstrates an engaged and responsible employee. Therefore, the importance of communication and collaboration are crucial to develop a strong relationship with mutual trust. Leaders are expected to lead by example, guiding, and inspiring its employees to become committed with their work by the notion of employeeship.

Managing performance in the organisation requires ambitious goals both for business and employees. It relies on employeeship and empowerment by giving employees responsibility and authority in decision making. The leader ensures employees are delivering and achieving its own goal. Competences and resources are distributed effectively in projects. Customers' feedback is important in order to identify drivers of customer satisfaction.

Enabling development is a process of securing and preparing for future business demands. Leaders support and continuously keep their employees updated on trends and developments in the industry. Actively working with feedback to improve and develop its employees and business towards a profitable growth. Moreover, leaders shall encourage and motivate employees to constantly develop to meet customer demands. Hence, being an attractive employer in the market is necessary in order to recruit talents.

The group managers are expected to adopt these into their daily work and lead their group towards its short-term and long-term goals. However, it is essential to ensure that employees are working in accordance to the company's business ethical, policies and routines. Besides from personnel responsibilities, they are also responsible of initiating regular follow ups on projects, managing administration such as budgeting and reporting financial results to the top management. Furthermore, the group manager is required to continuously evaluate client's demands and satisfaction in order to secure the group's business and maintain good relationship with its clients.

4.3 The Group Managers' Perspectives

This section contains narrations of the interviews with five group managers in the civil engineering business unit in the company's eastern region. Where stated, there are comparisons of the group manager's response and results from previous sections in chapter 4. Otherwise, it is solely the results from the interviews with the group managers which is being narrated.

4.3.1 Leadership and Performance

The group managers believed that leadership contributed to performance through engaging, supporting, coaching, and delegating responsibility to employees and that this led to high performance. Performance was mostly viewed in terms of financial ratios and other quantifiable metrics such as client satisfaction and employee satisfaction, and in relation to leadership, one group manager stated that "*Economic follow-ups is a large part of leadership*".

Regarding the daily work, the group managers viewed them as mostly operational and not so much about inspirational speeches or extraordinary accomplishments. It was primarily described as organising daily work through engagement, economical follow-ups, delegating responsibility, communication with employees and clients, coach and support employees, tendering, and resource allocation. The descriptions of their daily

work are rather concentrated to planning, organising, and sustaining the daily operations of the group's work.

Most of the tasks performed by the group managers were characterised by being administrative work and comprised of economic follow-ups and interacting with employees. More informal work was ensuring the well-being of employees through informal chatting and showing interest towards them. Setting and following up group-specific goals were not prioritised but group managers, together with the employees, adapted the goals from the regional business plan to suit the group level and measured performance against these goals. In general, the group managers believed leadership comprised of both the informal and more administrative tasks of their daily work.

A consistency between the company's common goals and the groups' common goals was identified. The company gives group managers a substantial amount of discretion to shape their group, as long as they do in alignment with the formal leadership framework and responsibilities. Hence, the group managers have a great impact on its employees and clients since they work close to their clients and possesses the largest ability to align business practices accordingly with the client's needs. However, the interviews revealed that most group managers adhere to the regional management's business plan and organise its work in the group accordingly to the plan. The common goals which group managers set for their groups, in collaboration with the employees, were mostly transferred more or less unaltered from the regional business plan to the group level. If a certain goal was set during regional management meetings, the goal could most likely be found in the groups list of goals. It operated as a chain of command where goals were transferred down and adjusted to the hierarchy of management levels.

One group manager believed the goals in the business plan set at regional management and group meetings were not being contested enough and had noticed that some employees and group managers remained mostly silent. They withheld their feelings and opinions in some cases which may have been in favour for the organisation even though they had the opportunity to openly express it. The group manager explained further that this most likely depended on the employee's character and that he or she may have felt uncomfortable to express certain opinion in the presence of a larger group.

The group managers directly drew the link from leadership to performance by explaining that leadership is engagement, coaching, and supporting employees and that this falls out automatically on performance. However, one group manager contrasted in the description of how leadership was connected to performance. The group manager highlighted client satisfaction when describing how leadership contributed to performance. Intuitively, this was not an answer expected by the authors when asking a group manager about leadership and performance, but at the same time it provided an alternative explanation of where from performance may be derived. The group manager believed leadership did not only comprise of leading employees, but also involving and guiding clients and in general having a client orientated work organisation. However, to what extent leadership (by the group managers' definition) enabled the group in making efforts to satisfy the client's needs remained unclear.

Another manager expressed a similar view of working with clients, but for the purpose of creating an action strategy for coaching employees in how to deal with certain clients which could decrease the employees' morale by being e.g. a rude, unstructured, or excessively governing as a client. The group manager explained that the client may

have an influence on employeeship and the performance of individual employees, perhaps with similar significance as the group manager's ability to influence. For example, working with a bad client could lead to low engagement and performance by the employee. The group manager explained that their job is to prepare employees for working with such clients and that they should not avoid those clients as they are not representative of the organisation they work for, i.e. they are so called bad apples which always will be encountered in work life.

The employee perspective was recurring when discussing leadership with the group managers. Employee satisfaction was considered a fundamental prerequisite for enabling high performance. Employee satisfaction was achieved in several ways, and each group manager had their beliefs of how to achieve it. However, freedom in the employees' work was recurring, in combination with emphasising having clear expectations on employees. Freedom of work was primarily achieved by the group manager through delegating responsibility to the employee. Such responsibilities were economic follow-ups, communicating with the client, and doing business with the client themselves. Other ways of enabling discretion in the employees' work-life was to give them flexible working hours and workplace.

The group managers had identified a trend towards increased freedom of work and consequently, they argued that more coaching was to be required in the future, hence more leadership as the majority of the five group managers described it. However, regarding delegating responsibility to employees, some group managers stated that not all employees were comfortable with additional responsibility in their work. One group manager believed this was not a problem and that other that preferred to take more responsibility could do so. Another group manager stated that this did not suit the company's ideals and that those type of employees perhaps should have worked somewhere else.

Although the five group managers believed leadership was the key to generating engagement and creating productive employees, they did not think by applying leadership in their work this would happen by itself. Their view was that it is not only the group manager's responsibility to ensure organisational performance, even though they are held accountable for it. Delegating was viewed as an element of leadership and employeeship was considered a form of leadership on the lower level or as a type of individual leadership.

Like these two group managers, the company executive also emphasised the importance of working according to the client's needs and being open to changes in the client's needs. As stated in chapter 4.1, the executive defined leadership according to the company's leadership model which constitutes of building relations, managing performance, and enabling development. Regarding the component in the leadership model about building relationships, this did not only imply relationships within the company, but also relationships with clients. Working with the client perspective is addressed by the executive board and a lot of discretion is given to the group managers to do so.

The group managers repeatedly brought up the importance of "doing business" or "attracting new businesses" in relation to their role as group managers, although it appeared to deviate from the discussion of leadership. Nevertheless, building and maintaining good relationship with clients was an element in the company's leadership framework. They believed that having good relationship with the clients would benefit both parties. For instance, if a project is delivered with good quality and executed

accordingly to the client's expectation and requirement the possibility of being reselected for next project will increase. Apart from the obvious outcome of attracting more projects, the group managers believed this could also enhance the morale of employees and perhaps the employees' interpretations of the group manager's leadership.

Some group managers stated that they wish to decrease their time spent on leading employees in their projects. Instead, they want to focus on building relations with clients to be more business orientated in their work which they believed could lead to attracting additional business opportunities and increase revenue. This would lead to more of projects being led by employees, project engineers, or a deputy group manager. The group manager would be revealed of responsibilities concerning project management and/or as a technical specialist.

Apart from delegating, leadership was viewed as a mechanism for the group managers to facilitate group collaboration. This was also believed to facilitate engagement among employees, which was a prerequisite for building relationships with other groups in the region. Building relations with other civil engineering groups in the region was necessary for ensuring that the group could collaborate with other groups in projects. Hence, by combining the forces of two civil engineering groups, the region could tender for larger projects by collaborating. The most crucial element for collaboration between groups was that employees from different groups got to know each other and this required group managers in the region to have an established relationship with each other.

Additionally, from the interviews some group managers believed that they influence the employees' willingness to collaborate with other groups and to outsource in projects by expressing themselves positively about such collaborations. Leadership was required to encourage employees to collaborate across groups as there could be some employees that preferred to work for themselves although this was not common. The executive highlighted in the interview that this was required by group managers and that collaboration within the region and some groups' opinions about sourcing work across borders might have previously restricted the capacity of the region and therefore restricted revenue growth.

In sum, the groups' goals were basically the same goals stated in the regional business plan. The group managers' view leadership as coaching, engaging, motivating, supporting, and delegating responsibility. Economic follow-ups were also considered leadership by one group manager. Leadership was believed to contribute to performance by improving engagement and motivation among employees, and that it falls out automatically on performance. Also, group managers believed leadership was crucial for facilitating collaboration between groups in the region.

4.3.2 Leadership Alternatives and Performance

Apart from leadership, the group managers were asked about which factors they thought were crucial for high performance. Group work and network influencing were recurring in their answers. Although all group managers agree on leadership as the most important for performance, network and group work were essential for attaining better performance. Exercising power is a mode that is least likeable since it is considered out of date and does not apply in a modern-day working environment according to the group managers.

As group work and network influences seem to be crucial for better performance, one group manager believed that leadership's presence remains strong and considered as the most crucial factor that shapes the groups. Autonomy was considered influential by two group managers, but it was not considered as important as group work and network influences for the performance of the group. Autonomy, as explained by one group manager, would possibly work for a while but nothing would happen if there is no feedback, support, or coaching from a leader, co-worker, client, or another actor with potential to influence. Furthermore, the group managers believed management was required to organise daily work. However, they did not accentuate management when being asked about what apart from leadership that was crucial for high performance, although it seemed to constitute a large part of their work and was a necessity to sustain the groups' daily activities.

From the interview with the executive, it was apparent that the change process towards groups consisting of one technical discipline per group was initiated in a managerial fashion by regional management, hence going in with this knowledge in the interviews the authors were keen to get the group managers perspective of this change process. Group managers were mostly positive towards this change, but they did not explicitly refer to management as being crucial for high performance. They displayed signs of ambiguity when being asked first in general and then asking them explicitly which factors that contributed to performance. In general terms, the group managers believed management was necessary but not crucial. In contrast, the change process towards purified technical groups was primarily a regional management decision and it was considered by the group managers a key contributor to increased performance in the region.

Previously the region had diversified group compositions with a mix of different technical disciplines. A change process was initiated by regional management during the middle of 2018 due to reports of inefficiencies. In the beginning of 2019, the region had managed to change towards working almost solely with one technical discipline per group. The group managers expressed a positive attitude towards this change process driven by the regional management, and they awarded this change as a main reason for the increased revenue among groups within the region. The group managers viewed the new composition of groups entirely in positive terms from a business perspective. For example, groups were able to work more efficient internally and could utilise other groups to tender for large projects which was not possible before when groups were a mix of multiple technical disciplines.

However, from a group dynamics perspective not all was great about the change towards purified technical discipline groups. Some group managers expressed a concern about the employee's thoughts and feelings about the change. They had identified a tendency of dissatisfaction among employees whom had previously been part of a mixed group where they used to have a strong relationship with their colleagues. By separating these individuals from their previous workplace with colleagues whom they enjoyed working with, negative reactions emerged towards their working climate which concerned some group managers. According to one group manager, some employees were so dissatisfied that they resigned.

Group managers expressed several advantages and disadvantages about the new group compositions. An advantage was that they could collaborate better within the group by seeking support from colleagues with similar expertise. Further, they were able to submit tenders for larger projects as they had teams with the same technical expertise gathered in one group. This was described as the key factor in why the groups had

increased their revenue. The disadvantage with the purified groups was apparent when groups were required to join forces with other groups of another technical discipline to work on a project. The pricing differed between technical disciplines within the company, a group could dislike the fact to work with a certain technical discipline since they would not get paid as much as in their own projects.

The reorganisation being driven primarily in a managerial manner had increased capacity and increased the groups' revenues, but at the cost of decreased group cohesion in some groups. Revenue had increased but one group manager mentioned that some employees did not take the reorganisation of the region's groups well and therefore decided to resign.

4.4 Financial Performance and Case Analysis

In general, the groups included in the study of the eastern region has had a steady growth of revenue during the previous year and there the trend points towards further revenue growth. However, the region has suffered from high operational costs and insufficient profit margins which seems to have been a consequence of groups not being able to bill the customers of enough chargeable hours. The interviews with the group managers revealed that tendering for larger projects was crucial for generating a higher revenue. However, as the operating costs and profit margin were at inadequate levels, being able to tender for larger projects had not yet increased all aspects of financial performance. For instance, revenue of the groups in this study had increased but profit had not kept up with revenue growth.

Some group managers and the company executive brought up the importance of encouraging employees to be aware of financial cash flows, and one group manager believed that economic follow-ups was a crucial element of leadership. In fact, all group managers state something about financial monitoring at some point during the interviews in relation to leadership or to their daily practices. However, it is not evident from the results how monitoring financial performance could contribute to generating performance although it could encourage employees to act in the organisations interests and perhaps increase the percentage of billable hours.

Neither do the results from the interviews indicate that there is a clear connection between leadership practices alone and financial performance, at least not a connection that has been possible to observe by the authors. Rather it was found that leadership at the group and individual level seems to facilitate certain aspects of both daily operations and the long-term survival of the region. Consequently, the results suggest leadership actions and more administrative work tasks are to be viewed as interdependent of each other in the organisation. Together, they functioned as levers for initiating and executing the change process towards purified technical groups and none of them would be able to perform the change independently, although the financial performance did not completely increase to adequate levels.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings will be discussed and connected to theoretical framework. The division of this section will be divided in leadership's influences on organisational performance, leadership and its alternative modes of organising contribute for organisational performance and systematisation of leadership and performance.

5.1 The Significance of Leadership for Performance

As mentioned in 4.3.1 regarding group managers daily practices, the tasks are mostly operational and not considered much as leadership practices according to the definition of Alvesson et al. (2017). This might be associated to their role of responsibilities and the element *managing performance* in the company's leadership framework. The description advocates primarily administrative tasks such as economic follow-ups rather than how leadership is defined by both the group managers and by e.g. Alvesson et al. (2017) and Bolden et al. (2011).

Furthermore, the group managers expressed a wish to spend less time on project management which could have consequences for the responsiveness of decision-making in the group. Being responsive to the client's needs was emphasised by the company executive and it is uncertain whether this would increase responsiveness to clients. Coffey (2010) emphasises that decision-making should as close to the client as possible as this is what characterises high-performing organisations. By decreasing the time spent on working in projects, the group manager could spend more time for building relations and doing business with clients, as encouraged in the leadership framework, the formal work description, by the executive, and by the group managers themselves. Yet, it is in the projects where much of the interaction with the client and the employees takes place, especially when the group manager undertakes a role as project manager. Spending less time in projects would imply a more strategic group manager role. Also, the group managers believed that they could, as technical consultants, lead the client in contrast to the assumption that leadership is a social process of influence between a manager and an employee (Alvesson et al., 2017).

If there are adequate action strategies for how to act in situations requiring decision making, as advocated by Coffey (2010), perhaps there will not be such a great demand of leadership as a social process of influence by a HIP and a LIP as described by Alvesson et al. (2017). By moving towards a more strategic group manager role, simultaneously group managers' daily work naturally begin to decrease daily interactions with employees. Consequently, as per the definition of leadership by Alvesson et al. (2017), a group manager working with developing businesses with clients and the long-term strategy of the group would require more autonomy as a mode of organising in projects by the employees and the deputy group manager, project engineer, etc. Also, the definition by Bolden et al. (2011), leadership is a social process of influence does not literally align with the increased strategic accent that the company's leadership framework and group managers themselves advocate.

However, there is room for a broad interpretation of the definition of leadership by Bolden et al. (2011), especially if it is considered in combination with the definition of leadership provided by Alvesson et al. (2017). Consequently, according to these two authors a more strategic group manager role would not mean less leadership and more management. Rather, their combined definition implies that leadership and management in this case are closely related and two interdependent modes of organising. Viewing leadership as social process of mobilising behaviours, which is

one part of the definition provided by Bolden et al. (2011), suggest that leadership can be utilised to facilitate the execution of directives that could at a first glance be considered as management practices but are perhaps in the grey area *between* leadership and management as seen in Figure 3.1.

This has consequences for the group managers' role regarding what their purpose in the whole organisation. Group managers are as stated front line managers, hence they are LIP in relation to superior managers (Alvesson et al., 2017). They have a low opportunity to influence e.g. regional management decision compared to regional managers. This does not mean they are completely powerless, but the definitions of HIP, MIP, LIP, and NIP by Alvesson et al. (2017) are relative highlighting the hierarchy of different management levels within an organisation. Viewing the group managers as LIP in relation to superior managers means that group managers are under the influence of leadership by a HIP, i.e. a higher-level manager. For instance, a business area manager may lead a group manager by influencing the group manager to work towards goals shared across the company, consistent with the definition of leadership by Alvesson et al. (2017). In this case, the group manager must voluntarily submit to the influential process by the business area manager for leadership to occur.

Nevertheless, according to Alvesson et al. (2017) and Bolden et al. (2011) leadership requires consent by subordinates which is the key difference between leadership and management. Setting goals at the regional level requires leadership to legitimise the goals. Communicating and implementing them at the group level requires a response by employees and a group manager that provides meaning to these goals. Whose goals it initially is may not be of importance if they are legitimised by the group manager, and by the employees who work towards them and are in their operations measured according to them. Consequently, a crucial presumption for fulfilling goals about e.g. revenue, profit, client satisfaction, etc. (i.e. reaching the intended performance) need to be recognised by the employees *and* the group managers in order to classify the process of social influence by a HIP as leadership. I.e. there must be an alignment of how the HIP and the LIP value leadership as suggested by Alvesson et al. (2017).

The group managers in the region stated that they adopted the regional business plan along with its goals to the group level indicating that they did not necessarily recognise the goals and agree on their meaning or their significance. Although it remained unclear, there is a possibility for the HIP (superior manager) and LIP (group manager) to construct or value the leadership differently, as proposed by Alvesson et al. (2017). This leads to the notion of employeeship proposed by Møller (1994). It is not possible for a LIP (group manager) to demonstrate employeeship when there is a construction or value misfit, which are the two dimensions of how a leadership discrepancy may exist as described by Alvesson et al. (2017). Because employeeship is a part of leadership, as argued by Møller (1994), leadership will never be realised if an agreement of the shared meaning or common goals is absent. Shared meaning and common goals are fundamentals in the definition of leadership (Alvesson et al., 2017; Bolden et al., 2011).

How does one know what the shared meaning is or which the common goals are? What the group managers revealed, that the shared goals are the ones stated in the regional business plan, does not provide significant meaning to them and therefore they are not goals that one can reach by practicing leadership, since leadership *requires* shared goals. On the contrary, it is management as a mode of organising that enables group managers to fulfil these goals in coherency with the results from the interviews with the group managers because management does not require a significant amount of shared

meaning (Alvesson et al., 2017). To genuinely become aware of which the common goals are or what the shared meaning in the company is, the discourse of HIP – LIP communication must replicate what the individual thinks and feels, i.e. interpersonal information exchange is dependent on individual thinking as proposed by Coffey (2010).

Consequently, the chain of command (or perhaps the chain of communication) between group managers, their superiors, and the employees must take place through open and honest communications as argued by Beer (2009). Moreover, open and honest conversations must be facilitated both vertically and horizontally. The findings indicate tendencies of deficits in vertical communication restricting the implementation of the strategic direction driven by for instance the company executive and subsequently regional management. Horizontal communication was perceived as adequate from the interviews and the groups were in general positively tuned to collaboration with other groups. Hence, it is primarily the quality of learning which needs to be enhanced as suggested by Beer and Eisenstat (2000). In this case, the need of enhancing open and honest vertical communications as advocated by Beer (2009) and Beer and Eisenstat (2000) are also supported by the notion of employeeship advocated by Møller (1994). Therefore, the group managers' role in being *both* a HIP in relation to employees and LIP in relation to superior managers requires clarification. The findings suggest an absence of adequate vertical communication as one group manager revealed that not all employees express their opinions and feelings in meetings at regional and group meetings in the presence of a larger group.

Kunda (1992) stressed that culture may function as a mechanism of control, as organisational culture encompasses common rules, guiding and influences behaviours in an organisation. This can be found from the results of how the company's leadership is defined and formed the framework, and how it has shaped the organisation. Simultaneously, Alvesson et al. (2017) share a similar view of organisational culture and leadership since culture is considered to serve as a guide and restrict leadership practices in an organisation. Furthermore, the company has a decentralised structure which perhaps have influenced how different groups are managed and developed by group managers. Each group can therefore evolve into their own subculture deviating from the organisational culture, which may be the case in the region due to the deficit in vertical communication. Despite the fact, Alvesson et al. (2017) argue that organisational culture affects leadership and conversely, but it is uncertain how these are associated to the functionality of the organisation. Further, Allcorn (2015) argues that this occurs solely in a stable organisation as leadership or a subculture exists in the absence of culture and/or in a dysfunctional organisational culture.

The findings also suggest that group managers view their leadership as mundane behaviour. Depending on how one values the importance of the everyday mundane behaviour for the engagement and performance of employees, there are several possible consequences. For example, according to the view of Heskett et al. (2008), mundane acts are crucial for engaging employees and can be linked to the profit and growth of the company in their Service Profit Chain. On the other hand, Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) argue that informal chatting and listening does not affect employees as it is commonly assumed by leadership practitioners, researchers, and gurus.

Furthermore, the group managers believed that one does not have to be a manager to exercise leadership and they believe it can be exercised by an experienced employee to influence a newly employed employee. In other words, leadership can be a one on one

influential process between two employees. These statements demonstrate a difference to the view of Alvesson et al. (2017) that leadership has to be an influential process by a HIP requiring voluntary submission by a LIP. From the group managers perspective, they see it as MIP can lead other MIP, but that resembles more to the mode of organising “autonomy” as suggested by Alvesson et al. (2017).

Perhaps it is the common misconception (or lack of consensus) of what leadership is and what it is not that is displayed here. As argued by Alvesson et al. (2017), leadership cannot be regarded as everything a manager does as it undermines its relevance to nothing. In this case, the group managers’ definitions of leadership practices such as engaging employees to collaborate with other groups and managing performance through economic follow-ups has indeed clear links to performance. However, there are ambiguities in the results due to the seemingly well-functioning leadership in the region and the inefficiencies apparent from the financial ratios. Also, the definitions of leadership provided by the group managers tends to dilate the notion of leadership, in relation to the definition of leadership by Alvesson et al. (2017). For instance, managing performance through economic follow-ups would definitely be categorised as management as a mode of organising according to Alvesson et al. (2017). Hence, the results indicate that there are aspects other than leadership that have substantially affected the dynamics of the region, thus the performance.

5.2 The Significance of Leadership Alternatives for Performance

Apart from leadership practices, the group managers seem to share the view and are convinced that other modes of organising than leadership have significant impact on a group’s performance, as Alvesson et al. (2017) would have predicted. They emphasised that group work and network influencing are essential modes for attaining better organisational performance. Thus, they also stressed that their daily tasks consist mostly of administrative work and economic follow-ups which they perceive their practices as mostly operational. These practices obviously indicate management as the mode of organising primarily used to organise work, yet management’s presence was not apparent for them.

Although the findings suggest that leadership and management practices are interdependent to enable setting and achieving goals in the region, leadership practices and its contribution were certainly be perceived by the group managers as a success factor for organisational performance. However, the revenue growth in the region seems to stem from management actions. This complicates the process of linking leadership exclusively to performance as management has contributed to revenue growth. This aligns with the argument that leadership practices cannot be directly measured in organisational outcomes or in other accomplishments (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there were ambiguities in the group managers responses of how to determine which factors are in fact contributing to higher organisational performance. Management appeared to be one of the key modes that has driven the revenue growth, albeit it was not taken into consideration by the group managers. The other modes highlighted by the group managers, autonomy, group work, and by some network influencing, were perceived as necessary but not crucial for building and sustaining high performance. Again, leadership as described by the group managers was highlighted. This indicates inconsistencies in the responses from the group managers

with the proposal by Alvesson et al. (2017) who argue that it is necessary to distinguish leadership apart from other modes, since the alternatives often do the organising rather than leadership itself.

Besides, the company's executive advocated the leadership framework provided to all group managers. Perhaps the practices were misinterpreted and mislead the group managers on whether their daily tasks are regarded as management or leadership practices. Hence, determining which factor contributing to better performance can be ambiguous, as other factors than leadership might have been crucial for the outcome, although it was not apparent for the group managers to consider management. Consequently, the group managers tend to unconsciously advocate the leadership industry's phenomenon of simplicity instead of acknowledging its complexity (Alvesson et al., 2017). For instance, Alvesson et al. (2017) described the dimension called construction misfit which the HIP and the LIP have different views of leadership, but they have similar views of the quality and the purpose of it. Alvesson et al. (2017) also claimed the difficulties of finding an approach that balances both simplicity and complexity. Thus, the alternative modes shown in Figure 3.1 are favourable supplements to leadership and regarded as equally important as leadership for achieving better performance in an organisation where employees and front-line managers might respond to other alternatives than leadership, as shown in the findings. The modes are interdependent with one another and can therefore not be excluded in an organisation's success and its performance (Alvesson et al., 2017).

The change process in the region has demonstrated improvements with the new group compositions, new business opportunities, growth in revenues and profits within the evaluated period. Nevertheless, the current state is yet under progress and there are issues that remains to manage. Although these factors seem to be enhanced and that the new group compositions could function through autonomy as one group manager stated, it still requires group managers to sustain the group's performance in the long-term. Alvesson et al. (2017) mentioned culture is fundamental in a professional organisation where for example a LIP does not require leadership practices from a HIP, supposed that the group is performed well without a leader's presence. Instead, the group managers should emphasise on communicating the organisational goals and facilitate the organisational culture to its group as this in turn will proceed other modes of organising to organise its work to obtain higher performance (ibid.).

5.3 Systematisation of Leadership and Performance

Alternatives to leadership such as the description of the six modes of organising by Alvesson et al. (2017) provides a richer understanding of the case than by only looking for how leadership contributes to performance. It provides some insight into the leadership – performance black box described by Burgoyne et al. (2004). Whereas the performance of each group seems to be outcomes of multiple modes of organising, they do not necessarily add up to the regional performance which is the main question which is addressed in this study.

The interviews with the group managers and the company executive revealed that leadership is viewed more broadly than merely a social process of influence towards common goals or shared meaning, as defined by Alvesson et al. (2017) and Bolden et al. (2011). Furthermore, the six modes of organising provided by Alvesson et al. (2017) offer a comprehensive view of how the groups organise work that generates performance, but it does not support a complete picture of how leadership and its alternatives contribute to generate performance by delivering value to the client. In

particular, the modes of organising in combination with the results from the interviews does contribute to the understanding of how performance is just achieved by the rather short-lived change process that has been undergoing prior to and during this case study. I.e. in terms of increased performance in each individual group has been successful with revenue growth in the short-term. However, first of all aspects of financial performance have not reached adequate levels and second, performance at the regional level (also the group level) does not only comprise of short-term success, but also how performance is sustained long-term which was highlighted by the company executive. Coffey (2010) and Beer (2009) argue that performance should include and be measured towards both financial and social factors to support the resilience of organisational performance over time.

There are several opinions on how to increase and sustain organisational performance. Moreover, the company in this case study has their own view on how leadership contributes to building and sustaining long-term performance. Beginning with the company's leadership framework, it emphasises the notion of employeeship which comprises of delegating responsibility and authority to facilitate engagement and commitment among employees. These are fundamentals for two of their three elements in the leadership framework, managing performance and enabling development. Møller (1994) would most likely agree upon this definition of employeeship but with the addition that there must be an employee willing to take responsibility.

The interviews with the group managers revealed that not all employees would be willing to take more responsibility than their employment agreement stated. This is problematic if the importance of employee engagement is considered as seriously as advocated by both Møller (1994) and Heskett et al. (2008). This study did not contain interviews with employees, the employees' perspective could therefore not be examined. Nevertheless, one can question why group managers do not simply ensure that employees are motivated and engaged as this appears to be the most vital requirements for sustaining a high performing organisation.

Beer (2009) implies with his approach to building a high commitment, high performance system that it is not as simple as it sounds for group managers to motivate and engage employees and as a result watch financial ratios soar. He argues that the strategic direction of a company driven by top management must be implemented at the operational level to enable performance and it can only be done through open and honest communications vertically (between front-line managers and senior management), and horizontally (between business units). The company executive stressed the importance of discretion of work for employees, but with the addition that there must be clear expectations of what should be delivered at all management levels. Hence, being able to openly communicate between management levels, and between managers and employees, remains a crucial activity to integrate the company from top management to front-line managers (*ibid.*). Mundane tasks such as talking and informal chatting with fellow employees may in this case be an important element of work and must be adapted to avoid organisational silence, although Alvesson and Svenningsson (2003) oppose to classify them as leadership practice.

However, according to Beer (2009) building the HCHP system involves more subsystems than leadership and open conversations between organisation's members. For instance, performance management is another subsystem that must be integrated in the entire system. This case study delimits the organisation being studied to the region and the profit centres (groups), but Beer's suggestion indicates that one must consider

additional elements than just the region to understand how a high performing organisation is achieved.

As one group manager stated, that leadership included economic follow ups, resembles more to the definition of management than leadership practice (Alvesson et al., 2017). Beer (2009) proposes a *strategic performance management system* which implies that it has to do with the top management level. Indeed, performance management was performed by group managers and staff and was considered a crucial activity, as indicated in the interviews and the formal leadership framework and responsibilities. The organising system, which is the third subsystem suggested by Beer (2009), was not examined further in this study. The fourth subsystem, the human resource system, was clearly identified in this study. The executive discussed the various leadership programmes that were tailored for certain management levels to ensure employees' development of leadership, among others.

Reflecting upon the results from the interviews with group managers and the executive, and the examination of the internal documents, it is evident that the region has displayed tendencies towards building a high commitment, high performance system likewise the proposition of Beer (2009). Yet, the authors have identified room for enhancement of certain areas in the region. As stated, the change process has managed to improve regional performance, but it has not been the disruptive discharge as anticipated.

The issue with inadequate profit margins across the region stems from the deficiency in billable hours. Hence, the SAL proposes it is at the individual level one should focus when implementing change as argued by Coffey (2010). Instead of concluding that there is a leadership deficit and devote resources to leadership development, the region could benefit from investigating how the task related factors of work are organised in order to produce work that is value adding for the client (ibid.). The group managers stated in the interviews that they already work with the social factors "satisfiers" and "motivators" as described by Coffey (2010), hence these are not primarily the change levers that are most likely to improve billing ratios. However, the possibility of deficiencies in leadership should not be ruled out and this study has limitations due to the lack of empirical material from the employee's perspective.

Action strategies enable decision-making by front-line managers and staff which characterises high-performing organisations (Coffey, 2010). One group manager demonstrated an example of this by describing how employees are prepared to work with particularly difficult clients. Hence, decisions could be made in action and the possibility of lengthy decision-making processes preventing daily work from continuing without disturbances could be minimised. This is an example of changes in task related factors where time spent on non-value adding work for the customer is minimised. An action strategy is the group manager performing every day work and fundamentally it resembles to the notion of leadership as mundane acts by managers legitimised by their formal position (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2003).

The findings point towards more task related factors being the cause of the low billing ratio. The solution to streamline task related factors proposed by Coffey (2010) is to decrease the amount of non-value adding work. As this may sound simple, it requires a whole system diagnosis of how all the components of the company interplay to enable complete system efficiency and to avoid sub-optimisation. As illustrated in Figure 3.3 the whole organisation must be considered in order to affect the results to the all stakeholders of the organisation. Thus, leadership must also be considered although it was not the primary cause of the low billing ratio. Changes at the process level requires

attention at the individual level, as argued by Coffey (2010). To execute the change process in the region, leadership was one of the change levers as proposed by Beer (2009) and enabled the execution of the transformation processes towards purified technical groups by legitimising the goals set by management so that a social process of influence through *voluntary* submission by a LIP could take place (Alvesson et al., 2017). This logic could explain why there was no leadership deficit identified among group managers that could be linked to the low billing ratios. Also, this aligns with idea that leadership and in this case, management are interdependent modes of organising. Moreover, it aligns with the argument that leadership practices are not equal to organisational outcomes as it is often other modes that do the organising rather than leadership itself (Alvesson et al., 2017).

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study aimed to explore how leadership and its alternatives was linked to performance in the region. During the progression of the data inquiry, the definition of leadership was described broadly which complicated the process of defining a link from leadership to organisational performance. The definition of leadership was extended to the point where it covered almost everything the group managers' did, and as argued by Alvesson et al. (2017) that decreases its significance. Consequently, the broad definition of leadership as implied by the results suggests that there is certainly no definite link between leadership and performance as explored in this case. However, from the perspective of the organisation, the broad definition of leadership is not an issue itself. Rather, leadership is merely a way of organising work and regardless of the discrepancy between the definition and practice of leadership, it will remain as a significant factor for developing and sustaining the organisation.

Nevertheless, although the study recognises leadership as an emergent process from the context of where it is practiced and thus its definition may vary, there may still be a need to distinguish leadership from other ways of organising work. Differentiating leadership from other modes of organising is essential for business executives to adequately identify where there is potential for changes to achieve the results as intended. Otherwise, one may assume that leadership is the problem and consequently the solution to the problem, as in this case with the inherent focus of leadership in the region's change process.

Rather than it being one mode of organising having contributed to performance, leadership and management appear as two interdependent modes of organising. In this case, the group managers, the leadership framework, and the executive broadened the definition of leadership so that it overlaps with the definition of management provided by Alvesson et al. (2017). Although the group managers highlighted multiple modes of organising, management was the only mode that could by rational means be linked to the performance of the region. The process of reorganisation had almost instantaneously by itself raised the potential to tender for larger projects, thus the revenue. Again, this was followed by ambiguous references to the significance of leadership but in general terms which therefore broadened the definition of leadership.

In this case leadership ensues what the actors and the framework believe it to be leadership. Leadership at the company is both influenced by the executive and the framework which may be regarded as a frame of reference for leadership, i.e. the culture in the organisation. However, the group managers also contribute to constantly redefine leadership since the region is operating as a separate organisation, each group in the region develops its own sub-culture which deviates from the organisational culture. That is why the group manager role requires a considerable amount of attention as they possess a significant potential to regulate and alter leadership in the region, and this may also be the case for the company as a whole.

Therefore, because of the vertical communication between management levels exhibit tendencies of deficiencies, although not observed in action but were revealed from the interviews, sub-cultures in the groups may deviate from the intended company culture. Subsequently, the group managers' role being relative, i.e. a HIP in relation to employees and a LIP in relation to superior managers, entails attention as they have the possibility to influence the culture in their group. The authors argue that this role requires clarification to facilitate open and honest conversation between senior management and the task force as advocated by Beer (2009), and to clarify which the

common goals are for leadership to occur between regional management and group managers according to the definition of leadership by Alvesson et al. (2017). This does not imply that there is a leadership deficiency among group managers or that the company's strategy is not working, but that the organisation's culture, values, goals, leadership, and other elements as a system must be aligned to create and sustain high performance (Beer, 2009; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Coffey, 2010).

In this study, there was no consciously made distinction between the individual level and the organisational level regarding leadership as described by Burgoyne et al. (2004). The authors believe examining the individual level and the organisational level could provide with further insights into leadership and its link to performance. At the individual level, future studies could seek to explore how leadership as a process of influence occurs in action which is favourably performed using participatory research methods. Noteworthy is that this requires an extensive body of knowledge of the leadership topic to facilitate the researcher's attempt to produce knowledge by using the grounded theory methodology. If such a study is to be performed, this study may serve as a point of departure although the authors cannot stress enough the importance of embracing a reflexive approach to leadership and being aware of the assumptions inherent with the researcher's previous experience. Future studies of how leadership affects the organisational level could contribute to the understanding of how leadership and culture are interrelated. Such a study would favourably be carried out through ethnographic studies where the researcher acts more as an observer rather than participating in-action.

Lastly, the authors believe that perhaps future studies should approach leadership and performance as two separate research topics. Leadership is complex as it is, and by attempting to find a link to performance it adds to that complexity by seeking for the complete picture of what it is that drives organisational performance. The modes of organising do contribute to the understanding of organisational dynamics, but they are merely descriptions of how work is organised and do not comprise of everything that occurs in an organisation which is relevant for the determining drivers of performance. The performance of organisations is contingent upon many other factors and there are often several ways of reaching the same results. Hence, any future studies similar to this one will most likely not find a clear link between leadership and performance if they are conducted using a similar approach.

7 References

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