GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

IT IS NOT ABOUT YOUR STYLE

An Investigation on Managerial Soft Skills and Attributes Related to
Positive Leadership Styles in the Service Sector

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Abstract

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Purpose: Managerial work and leadership are linked to the organization of the work of others. Managers are responsible for planning and scheduling work, allocating resources and directly monitoring the work progress in many ways. Their work is fundamentally relational and affects the work engagement and the service quality of the team. Based on that, our purpose is to investigate common soft skills and attributes within positive leadership from well-performing workshop managers, providing an insight on these characteristics and skills in relation to a positive service quality.

Theory: The theoretical framework is based on five different theories related to positive leadership and engagement: personal engagement-, self-determination-, social exchange-, social learning and job demands job resources theory. These theories and concepts enable the identification of the relevant soft skills of these leaders in a multinational organization.

Method: The research was carried out through a qualitative method using semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with workshop managers within the organization from five different countries in the business area "Europe North Central" and the interviews were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The number of respondents was 12.

Result: The study revealed that most of the managers had one or more attributes from each leadership style, which is believed to be positively related to work engagement and service quality. In addition to that, soft skills like communication, ability to influence, self-awareness and sensibility for individual needs were expressed as important skills for most of the leaders, as well as their mechanical background.

Acknowledgement

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1. Background

Multinational companies are expanding every year, looking for the best way to work with the available resources, cost-effectiveness, and social political aspects in order to enhance competitive advantage (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). To do that, it is the people within the organizations that possess the talents and abilities that enable the business to resist, grow and move forward to tackle these challenges and changes. When it comes to human resource strategies in the service sector, which relies more on human resources than machines, these organizations are more labor-intensive and cost-intensive than the manufacturing sector, and work with both tangibility (i.e., physical goods) and intangibility (i.e., products that are not physical in nature) offers. This calls for different skills/attributes and different forms of leadership (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). These attributes and skills, also known as soft skills, relate to human interpersonal skills and behaviors, like communication, conflict management and can belong to one or more forms of leadership.

Wong et al. (2015) states that customer-oriented teams communicate that they are not trying to sell products and services to be profitable for the selling company, but rather to serve the preferences and long-term needs of the customer, which lead to greater customer satisfaction. To fulfill the needs of the clients, it is necessary to create a certain environment in the service team, fostering a service-oriented atmosphere or service climate, and consequently, service quality (Schneider et al., 1998). Moreover, managerial work and leadership are linked to the organization of the work of others and have an important role in this process. Managers are responsible for planning and scheduling work, allocating resources, and directly monitoring the work progress in many ways. Their work is fundamentally relational and affects the work engagement and the service quality. The managers possess different skills and lead with different styles with the purpose of building a productive environment, work engagement and consequently, service quality to the customers (Schneider et al., 1998; Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Salanova et al., 2005).

There are several studies related to different leadership styles and how each one of the styles work in order to create work engagement, however, little is known about their similarities and which attributes or skills they share with each other (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020; Schneider et al., 1998; Hoch et al., 2018).

1.1 Case Company

The project was performed in collaboration with a large multinational company (MNC), in one of their business areas. The organization provides transport solutions, including heavy combustion engines, and recently electric heavy trucks and buses for private and public organizations. The study included five countries in the Europe North Central area which consists of: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Austria, Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland. The major focus was the service areas, called "workshops", which have direct contact with the customers. The term "workshop" refers to mechanical workshops, where the customers bring their heavy-duty trucks or buses for inspections, repairing or other services. The main staff of these workshops are mechanics who work with combustion engines or electrical engines, and answer to a workshop leader and/or a service manager who delegates, controls the processes, and tries to improve customer satisfaction. The workshop managers have around 5 to 50 subordinates to coordinate and control. In addition to that, service managers usually originally come from the mechanic team, and have high technical knowledge about electrical and combustion engines. However, they often need a management/leadership education before starting as a service leader. The organization has a current project focused on leadership development regarding soft skills and gave us the opportunity to conduct an investigation in order to better understand the characteristics of a competent leader in the service area.

To proceed with the investigation, the contact persons selected five countries which were considered similar in their way of working. Within this selection two to three well-performing workshop leaders from each country were chosen as interviewees from around 50 workshops, which will be kept anonymous. The well performing workshops were chosen based on two different surveys conducted by the organization which evaluate various aspects of the workshops service and performance, for example, work engagement, teamwork, trust, as well as customer satisfaction, service quality and helpfulness. Since our project focuses on successful leaders, both surveys were taken into consideration when selecting well-performing workshops, which is further explained in the 5.3 Sampling section.

2. Purpose of the Study

2.1 Problem Statement

According to Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021; 2020) and Hoch et al., (2018), little is known about the similarities and differences between the positive leadership styles, along with their relations with work engagement. The authors, however, have identified an overlap between positive leadership styles, that is, transformational -, servant -, authentic -, ethical - and empowering leadership. Through a meta-analysis, Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) also found that all positive leadership styles were significantly and positively related to work engagement. They call for more research focusing on the similarities of positive leadership styles, to better provide leaders with tools to develop those skills, and not rely only on their individual styles. This project contributes to a better understanding of the attributes and soft skills shared between these leadership styles through exploring managers' perceptions and practices. In addition to that, this project also aims to understand how these attributes and skills can be associated with service quality.

2.2 Aim and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to contribute knowledge concerning positive leadership and associated soft skills/attributes among managers in well-performing workshops in the service work sector. The study also aims to highlight possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles to better understand how they overlap each other. The research questions read as follows:

- What constitutes positive leadership according to managers in well-performing workshops in the service sector?
- What soft skills do the different aspects of positive leadership require and how could aspects of positive leadership be associated with service quality?

3. Previous Research

This chapter will present previous research in managerial work in relation to the service sector, exploring the ways that managers can make it easier for their employees to provide a good service quality. The first section presents the managerial work in relation to the service sector and service quality. The second section explores the link between positive leadership and work engagement, while the third section presents the importance of soft skills in relation to organizations. This is done to provide a framework and an overall understanding of the subjects to the reader, as well as to present the gaps identified in the field.

3.1 Managerial Work in the Service Sector

In opposition to the manufacturing sector, the service sector demands different interactions and processes to create value to the system, which in turn requires certain skills and competences from the actors involved (Lin & Liu, 2016). According to Boxall and Purcell (2016), the service work is more labor-intensive than goods-producing areas. In other words, the cost of employment is higher than in manufacturing work, because it requires more customization of the service, and the organization relies on people to a greater extent. A key aspect of service work is contact with the customers and the delivering of service. Thus, it cannot be standardized in the same way as manufacturing work, which makes it more labor-intensive (Frenkel, 2000; Batt, 2002). In addition to that, Bowen and Ford (2002) highlight the responsibility of the organization to identify the driving force behind the customer purchase, in order to meet their expectations and foster customer fulfillment and loyalty. Similarly, Frenkel (2000), highlights the importance of having a facilitator or a manager to coordinate and develop an environment of growth and productivity, where the individuals within the organization can exercise their talents and thereby improve the service quality (Gracia et al., 2010).

Managers play a key role in organizations and their work is fundamentally relational, and it is therefore of value to study their behavior, experiences, and skills. Managerial work is relational work, and managers spend much of their time in formal and informal meetings to represent their units, and they are involved in different communication processes, having little time alone. According to Schein (2010), the leader and/or manager can influence the work environment positively, which could possibly affect patterns of conduct and behaviors. In

addition to that, the leaders/managers positive influence on the work environment may also be connected to delivering a higher quality service to customers (Salanova et al., 2005).

According to Frenkel (2000), the service provider carries a symbolic value to the customers, which can be related to communication styles, attitudes, and other social skills, affecting the company's reputation, profitability and customer satisfaction (Lin & Liu, 2016). In addition to that, an investigation from Salanova et al., (2005) shows that organizational resources (e.g., training, autonomy, management, proactive leadership), can improve the interactions between the employees, enhancing the work engagement, along with employee's effort and their competency in providing service quality. This phenomenon is called service climate (Schneider et al., 1998), which refers to practices and processes that are supported and expected by the manager to enhance service quality (Bowen & Schneider, 2014). A positive service climate promotes better interaction between the team that provides the service, leading to a positive customer retention, satisfaction, and loyalty, together with better service performance for the company (Salanova et al., 2005; Hong et al., 2013). In other words, a positive spiral is created where a better service climate gives higher service quality to the customer, increasing customer loyalty, and where a higher customer loyalty reflects in a better service climate (Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Salanova et al., 2005). The management and/or leadership has an important responsibility to reduce the barriers and facilitate this process for the team, to build up work engagement and develop a positive service climate (Salanova et al., 2005; Bowen & Schneider, 2014).

3.2 Positive Leadership and Work Engagement

In a meta-analysis Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) list five frequently used and well-researched positive leadership styles: transformational -, authentic -, servant -, ethical - and empowering leadership, which will be described further under theoretical framework. According to longitudinal studies from Decuypere and Schaufeli (2020; 2021), all positive leadership styles are linked to positive work engagement and competitive advantage. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) define engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 295). Kahn (1990) adds that "in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." (p. 694). According to Bakker et al. (2006) employee work engagement is a positive and fulfilling state of mind characterized by vigor (i.e., willingness to

invest time and effort in the work), dedication (i.e., enthusiasm and pride in the work) and absorption (i.e., a positive feeling of concentration and engrossment in the work) of work. The same authors show that this engagement is contagious among the employees, which highlights the importance of a leader to inspire and guide the group in a certain direction.

A leader's role is to inspire, strengthen and connect the team, developing their internal cooperation and eventually improving the service quality (Schneider et al., 1998). This not only increases the work engagement in the organization but also, if done right, provides a competitive advantage (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021). Leadership is a complex and multi-faceted construct, and although there are many different factors that may affect the development of employee engagement, research suggests that positive leadership can potentially influence these factors to a great extent.

Decuypere and Schaufeli (2020) states that each of the positive leadership styles have their own specific focus, but also share common ground in their attributes. For example, transformational and servant leadership style focuses on basic psychological needs of the followers in order to reach the organizational goals or employees' personal growth. Becoming a role model for employees is also a behavior or attribute shared between ethical and transformational leadership styles. This means that managers can express soft skills and attributes connected to several positive leadership styles at once, making it difficult to separate the leadership styles from each other. In their meta-analysis, Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) call for more research to be done regarding the similarities and overlap between the positive leadership styles. Hoch et al. (2018) also highlights the overlap between the different leadership styles while stating that there have been inadequate investigations done in the field.

To highlight possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles and to understand how they overlap each other, this study aims to contribute with knowledge concerning positive leadership and their soft skills/attributes, according to manifestations among managers in well-performing workshops in this particular service work sector.

3.3 The Importance of Soft Skills in organizations

The concept of "soft skills" and "hard skills" has been scrutinized and categorized by various authors (Touloumakos, 2020). According to Weber et al., (2013), hard skills are related to technical jobs, associated with intelligence-quotient, for example, when a mechanic uses their cognitive and technical skill to fix a mechanical problem. Parente et al., (2012) distinguishes

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hard skills as including strategy-, structure-, and systems-related skills. In contrast, soft skills are referred to as interpersonal skills, and they are often hard to define. Soft skills are more intangible, more ambiguous and harder to assess than more technical knowledge, while hard skills are more easily identified, influenced and more tangible (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Parente et al. 2012). Soft skills are related to individual and collective behavior and interpersonal skills, and apply to, for example, communication, management, conflict solving and coaching.

According to Boyatzis (1982), these competences have a significant impact on the performance effectiveness of the managers/leaders and can also influence the engagement of their teams. Having the right soft skills is important, especially for those managers and leaders involved in facilitating personal development (Gibb, 2014). Bates and Morgan (2018) explain that soft skills like listening, establishing trusting relationships and structuring constructive conversations, facilitate personal development, and consequently, according to Decuypere & Schaufeli (2021), may foster work engagement.

Dameron and Durand (2013) suggest that the lack of soft skills in leadership can explain organizational ineffectiveness and dysfunction, which could possibly cause failure. A survey conducted among just over 1600 employees suggested that jobs with non-manual work or services find that interpersonal and relational skills play an important role for the organization to survive (Green, 1998). Other research reveals that employees with high soft skills, like ability to work in teams, initiative, planning ability and adaptability perform with higher quality and create a service orientation culture in the organizational environment (Khokhar & Kush, 2009). In addition to that, a study conducted by Chaudhry and Usman (2011), found that soft skills in a group of employees predicted their levels of performance, and argued that the organizations should use soft skills as a tool to support different human resources processes, such as in retention, promotion, and termination. The same study revealed that soft skills also improved relationships within the staff, communication, adaptability to changes and decreased work stress, which potentially foster better ways of working and greater engagement.

Previous research points out the presence of soft skills in relation to performance on different sectors (Sanjay & Munshi, 2020; Lin & Liu, 2016; Boyatzis, 1982; Green, 1998; Khokhar & Kush, 2009; Chaudhry & Usman, 2011), personal development and employment success (Gibb, 2014; Khokhar & Kush, 2009) and management/leadership (Parente et al., 2012; Bates & Morgan, 2018; Dameron & Durand, 2013; Green, 1998). Soft skills are particularly important among the managers because their role can inspire and encourage the employees to

mimic their own behaviors and engagement, and by doing so strengthen the organization's competitive advantage (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021). However, a better comprehension on how soft skills are related to work engagement and service quality is needed. Based on this, our project aims to investigate soft skills and attributes of the managers in well-performing workshops according to their positive leadership styles. The knowledge of these attributes can contribute to understanding their relation with service quality, and contribute to a better comprehension on how the leadership styles overlap in their characteristics.

4. Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned, work engagement and service quality are related in such a way that a higher level of engagement will result in the employees making an extra effort towards the customers, leading to greater customer satisfaction (Schneider et al. 1998; Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Salanova et al., 2005). Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) and Salanova et al. (2005) implies that leadership and leader's skills are essential to promote engagement and, by extension, service quality, which is a guiding assumption upon which the present study rests. Therefore, the present chapter begins by presenting the five positive leadership styles (transformational-, authentic-, servant-, ethical- and empowering leadership) along with the attributes used to identify the different styles in the interviews on this project. Thereafter, to highlight the link between positive leadership and work engagement, we present five theories (personal engagement-, self-determination-, social exchange-, social learning-, and job demands job resources theory). Thirdly, a framework describing how the managers' soft skills are categorized.

4.1 Positive Leadership: Five Leadership Styles

As stated before, all positive leadership styles hold the underlying assumption that they positively influence employee outcomes, for example work engagement and competitive advantage (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). There is evidence of an overlap between these positive leadership styles and that a manager might not represent just one of these styles (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; 2020; Hoch et al., 2018).

4.1.1 Transformational Leadership

According to Eva et al. (2019), the transformational style focuses on empowering and making the followers independent with the purpose of enhancing the performance of the group, and consequently, a positive outcome for the organization. Transformational leaders can be described as setting performance standards, envisioning the future, and acting as a role model (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). Bass (1985) developed a concept of transformational leadership, combining charisma with two different ingredients. The first one is individualized consideration, where the leader has eyes on each individual and her needs, support, coaching and mentoring (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This creates a powerful identification with the leader,

which facilitates the process of obedience and acceptance of the followers. Second, the leader inspires the followers to reach higher levels of performance, giving a clear vision and sense of purpose to drive the personal or organizational goals. This ingredient is called intellectual stimulation (Sendjaya, 2015). Transformational leadership works through two other dimensions that inspire their followers. First, "Idealized influence" means that the leader is a role model and a trustful and admired person, inspiring the group to follow his behaviors and efforts to reach the goals of the organization with determination and persistence (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Second, "inspirational motivation" implies that the leader does not only provide a vision and direction to the followers, but purpose and challenges to motivate them to keep following the vision and direction of the organization. Transformational leaders also have clear communication and expectations of the group (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In this project, the four dimensions, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation, were taken into account.

4.1.2 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is based on the idea that the leader's primary role is to focus on the needs of others and can be described as altruistic with a focus on personal growth for the followers. The effort to create long-term and sustainable performance shows the contrast in comparison with the performance-oriented leadership, where the leaders sacrifice their followers' well-being in order to reach higher levels of profitability and growth (Sendjaya, 2015). Servant leaders value authenticity and stewardship on a deep level, understanding the personal needs of each one's followers and developing trust between their relations.

The dimensions that are emphasized in this study from servant leadership are: empowerment (i.e., enabling people and encouraging personal development), support, humility (i.e., the ability to put accomplishments and talents in a proper perspective) and stewardship (i.e., taking responsibility for the organization/team). All these dimensions show significant correlations with work engagement (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021).

4.1.3 Authentic Leadership

Authentic leaders refer to a leadership approach that stimulates and promotes a strong internal moral perspective, unbiased processing, self-awareness and control, transparency (with themselves and followers) and an understanding of their own convictions and values, which

one follows no matter the consequences or implications (Sendjaya, 2015). Authenticity can be described as "owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to know oneself" (Seligman, 2002, as cited in Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 92).

According to Kernis (2003), this leadership style consists of a high level of self-esteem, a deep understanding of one's weaknesses and strengths, and high levels of stability and consistency in one's actions. In this project, authentic leadership has been investigated following these four components: self-awareness (i.e., understand themselves and their own convictions), relational transparency (i.e., being transparent with the followers and themselves), internalized moral perspective (i.e., consistency in actions according to their morals) and balanced processing, where the leader bases their decision on relevant information (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021).

4.1.4 Ethical Leadership

According to Brown et al., (2005), to be an honest and trustworthy ethical leader it is necessary to have the "idealized influence" attribute as a/one's transformational style, to be able to encourage one's followers to reach higher standards of moral and ethical behavior. The leader is considered a *moral person*, which means that she is honest, fair, open and has strong integrity, and strives to do things the "right way" in both their personal and professional life (Treviño et al., 2000). The same author also describes that decision-making processes are guided by a solid set of ethical values and principles, highlighting their honesty and fairness. The ethical leader also tries to be the *moral manager* focusing on explicit communication on moral and ethics conduct (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). According to the same authors, this implies that ethical leaders give feedback on performance reviews and encourage autonomy, self-determination, and competences. This in turn enhances employees' trust and influences engagement positively. In this project, attributes like reward systems, ethical goals, fairness, communication, feedback, and explicit concern about moral and ethical behavior are taken in consideration to identify this style.

4.1.5 Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership is an emerging style of leadership that stems from the principles of positive psychology, where focus is on enabling and encouraging employees to lead themselves,

rather than enforcing authority (Decuypere & Schaufeli (2021). According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), empowerment is the process of identifying obstacles that raise powerlessness and creating organizational practices and techniques to strengthen a sense of self-efficacy among the team. Two years later, Thomas and Velthouse (1990), argued that empowerment is an intrinsic task motivation and that it is necessary that its four dimensions are present: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. In essence, intrinsic task motivation is based on positive experience through a task or process (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), for example, if a person perceives a task to be meaningful, the motivation to complete it will come from within, without any external motivating factor being needed. In addition to that, leaders engage in primarily six empowering behaviors: delegation of authority (i.e., enable the staff to have more responsibilities and authority) (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), self-directed decision making (i.e., empower the individuals on decision making and problem solving) (Konczak et al., 2000), skills development (i.e., the leader facilitates skill development and acquirement of knowledge) (Konczak et al., 2000), coaching (i.e., support and guide the employee through his/her development) (Konczak et al., 2000), accountability for outcomes (i.e., outcomes responsibility rely on the individual or team empowered) (Ford & Fottler, 1995), and information sharing (i.e., the leader encourages information sharing to facilitate the process of decision making) (Ford & Fottler, 1995). These are the dimensions that are taken into consideration to identify this style.

4.2 Theories for Assessing Leadership Styles in Relation to Work Engagement

According to Decuypere and Schaufeli (2020), there are five different theories that explain the relation between positive leadership and work engagement. The theories presented below highlight these different aspects of the link between all positive leadership styles with work engagement and facilitate the assessment of their commonalities in this project.

4.2.1 Personal Engagement Theory (PET)

According to Kahn (1990), personal engagement is enabled when three different psychological states are triggered by the leader: psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability. The first one refers to the feeling of receiving back in personal investment, when the individual feels that it is helpful, valuable and has a certain amount of autonomy to operate in relation to three different aspects: task characteristics, role characteristics and work interactions (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). The individuals reach psychological meaningfulness when they have clear,

challenging, and varied tasks, influence in their role and receive rewards through the interactions in the work. The second state, psychological safety, refers to the capability of the individual to expose oneself without fear of adverse consequences to their reputation or career. It is leadership that works with the subordinate at the same level, is supportive, open, consistent,fair and conveys a sense of security that enables engagement (Kahn, 1990). Finally, psychological availability facilitates personal engagement when the individuals are physically, psychologically, and emotionally filled with energy to accomplish a particular activity. In other words, the leader supports the individual to be confident with the tasks and responsibilities and understand and help him/her to find a balance in their work and personal life, attempting to boost their energy in all the three areas to promote trust and engagement (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021).

4.2.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

According to Van den Broeck et al. (2008), SDT claims that every individual is a growth-oriented organism closely engaged in their environment, interacting with different individuals and groups when pursuing their interests and goals. In other terms, following their desires and needs, there is a natural tendency to interconnect with other people positively or negatively. The same authors inferred that the leaders could use this individual condition to improve engagement and satisfaction among employees by fostering autonomy, connection with the group, competence development and freedom to choose (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) raised three essential actions for the leader to promote engagement; empowering the employees, developing autonomy and freedom when it comes to decision making; strengthening relationships on the team, focusing on building strong connections and a sense of relatedness; facilitating training and feedback to develop more competence.

4.2.3 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

In the social exchange theory (SET), the exchange relationship between manager and employee is built on trust and interdependence where there is a mutual expectation of reciprocation of favors, work, or support. As a result, these social exchange relationships are built largely around trust. Employees to ethical leaders usually perceive themselves as being in social exchange relations rather than in an economical exchange relation and should therefore be more prone to go above and beyond their tasks thanks to their dedication and engagement for their managers.

According to SET, trust grows as managers and employees interact in high-quality relationships. The fair and supportive treatment and open communication is a sign of trust that the employees reciprocate. When showing concern for the employees, openness to input, making fair decisions and showing good morals the leader becomes a role model. Therefore, according to the SET, the employees will put their trust in ethical leaders because they are role models (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006).

4.2.4 Social Learning Theory (SLT)

According to the social learning theory (SLT) managers have the power to enhance positive organizational behaviors, such as engagement, through behavioral modeling. By acting as role models and engaging themselves, the employees may want to mimic this behavior by becoming more engaged as well (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021). This process can be both unconscious and emotional. According to a research on the crossover of burnout and engagement by Bakker et al. (2006), it seems that engagement is contagious among employees in a team. Drawing on social learning theory, Hoch et al. (2018) state that leaders can influence employees to engage in certain behaviors through behavioral modeling and transactional leadership behaviors such as using rewards, punishments, and communication.

4.2.5 Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R)

The job demands-job resources theory illustrates how work engagement can be affected by both the job demands and job resources available. This is shown in both a stress process and a motivational process. The excessive demands in combination with poor resources (i.e., performance feedback, social support and participation in decision making) has a negative impact on work engagement and psychological and physical wellbeing of the employees. If the stress process is on one side of a spectrum the motivational process is on the other end of that spectrum. When the job demands are on an acceptable level and great job resources are available, work engagement is fostered. It is important for a leader to balance the job demands and job resources of their employees in such a way that they remain healthy, motivated, and productive. The leaders can do this by managing both the allocation and impact of the job demands and job resources on their employees. Job resources can play both an intrinsic motivational role where they foster the employees' growth, learning and development, and an extrinsic motivational role where they are vital in achieving organizational goals (Schaufeli &

Bakker, 2004). Schaufeli (2015) argues that since leaders usually have the power to influence the job demands and job resources, they may directly or indirectly influence the work engagement as well.

4.3 Soft Skills

To facilitate the identification of the soft skills, three different categorizations were chosen: personal skills, situational skills, and interpersonal skills (Abduwani, 2012). Personal skills refer to competences that help personal development or competence development regarding the organization (i.e., self-confidence, language and self-motivation, mentoring, self-management). Interpersonal skills are abilities towards other individuals and groups, improving organizational team competency (i.e., communication, conflict management, leadership, and work recognition). Situational skill merges when personal and interpersonal skills turn out to be critical (i.e., empathy, authority, problem solving and cooperation). These three classifications are based on study by Abduwani (2012), where the author highlights the value and development of soft skills (see Appendix 5).

5. Method

The main purpose of this study is to investigate and contribute with knowledge concerning positive leadership and soft skills/attributes associated with this, according to manifestations among managers in well-performing workshops in this particular service work sector. The study also aims to highlight possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles and to understand how they overlap each other. To reach our purpose, a qualitative thematic approach was used in this project.

5.1 Rationale for the Qualitative Research Design

As mentioned above the idea is that this research might help guide other researchers interested in investigating the relationship between soft skills, positive leadership and engagement in service work and provide practical implications to provide leaders with the right tools and to develop these skills. However, skills, behaviors and attitudes are difficult to measure or grasp, in view of the fact that it depends on the individuals, interactions, contexts and environments they are in (Warhurst et al., 2004). To achieve this goal, it was necessary to become thoroughly familiar with the leadership styles, which soft skills/attributes they possess and how these factors could affect the engagement of their team. Also, an investigation of experiences, situations and perceptions of the service leaders/managers was essential to provide a deeper view of the attributes and soft skills necessary to provide good service in this sector. The investigation of the manager's experiences gave flexibility to comprehend the context in an individual, group and organizational perspective (Charmaz, 2006), providing the freedom to shape and reshape the data collected and the interpretation of their experiences.

5.2 Sampling

Bryman (2012) considers sample size to be one of the greatest challenges qualitative researchers face. However, Ritchie, Lewis & Elam (2003) states that qualitative samples are usually small in size. The authors list three main reasons for this. First, if the data consists of enough interviews that are rich in information and are thoroughly analyzed it will eventually be saturated and no new information will be added from each additional interview. Second, in contrast to quantitative data, there are no requirements for qualitative data to be of sufficient scale to provide estimates, nor to determine statistically significant associations with a certain

precision. Third, information gathered from qualitative interviews are rich in detail and contain hundreds of "bites" of information. In relation to this, the sample size needs to be kept reasonably small. The number of interviews for this study was set to 12, which was considered enough to get a broad understanding of the workshop managers soft skills, attributes, and leadership styles. Qualitative research also consumes a lot of time and resources, and it would therefore not be manageable to conduct and analyze too many interviews, especially for a master thesis project that is quite limited in time. After the interviews were conducted and the material had been transcribed and coded, saturation was achieved relatively fast. In this project, it was identified patterns in the answers of the respondents that became clearer as more interviews were coded, using thematic analysis. Even though the interviewees were provided through contact persons there was somewhat of a spread between the different respondents, both in background, age and experience within the organization and as a manager.

According to Cornish et al. (2014), collaborative analysis can contribute to the study, expanding the understanding of the phenomena through different perspectives and developing new ideas during the course of the project. The possibility to take part of this project, the approval of the contact persons and HR was essential to get in touch with the workshop managers to conduct the interviews. In addition to that, the gatekeepers granted access to the customer satisfaction and workshop performance indicators and support to understand it, which facilitated the process of choice for the sampling.

For this study a purposive sampling was done by the organization, where the "VP HR Europe" and "Director service market and retail manager" served as gatekeepers. The gatekeepers helped with the selection of workshop managers best suited for interviews. They reached out to the local HR managers in each country and asked them to select some workshop managers for the interviews, as well as informed the workshop managers about the project. The workshop managers selected for the interviews were running well-performing workshops based on two surveys provided by the organization, regarding work engagement and customer satisfaction. The first survey evaluated the following: work engagement, teamwork, trust, purpose, empowerment, role, care, management, communication, growth, innovation, work life balance, customer focus, feedback, accountability, health and safety, leadership, values, resources, inclusion, strategy, collaboration and continuous improvement among managers and employees. The workshops chosen through this survey had high scores in almost all the different aspects, especially work engagement, customer focus, leadership, and trust. The

second survey evaluated aspects of customer satisfaction: courtesy and helpfulness, contact with the right person, availability of mechanical parts, information, completing service and customer agreement, solving problems, service quality, long-term relation and explanation about work carried out, among customers. The chosen workshops have high scores on almost all the aspects of customer satisfaction, which indicates high service quality. Since our project focuses on successful leaders, both surveys were taken into consideration when selecting well-performing workshops.

5.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 service managers from well-performing workshops in five countries within the Europe North Central area. All managers were male and had a background as a mechanic. Their experience within the organization ranged from 1 to +40 years, whereas their experience as a manager ranged from 5 to +20 years. Contact information to the workshop managers was shared by the local HR managers to the researchers and contact was established with the interviewees via email (Appendix 1). Semi-structured interview questions were chosen to be flexible and adaptable to the situation so the researchers could do some probing for further information, when necessary, yet they are also structured enough so that relevant questions and topics are covered within the scope of the study (Bryman, 2012; Ritchie et al. 2003). An interview guide was designed to structure the in-depth interviews effectively (see Appendix 2 & 3). The interview guide identified the key issues and subtopics that were explored during the interviews. A logically structured and rationally designed interview guide made it easier for the researchers to become familiar with the questions and comfortable during the interview. The interview guide was structured as follows: (1) Introduction. The interview guide started with some introductory questions to ease the interviewee into the interview and were relatively straightforward and easy to answer. The purpose of introductory questions was to make the interviewee comfortable and initiate a conversation and also to get a deeper understanding of the research project. The opening questions also provided an opportunity to collect contextual information such as background, education, experiences, etc., which provided a context for later stages of the interview and guided follow-up questions. (2) Core part. This part of the interview was more in-depth, and the questions moved from more circumstantial towards attitudinal/evaluative/explanatory, from more general to more specific. Generally, interviewees find it easier to talk about experiences

than motivations or attitudes or feelings (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). Therefore, the questions regarding experiences came before the motivational or attitudinal questions. The questions followed a chronological order. (3) Winding down. Towards the end of the interview, it is good to wind the interview down to end on a positive note to make sure that the interviewee has time to move away from possible distress or frustration that the discussion might have generated. The questions for winding down were about the future and of the interviewees attitude and experience of the interview. This was to make sure to get the last bit of information out of the interviewee to leave with a complete picture of the interviewees' thoughts on the subject (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003).

All interviews were conducted over the internet through video calls and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The questions were constructed to initiate a conversation and reflection from the interviewee rather than short answers. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees' and conducted in either English or Swedish.

5.4 Thematic Framework

According to Maxwell and Chimel (2014), and Schreier (2014), the thematic framework is an analytical technique, where the data is reduced and segmented to identify, decipher, and formulate different categories for the object of study. The same author emphasizes that thematic analysis goes beyond the thematic coding or categorization, connecting not only themes but also the relation between the categories. In the case of this study, the thematic analysis helped the understanding and interpretation of the experiences, background, behavioral styles, and relevant soft skills among the successful managers. It also created a basis to understand and interpret the commonalities and differences between them, taking into account the environment that the managers work in. In this project, 12 interviews were carried out, anonymized, transcribed and only then the raw data were coded. The raw material from the interviews was rich in detail and heavy on information, therefore it was necessary to reduce and categorize it to prepare it for analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). To be able to filter the data, the familiarization with themes, theories and concepts was essential, aiming to create a concrete ground not only to code the data, but to analyze it as well. In the coding process, the material was labeled and sorted in different categories and colors, creating a similarity-based order, and facilitating the identification of similarities and differences between the categories (Maxwell & Chimel, 2014). According to Maxwell and Chimel (2014), the coding process can be done in

three distinct categories; organizational, substantive, and theoretical, where the actual process can combine more than one category. The coding followed the thematic approach, where the categories derived from the five positive leadership styles that have a strong relationship with work engagement and the soft skills that were identified during the thematic analysis. Following the coding process, a holistic approach was chosen to analyze the connections between categories, creating a broader perspective of the interviewees, focusing on the similarities and distinctions in the specific context that they are in. At this stage, a close investigation on the patterns of experiences, assumptions, perceptions, and behaviors was done, to understand the themes that were explored more often in the conversations, identifying the communalities and differences between positive leadership.

The thematic framework method provided the possibility to move back and forth between the chosen theory and the empirical data, which also can be described as adopting an abductive approach (Thornberg & Charmaz 2014). In addition to that, the same framework enabled exploration of spontaneous manifestations or explicit and latent themes in the interviews, which required a more interpretative method. Thereafter, when the data was collected, each of the 12 interviews were analyzed, coded, and combined within their respective categories of the thematic framework, adding support to the analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It is important to mention that the themes investigated were connected with the chosen theories, which explores positive leadership and their soft skills/attributes in relation with work engagement, and also highlights possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles, understanding how they overlap each other.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were taken into account throughout this study. In line with the recommendations of the Swedish research council (2017), all participants for the interviews were informed about the purpose of the study, guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, as well as information that participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any time. The email with information that was sent out to the workshop managers before doing the interview can be found in the appendix (Appendix 1). The interviewees were also sent a consent form (Appendix 4) stating that "Participation takes place on the research participants' terms. The participant can choose to change the terms of her/his participation or to cancel the participation (e.g., an interview) without giving reasons if he/she so wishes." Interviewees were also

informed that the recordings of the interviews would be safeguarded and only used by the researchers and would be deleted once the thesis course was completed.

5.6 Criteria for Research Quality

The subject of data quality was chosen to be addressed by criteria for quality, described by Tracy (2010). According to the author, there are eight criteria's for excellent qualitative research (i.e., worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence), that were all applied in this project to enhance the validity, reliability and purpose of the project.

To fulfill the "worthy topic" criteria, the subject of this project was chosen based on a real necessity of a large multinational company, since there was a need to identify attributes and soft skills from the management in this sector, to better understand what soft skills, attributes and experiences the ideal workshop manager possess, and how to develop future leaders. In addition to that, our project aims to contribute by identifying attributes that the leadership styles have in common, which is one of the research gaps mentioned in Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021; 2020) and Hoch et al., (2018). Furthermore, when it comes to the data collection and "rich rigor" criteria, we first planned to conduct ten interviews, however, two more interviews were added to make sure the data became saturated. These two extra interviews confirmed saturation, since the information started to be repetitive. To achieve "sincerity" and "meaningful coherence", where the researchers keep themselves immersed and transparent with the project and methods, the material, theories, methods, and purpose of the study were constantly critically revised and modified. Moreover, "credibility" refers to the trustworthiness and plausibility of the study. Increasing the credibility can be done by using in-depth descriptions, concrete details and showing rather than telling, which was done through the quotes in the result part for example.

To make this research available to the greater mass, or to "resonance", the text was continuously revised and simplified when it came to describing the project, problem statement and explaining potentially new terms to the reader. Additionally, a goal in this project was to make readers without any prior experience in the discussed topic engaged, and in that way achieve transferability. Transferability means to make the reader feel as the research overlaps with and can be applied to their own situation.

To write a "significant contribution" is to search and identify a research gap and contribute to extended knowledge within the research area. Theoretical significance is achieved when the researchers extend and build on disciplinary knowledge, and practical significance is about whether the new knowledge is useful or not. This project achieves this when shedding light on leadership styles and their common soft skills/attributes among managers in well-performing workshops in this particular service sector. Finally, to be "ethical" in one's research is also of great importance. Procedural ethics (i.e., the importance of accuracy and avoiding fabrication or fraud) where the research participants have the right to know the purpose of the study and know that their participation is voluntary is of importance. This was achieved by thoroughly describing the purpose of the study and informing the participants of the voluntarity of the project several times during the process (Tracy, 2010).

5.7 Limitations

This study was subject to limitations which could ultimately impact the final results. First, the interviews were conducted via Teams, following the restrictions due to Covid-19, which could affect the way the participants answered the questions and expressed their opinions. Along with that, most of the interviews were executed in English, and since English was not the mother tongue of either the interviewees or interviewers, this could potentially affect how the managers understood or answered the questions, however, all the translations were revised during the process. Second, according to Maxwell and Chimel (2014), and Palmberger and Gingrich (2014), there is a chance of decontextualization in the coding process. However, this was taken in consideration through investigating each manager's experience individually, accounting for their particular setting, environment and context. This was especially important since the managers administer different sizes of workshops and are responsible for different numbers of subordinates. Third, the collaboration with the organization could possibly create practical challenges concerning their choices of interviewees and resources and time available. However, the collaboration is also an opportunity to understand the organization better and enrich our project. To avoid any of these frictions and possible problems, an agreement and clarity in our communication was established with the contact persons to reduce the chances for this to happen.

Gaining access to an organization and the information within it is a complicated process. Access is usually given by gatekeepers who need to be on board with the researcher's motives

concerning for example what the organization can gain from participating, the costs of participating in terms of staff time and other costs, and potential damage to the organization's image. Gatekeepers usually seek to influence the investigation through wanting to be involved in what kind of questions can be asked, who will participate in the study, and the amount of time spent on each interviewee. This might pose a possible limitation to the study. However, gatekeepers also help the researchers get smoother access and passage to the people involved in the study (Bryman, 2012).

Other implications were that only managers were interviewed and not employees. Including the employees of the managers could potentially contribute with knowledge about how they view their managers leadership and leadership practices. However, the organization provided data from their own surveys that evaluated how the employees ranked their managers and their work engagement, which showed that all managers interviewed received high scores on these surveys. Additionally, although the managers are all working for the same organization, they work in different countries. It might be possible that national variations in organizational/leadership cultures could have affected the results of the study, even though the organization had codes of conduct that was general to the entire organization. Also, all interviewees identified as male. However, this was simply a reflection of the business they were a part of which is heavily male dominated. Finally, it is important to highlight that engagement is not the only indicator of a successful workplace, however, in our project the well-performing workshops were chosen based on work engagement and customer satisfaction indicators provided by the organization (see 5.2).

6. Result

This chapter explores the results based on experiences, situations, assumptions and narratives presented by the managers. The design used will correspond to the research questions (see section 2.2) and their respective ramifications. To support and validate our main themes, direct quotations were used.

In this section, the results are presented as themes which correspond to key aspects of positive leadership in this sector, as identified by the interviewees. It is important to highlight that no manager represented just one leadership style, and that there were overlaps between the styles. Because of that, the results of the research questions of this project are not presented in accordance with the leadership styles, but the following themes: 6.1 Communication, 6.2 Managing Individual Needs, 6.3 Self-Awareness, 6.4 Influential Leadership and 6.5 The Importance of a Mechanical Background.

6.1 Communication

When interviewing the managers, communication was the subject that was brought up most frequently. The most frequent and important types of communication mentioned by the managers were feedback and information sharing. Communication is an important theme in positive leadership, and it was evident in the interviews that communication played an important part in the managers daily work, and that they used communication in multiple different situations, such as in their own personal development, towards the employees or teams, or when addressing an issue using authority and problem solving.

Communication is not specifically bound to any of the soft skills categories personal, interpersonal, or situational. Rather communication is important in each of these categories depending on the circumstances. Communication is part of almost everything connected with daily work in the service sector. For instance, the managers described how their communication with the customers was mostly used to help describe the problems they had with their vehicles, so that they knew how much it would cost to fix it and how long it would take.

All managers stressed the importance of communication, both towards the employees and the customers. For example, as emphasized by one of the respondents: *"You need to communicate. Communication is very important"* - *Respondent 8.* Communication with the employees in the way of spontaneous daily talks in the workshop was considered important, as

was leaving the door open so that the staff can come by and speak their mind: *"...my door is always open, so if there is somebody with a problem or even if it's a private problem, they can always come to me and talk to me." - Respondent 8*. Two other managers described how they arranged different activities outside the workplace to initiate more relaxed conversations with their employees about their personal situations. One mentioned how they could go for test drives in the trucks and at the same time talk about the situation at work and other relevant topics with the employees. Another manager said that he used to take walks around the area of the workshop with one employee at a time to have a more relaxed non-formal conversation about personal matters, as well as about work-related issues. Delivering feedback to the employees was also emphasized as important and was also given in a similar spontaneous way in the workshop, as expressed here by this manager: *"I'm trying to give them feedback. Not feedback to go to a closed office and make a small meeting. Just give them feedback on their daily work." - Respondent 6*. Another manager summarized how communication and feedback are connected by pointing out that communication is a way of getting feedback:

"...when you never communicate, when you never talk to the people around you, when you don't get feedback, you don't know what's wrong. So, communication for me is one of the most important things." - Respondent 8.

Most of the managers expressed how they provide feedback to their employees in different contexts and situations. Some managers described that they schedule meetings with their employees two times per year to provide feedback and plan personal development for the employees. Some workshop managers also described how they reached out to their own managers and asked for feedback, while some simply seized the opportunity when they were alone with an employee to provide feedback spontaneously.

Another aspect of communication connected to daily work is information sharing, which was clearly reflected in our results. All managers described how they worked with information sharing in the workshop. For example, most of the workshops had recently started to have lean-meetings every morning, as a way of sharing relevant information among all technicians to give everyone the best prerequisites to do their daily work and provide the best possible service to customers. Respondents explained that most important information from the lean-meetings is then put on a whiteboard in the workshop for everyone to see, following is an

example on how a manager described their information sharing on lean-meetings and information board:

"Most of the information is shared on the LEAN-meetings. We have a board, where we start our work in the workshop, so that everyone can see where we post new information. That information will be up there for a week." Respondent 1

In addition to that, most of the time when the managers mentioned information sharing, they also expressed the importance of communication in decision making, and sharing decisions with their team. The managers highlighted the importance of being able to use different kinds of communication depending on what they communicated to the employees. For example, the communication used when sharing information in the workshop and having spontaneous one-on-one meetings and daily morning meetings was more relaxed and informal. In contrast, when the managers helped to guide and coach the employees in the workshop and the workload was great, the communication was more sharp, informative and there was an underlying assumption/knowledge that everyone knew the basics of mechanic work. The managers also used communication to gather valuable insights before making important decisions or solving problems, to have the right information to anchor their decisions in.

"Before I make decisions, I discuss and find the solution with the team, and I take the responsibility of the last word. If discussing with the team does not work, I talk with different workshop leaders in order to find better solutions for my problems." Respondent 10

The results indicate that communication and information sharing requires soft skills from different dimensions (i.e., personal, interpersonal and situational). The managers found it important to adjust their communication to their employees, to enhance the understanding (i.e., tailoring the language and presenting the information clearly and concisely) and show sensitivity when giving feedback and resilience in critical situations. To sum up, all managers interviewed emphasized communication. The different kinds of communication mentioned by the managers can help improve for example guidance, coaching, support, empowerment, feedback decision making and delegation. leading to better work engagement.

6.2 Managing Individual Needs

The results indicated that managers pay close attention to their employees' individual needs and find this to be important. Managers expressed positive outcomes when giving effort to understand their employees' perspectives and situations, and even when it comes to their personal life. When listening to the employees, the managers could identify sensitive areas of employee's life, and consequently support them in difficult times. By supporting their staff, managers believed that their relations grew stronger, as well as their trust. For example, a manager explained how he helped a colleague to get through a divorce, listening and comforting him until the end of the process, enhancing their trust and improving their relationship at work. In another case, a manager described his efforts to support and help an employee with symptoms of depression, listening and giving space for the employee to deal with his struggles. This could also be applied to their work tasks, where the managers support, coach and mentor their staff to find solutions to their problems or advice for future competence development. The ultimate goal of these actions is to develop a better team to provide better service, taking individuals needs into consideration. As illustrated below, managers find it important to take into account the employees' needs in their personal life, to create a healthy work-life balance and keep their performance at work:

"It is important to look at the mechanics and understand their needs today for their personal life. If they are happy in their personal life and happy at home, they are also happy at work. We have to be careful with their balance between work and life." Respondent 7

The focus on the employee's personal and professional growth and support shows that the leaders are focused on empowering and developing their employees. In turn, this development was believed by managers to lead to increased performance of the workshop, which results in greater customer satisfaction, for example, as expressed by respondent 6: *"Me as a manager have to make the right decisions, make money, and make the customers happy. And happy employees also. If I have happy employees, I also have happy customers."*. It also shows that the manager understands that his decisions are critical to fulfill the employees needs as it plays a motivational role for the staff, and thereby contributes to reaching organizational goals:

"And at the end of the day, the jobs are done, and they're done good and correct. Clients are happy. But also, my employees are happy. That they feel they have accomplished something. And that gives me joy at work that at the end of the day, everybody is satisfied with the day."

Respondent 4

The managers also stressed their interest in facilitating the process of skill development of the employee, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, planning training programs and encouraging acquisition of knowledge for their careers, for example, as emphasized by respondent 1: *"It's important to find a solution to what they want to develop. Here there are a lot of possibilities. We should help them in the right direction"*. In addition to that, the manager also highlighted his responsibility of helping their staff to go in the "right direction", which stresses the importance of his role of leader/mentor in the daily work. It is important to point out that several managers linked this mentoring or coaching actions to develop more autonomy and empowerment within the employees.

The managers also expressed the importance of their empowerment influence when coaching and mentoring their subordinates to support and teach them specific tasks, or to find an education for that purpose. In the example below, the manager has frequent conversations with hishe employees about their professional or personal development. This manager tries to coach and assist his employees to find the best education program to improve their work and improve their service quality:

"You must support them. When I have my employee talks, we talk a lot about personal development. Then we check what training options are there. I also have to give some feedback, for example. This can be difficult, if he says 'I want to become an electrician', and I know he has no knowledge at all about it. Then it's going to be hard, but I try to support development and education, I want them to go to good educations and I want them to learn."

Respondent 2

In addition to that, the respondents often highlight that continuous informal or formal talks, encouragement and mentoring are essential to develop more autonomy and self-confidence in their employees.

When being supportive and connected with employees' needs, the managers expressed genuine happiness and altruistics behaviors when they could see the positive outcomes. For example, one manager expressed: *"I say that I succeed when I see others succeed. To see that we succeed in helping others develop in their career, that gives me a lot!"* - *Respondent 5*. The same manager continued by stating that: *"I feel like I have succeeded when I see someone with potential, and to guide that person to succeed."*. The manager highlighted the importance of supporting his staff and how this support can be meaningful for him and to his employees.

The managers clarified during the conversations that, in order to identify individual needs, be able to coach/advise, and support the employees on their personal/professional growth, it is necessary to have specific attributes and skills. Managers expressed that humility is an attribute that helps them to be closer to the staff, working as equals, since it creates mutual respect in their relationship. Another attribute highlighted by the managers was the importance of being empathic towards the individuals. This attribute mentioned by the leaders assists their ability to put themselves in someone else's situation, and also helps to support them in difficult problems expressed by some employees. Additionally, being empathic helped the manager to be more sensible and patient with their employees in critical situations. Soft skills like being confident in themselves were also expressed by the managers to be relevant in order to guide, coach and advise their staff. The managers are experienced and know about the steps of development needed to become a better mechanic, which gives confidence to advise and guide their staff's development in the "right way" as mentioned before. The capacity to listen and communicate as stated in the first section, is also a critical soft skill expressed by all the managers to be capable of managing their employees' individual needs. In addition to that, when listening to employees, the managers could identify their physical or emotional levels, and support them according to that. In sum, the managers express that these attributes and skills (i.e., humility, empathy, self-confidence, listening and communication) are essential to support and enhance their employees' capabilities and facilitate their service quality development, which consequently has positive outcomes in relation to customers, as well as for the well-being of the employees.

6.3 Self-Awareness

The managers' awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses was a recurring theme in the interviews, which suggests that self-awareness plays a big role in how the managers behave and

work in their leadership. Self-awareness, self-esteem, humbleness and humility were described as essential characteristics of leadership that the interviewed workshop managers came back to during the interviews. When the managers were asked to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, the strength mentioned most often was technical skills, which will be elaborated on further down. Apart from that, the managers described other strengths such as use of communication, analytical skills, delegation and planning that were perceived as important attributes/skills to make use of as a leader. Some of the weaknesses mentioned by the managers were instead that they were perfectionists, had high stress levels, had a bad temper, took business related problems personally and were impatient. When reflecting on their weaknesses, one respondent described that he sometimes has problems with his temper, especially early in his career. He explained that he used to be much more hot headed before, but has now worked on his temper to remain calm in more situations. Another manager struggled with control issues, but expressed that he is aware of this and is working on it. In the second quote, another manager expressed self-criticism when he realized that he was working too much and a change was necessary to avoid burnout:

"I'm not good at letting go of different tasks. I know it's not good but it is because I have a control issue. But that is something I have been working on, to delegate things. Otherwise, I won't have the time to do everything I want to do with the quality I want." Respondent 12

"My weakness is that I always deliver 100% and I've been used to always delivering 100%. That means that I work too much. I need to let some things go or I need to identify which assignments I am, or I am not going to do. I'm my own biggest critic, and I am my own enemy, because I always need to make it to 100%. I need to relax and take it to 80%. That's one of my weaknesses." Respondent 9

Self-esteem was evident among the managers when they expressed an overall sense of self-worth and value. Most of the managers brought up their strengths during the conversations, like their mechanical background, which gives them the possibility to be precise in their support to the other employees, or their ability to influence and guide the team. This will be elaborated on later. It was also evident that the managers had a clear picture of themselves and showed self-confidence when expressing their opinions about themselves and describing situations with the

other employees. For example, respondent 6 expressed conviction on his leadership abilities and self-confidence guiding and supporting his team:

"I have natural leadership. It's natural for me to be a leader and I'm good at getting people with me. I'm not the leader who's going in the front. I am a leader who's going a bit behind my employees and having everybody with me."

The managers showed the importance of practicing and showing humbleness when it comes to working side by side with their subordinates: *"I am one of them, I am not more special than them" - Respondent 11*. In addition to that, the managers expressed a great deal of humility and humbleness towards their employees when they described putting their own accomplishments and talents aside and getting their overalls on and joining the employees in the workshop: *"When there's a lot of work I put on my working clothes, I go work with them so they can feel supported all the time." - Respondent 4*. When expressing that, several managers showed a sense of pride of being part of their teams. The respondents repeatedly said that they are leaders that are either in the front of the team guiding and showing the way, or in the back, making sure everyone is growing and have sufficient support to work in the same direction.

The managers had an openness, were ready for challenges and had a will to learn from experiences and mistakes. The awareness that they were not prepared for everything but willing to learn showed a great deal of humbleness towards their role and daily work: *"As a leader I am constantly learning every day. Every day we have problems, we try to resolve them, we have positive and negative outcomes, and this just contributes to my continuous learning to be a better leader." - Respondent 2*. This was expressed by other managers as well, one manager described how he was learning something new every day and then could use these experiences to avoid stress in the future. This humbleness was also displayed when the managers showed awareness of their role and responsibilities towards their subordinates when working together in the workshop, focusing on the team and overall success of the workshop. Another manager elaborated on this and described how he let his employees take care of difficult situations in order for them to grow and learn from the experience. This was motivated by the manager because he knew that this would be the best thing for the workshop in the long run, and if something went wrong he would take care of it.

In sum, the managers expressed that these attributes and skills (i.e., self-awareness, humbleness, self-esteem, and humility) are essential to be a positive leader.

6.4 Influential Leadership

According to the managers, the ability to inspire, influence and empower the employees is essential to reach the organizational goals. Several managers stressed the importance of being a role model for the employees to be able to demand tasks and responsibilities from them. For example, one of them stated that: *"I have to act as an example before demanding something."* *- Respondent 10*. In addition to that, other managers highlighted the importance of being the one who brings positivity to inspire the group and create a better environment, as this manager put it: *"Well, if you want to create a positive work environment, I think that you as a leader should always have a positive mindset. You should be the one that's being positive." - Respondent 4*. During the interviews, the respondents for example, expressed the importance of having good attitudes and behaviors in front of their staff to create a positive environment, encourage proactive attitudes or even influence employees' mindsets. In addition to that, the managers also realized that to be able to delegate tasks and share responsibilities, it is necessary to show effort in their own work, for the purpose of showing fairness and being an example for the group.

The managers several times demonstrated the importance of having a vision or an overall goal, and they identified the necessity to convey this vision to their staff to guide everyone in the same direction. They also highlighted the importance of having a clear and continuous communication with the team in this process, to regulate and synchronize their efforts: *"A leader has to talk a lot with their people and to have a clear direction for something and try to take everybody in the same direction." - Respondent 7*. The managers also expressed the importance of their responsibility to lead, guide and influence the group to transform the vision into practical actions: *"My role is to lead the way and point the direction. It's also to transform vision into strategy." - Respondent 9*. In another interview, respondent 1 emphasized the importance of goal setting to follow the vision of the company: *"By formulating goals, then follow up these goals to see what we do not live up to. We look at our goals each day to see where we are.".* In this sense, the managers seem to highlight the importance of taking charge of the organizational goal, showing effort to understand the ultimate vision of the company, and communicating this in a clear and simple form to their team on a daily basis.

The managers often emphasized the importance of delegating authority and responsibilities to their subordinates, to develop autonomy and empower the employees to make their own decisions. As expressed by respondent 6, these behaviors were often connected with supportive actions, for example backing up their employees' decisions, and discussing the outcomes afterwards: *"I'm really good at delegating to other people and supporting them in their decisions. They often have to make their own decisions. And then we discussed it afterwards. I will always support them.".* These attributes of delegation and support were repeatedly used as examples of a positive leadership practice, since the respondents demonstrated their intention to share power and delegate tasks. These attributes were often connected to the purpose of teaching their employees to promote their skill development, as well as supporting their decisions in this process, as in the example below:

"...also taught my employees here a lot because they had to make the decisions on their own. And also, knowing that I was behind them in every decision, but in the daily work they have to make their own decisions, and it was very good." Respondent 10

To be an influential leader, the importance of negotiation skills was also stressed by the managers. They highlight that to negotiate, it is important to have a good relationship, trust and communication with the staff. The managers expressed that negotiation with the employees is often practiced on a daily basis, in order to demand tasks, mediate conflicts, find better education programs that fit their necessities or even negotiate extra work hours with the employees. For example, respondent 1 (see below), had to negotiate with the team to start work one hour early on Fridays and managed to reach an understanding. Besides that, the same respondent also shows during the interview that he was always open to stay longer at work if some staff needed help to complete a critical task:

"We were in a very busy period. So I asked everyone to start one hour earlier every Friday of the week. So we could have time to do our jobs the right way. I asked everybody to do it as a team and they said: 'yes, we'll do that!' So I think they followed me as a leader." - Respondent 1

In addition to that, managers point out that being a role model also can help to influence their employees to do a particular task as mentioned before.

When it comes to soft skills, managers highlight different skills that seem to facilitate their ability to influence, inspire and empower their employees to reach the organization's vision. For example, taking charge of the team is a soft skill often expressed by the managers, in order to continuously steer the team in the desired direction. They frequently mentioned the importance of being either in front of the team, guiding and setting the goals, or on the back of the line, supporting their actions and keeping a positive mindset.

The managers also mentioned specific attributes and skills to be a role model and influence their employees. They mentioned authenticity, self-motivation, adaptability and resilience skills as crucial to define a performance standard, and consequently, inspiring them to reach a higher level of performance. Respondents mentioned the importance of authenticity, to show themselves and not something else. To them, this develops more trust between their relations with the employees and helps to be consistent in their practices. Self-motivation was also expressed as an important skill by the managers to keep themselves and their employees stimulated. They mentioned that it is their responsibility to keep the energy and the engagement in the work, since they are seen as an example for the team. Finally, the managers also mentioned the relevance of being adaptable and resilient, for the purpose of showing control of the situations when challenges come, which are also connected to being a role model. In this sense, managers showed that their capacity to keep control and adapt to different circumstances can influence the way that their employees also react to their own challenges.

In sum, the managers expressed that these skills (i.e., empowering, self-motivation, negotiation, adaptability and resilience) as well as attributes like taking charge and being an authentic role model, were seen as essential to be a positive leader and to help them to have a certain degree of influence over their teams.

6.5 The Importance of a Mechanical Background

One aspect that was touched on in all interviews was that all managers came from a mechanical background, and that they all stressed the importance of having mechanical skills as a leader in their position. Mechanical skills were something that was perceived as important because it gave the managers a sense of respect, legitimacy, detailed knowledge and self-esteem. The managers expressed how mechanical skills enhanced their confidence and consequently their

ability to provide better service to their customers and guidance to their team. Mechanical skills were considered important in relation to communication, managing individual needs, self-awareness, and influential leadership as well. For example, mechanical skills were highlighted as something that improved the communication and problem solving between them and the employees and customers, which will be exemplified below. The challenge of managing individual needs was also considered easier when the managers knew what was needed to support the employee's professional growth and development in terms of mechanical skill development. Self-awareness and mechanical knowledge were visible when the managers used their mechanical skills to help the employees in the workshop. This was also connected to influential leadership when the managers described the increased respect and legitimacy they got from the employees when working together in the workshop, becoming a role model for them. Respondent 10 highlights the importance of technical knowledge in relation to respect and legitimacy:

"You are going to gain the respect from the technicians if you have the same or more technical knowledge than them, then they are going to understand that he is not only the boss, but he knows about the things."

It was not only the mechanics in the workshop who benefited from the managers previous experience as technicians, but the customers as well. As one manager put it, his background as a mechanic helped him explain the problem the customer was having with the vehicle, what had to be done to fix it and provide a time and cost estimate. This is something that enhances the service offering at the workshop and contributes to a more satisfied customer. One interviewee highlighted the importance of this:

"A big problem is that many of our customers know very little about cars, and that makes it hard for us to motivate why something might cost 100 000 kr to fix. But my background as a mechanic makes it easier for me to explain what has happened and why it costs so much to fix it." Respondent 11

Another interviewee elaborates on this and also connects his mechanical background to him being a better leader, which can guide his employees to do a better work, solving problems and also give good explanations to the customers:

"What's certainly helpful is that I am also a good technician, where I've had my years of experience. It really helps me a lot in my job because I can guide my technicians, I can be helping them, but I can also give a good explanation to my customers. Because I know what I'm talking about." Respondent 4

Detailed knowledge about mechanical work was also mentioned as a strength for getting involved in different projects to keep developing the business. This manager explained how this helped him develop the workshop further:

"I think my technical knowledge is one of my biggest strengths here. I get involved in a lot of things here, down to the smallest detail, and that is because I know what I'm talking about and I'm interested. So, I would say that this has helped me a lot in developing the workshop." Respondent 12

Another manager elaborated that having knowledge in all roles gave him self-esteem in performing in all the different roles at the workshop: "*I have all the roles in some form, and I need to be able to perform in all the roles, I need the knowledge of all roles.*" - Respondent 3.

To sum up, a background as a mechanic and the skills that come with that clearly helped the interviewed managers gain both respect, legitimacy and self-esteem in their respective teams. As expressed by the managers this also was believed to lead to higher customer satisfaction, and provide good conditions to further develop the business/workshops.

7. Discussion and Analysis

In this chapter, the analyses are separated once again based on the previous themes. The analysis contains the most relevant positive leadership characteristics along with their soft skills identified by the interviewed managers, highlighting the relation to work engagement and service quality. According to our aim, this section also points out possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles to better understand how they overlap each other.

7.1 Communication

According to the managers, communication was one of their most important tools in their daily work. To them, communication is essential to their relationships with the employees, as well as to the interactions with the customers to enhance customer satisfaction. Communication can be understood as not being tied to either one of the soft skills categories personal, interpersonal, or situational. Rather communication is important in each of these categories depending on the circumstances. In this sense, communication was stressed by the managers in three different ways: information sharing, feedback/support and open communication with employees. In addition to that, it is important to highlight that communication is related to all themes of the results and analysis section and requires several soft skills and attributes (e.g., self-confidence, resilience, negotiation, empathy, listening, coaching and support), and these skills are going to be explained further in the next sections. However, since it was stressed so much by the managers it was still considered important to highlight as a separate and distinctive theme.

According to the managers, practices on information sharing can support decision making, since the employees have the right information to base their decision on, leading to more interdependency in the group. Information sharing was expressed several times by the managers, when they tried to reach out to other managers to ask for advice, to solve a specific problem, or when they shared information with their own employees, in order to support them. These practices on information sharing are supported by self-determination theory by Van den Broeck et al. (2008). This theory stated that leaders can use the individual's natural tendency to interconnect with other people to improve engagement and satisfaction among employees by fostering autonomy, connection with the group and enhancing competence development. In this sense, the interviewed managers seem to encourage their own employees to share information with each other, create more interactions between them and strengthen relationships in the team.

In addition to that, the same managers mentioned that they also practice information sharing and see it as important on a daily work basis.

Moreover, feedback and support were something that was highly valued among the workshop managers. They expressed that it could help to increase trust and strengthen the relationship between them and employees. The managers all showed different ways of communicating with their employees depending on the context or situation. According to the managers, feedback was given in formal meetings, as well as in informal small talks during the day depending on the circumstances. In the same way, managers mentioned that they often used communication to support their staff with their technical knowledge, which also seems to help their subordinates to develop skills. Practices on feedback and support is a way of developing competence among the employees through empowerment and positive reinforcement in accordance with self-determination theory (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021), and it could possibly foster work engagement. Job demands-resources theory also highlights that lack of feedback and support have a negative impact on work engagement and psychological wellbeing on the employees (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The interviewed managers seem to work constantly with feedback/support, in order to encourage competence development for their staff on their daily tasks. These different ways of communicating examplifie communication as a soft skill in the different categories, such as interpersonal and situational. For example, when communicating with an employee and providing feedback, the communication is both interpersonal (i.e., because the communication is towards another individual) and situational (i.e., the communication is different depending on the situation it is provided in, or what it is about) at the same time.

Managers also expressed the importance of having an open communication environment, where employees can share their thoughts and opinions about work and personal life. According to social exchange theory, open communication is a way to have an exchange between managers and employees, where there is mutual trust and support. The managers in this study described how they encouraged open communication with their employees in order to have a high-quality relation, identify individual needs, and develop an environment of openness to the employees' input. According to social exchange theory by Engelbrecht et al., (2017) and Shore et al., (2006), when managers and employees have this open communication relationship, there is a chance that the employees are more prone to go beyond their tasks thanks to their dedication and engagement for their managers.

Communication is related to all the positive leadership styles and is connected to most daily work in the service sector, which was made clear during the interviews with the managers. For example, from an ethical leadership perspective, it is relevant to give attention to feedback and clear communication, which was something often emphasized by the interviewees. The empowering leadership style would not be able to coach or share information without communication. A transformational leadership style would not be able to provide an inspiring vision and provide a sense of purpose to the employees without verbalizing the goals. This was done by the workshop managers through the daily meetings and planned personal development meetings. The focus on psychological needs and personal growth of the followers in the servant leadership style would be hard to conduct without listening and sharing experiences. According to the managers, personal development meetings and the availability of the managers facilitate this process. In the authentic leadership style, the balanced processing, where the managers collect information before making a decision, could not be done without communication either, which was something almost all managers emphasized.

According to Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021), feedback, information sharing and creating an open communication environment are elements shared by all positive leadership styles. These elements are related to developing a higher work engagement and consequently, a better service climate, and service quality provided to the customers (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Salanova et al., 2005). In this sense, it may be concluded that the skill of communication is essential to leaders in service sector organizations.

7.2 Managing Individual Needs

According to studies carried out by Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) and Bass and Riggio (2006), a managers' focus on individual personal/professional needs can develop a strong connection with the leader, helping to create a better work environment, trust, and consequently contribute to a higher work engagement. According to the managers in this study, the practice of managing individual needs can be said to consist of two parts: Identifying individual needs and supporting employees according to this information. Furthermore, the managers described that both parts require different skills and attributes.

To identify the employee's individual needs, managers expressed the importance of having both informal and formal talks with the employees, which help to identify levels of emotional and physical energy that they are showing, or to identify technical competence areas

with room for improvement. This practice is in line with job demands-resources theory (Schaufeli, 2015), where the manager attempts to balance employees' capacity (i.e., physical, emotional and psychological energy) and resources available with the demands of work. An example of this was when the manager listened to an employee with symptoms of depression and tried to decrease the work pressure. According to the manager, after identifying the problem, he could act according to the employee's energy levels, which afterwards showed to be effective, creating a better work environment for the employee and consequently better performance. According to personal engagement theory by Kahn (1990), identifying employees' needs can also improve psychological safety. The manager mentioned that encouraging employees to talk about personal and professional problems seemed to improve their capability to expose themselves without fear, creating an open space with less judgment in the workplace. In that way, the capability to be free to express opinions and thoughts without fear of being judged was expressed as helping the employees to develop more trust in their managers and also promoting autonomy in their roles, as a consequence of sufficient psychological safety.

In line with all the practices related to identifying employee's needs, the managers highlighted skills and attributes like communication, humility and empathy as important, where communication was expressed as the most important skill/attribute in this process. According to the managers, the way that they communicate in informal and formal conversations, and the importance of listening actively to their employees, are essential to understand their work situation, which afterwards can facilitate defining what kind of approach they are going to take on towards the employee. Second, managers also mentioned empathy (i.e., putting themselves in someone else's situation) and humility (i.e., working as equals), to make the process of identifying their employee's needs smoother. In addition to that, it is important to highlight that these skills appear to create stronger bonds and trust between managers and employees, since they are relevant to build work engagement as mentioned in social exchange theory by Engelbrecht et al. (2017) and Shore et al. (2006).

As for the second part, according to the managers, after identifying an employee's individual needs, an action with the necessary support and assistance is often required. In line with this, the managers expressed that supporting their employees in their professional development, as well as comforting them in difficult times, seemed to strengthen the relationships and promote mutual trust. This result is in line with social exchange theory

(Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006), which states that the relationship between employee and manager can ultimately foster trust and interdependency. This is enabled where there is a mutual expectation of reciprocation of favors, work, or support. According to the managers, the practice of support can be performed by coaching and mentoring. For example, after identifying room for improvements in the employee's technical area, the managers coach and advise their employees to develop their skills, helping them to clarify their weaknesses, and finding the best training program to improve their capabilities. In this sense, a mechanical background, that will be described later, is an essential factor to facilitate this process. In addition to that, being a coach and advisor were described as characteristics of a role model, which was believed to influence employees' behaviors. This can be explained by the social learning theory by Hoch et al. (2018), where employees may want to mimic the leaders' practices to reach higher standards. According to the managers', the employees are often inspired by them, following their example. In line with being a role model that coaches and mentors their staff, self-confidence and self-esteem were mentioned as important attributes that help the managers to take charge of this support, and also contributes to inspiring and encouraging their staff to improve.

Furthermore, in addition to all that was said about identifying individual needs and supporting their employees, managers expressed that these actions seemed to improve the work satisfaction and happiness of the staff, creating a better work engagement, and in extension a higher service quality for the customers. This is in line with the relationship between work engagement, service climate and service quality stated by Schneider et al. (1998), Bowen and Schneider (2014) and Salanova et al. (2005).

Managing individual needs is a theme that is connected with several positive leadership styles (e.g., transformational, servant, empowering and authentic), and highlights how these styles overlap each in their skills and practices. For example, servant leadership style mainly focuses on the psychological needs of the followers and gives less attention to the organizational goals. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, understands that psychological needs of the subordinates are essential to reach higher levels of performance and the organizational goals, prioritizing the organization first, and the followers' needs second (Eva et al., 2019). Most of the managers in this study thus showed aspects of both styles, focusing on identifying the employee's needs, empowering and supporting them to grow, and to develop their autonomy. Supporting self-determination, i.e., coaching, developing and empowering the

employees, was also one of the overlapping leadership behaviors connected with all of the positive leadership styles (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). This was achieved by the managers when they focused on the personal and professional needs and growth to facilitate development for their employees. The managers also stressed the importance of facilitating skill development for the employees and planning training programs for them to have the opportunity to develop further in their career and become more independent, which might ultimately lead to them becoming future managers/leaders.

In sum, it may be concluded that the ability to manage individual needs require different skills and attributes such as active listening, communication, coaching, humility, empathy, self-confidence and support. These skills and attributes, as well as the practices of managing individual needs, are related to several leadership styles, which highlight how the styles overlap each other.

7.3 Self-Awareness

During the conversations with the managers, various different personal soft skills and attributes were identified that emerged together as one theme: self-awareness. As mentioned, personal soft skills are skills that promote personal development or competence development regarding the organization (Abduwani, 2012). Based on the result, self-awareness seems to be a theme that assists the managers in their practices, behaviors and decisions in their daily work, and is divided into different attributes and skills: self-knowledge, humbleness/humility and altruism.

First of all, managers expressed the importance of being aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to support their employees in a good way, as well as asking for help. It was clear that having knowledge of their own strengths also was something they believed helped them to develop a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. These two outcomes were connected with several practices, like being confident when coaching, giving positive or negative feedback to employees, as well as making assertive decisions in critical situations. It can also be expressed that having knowledge of their strengths and being self-confident helped the managers become role models for the staff, which will be further elaborated under "Influential leadership". On the other hand, managers expressed the importance of knowing their own weaknesses, which clearly enabled them to ask for support from other workshop leaders, as well as their own employees. The self-knowledge highlighted by the managers and their respectives outcomes (i.e., supporting, coaching and asking for support), can be related to

social exchange theory by Engelbrecht et al., (2017) and Shore et al., (2006). This theory stresses the exchange relationship between managers, which is based on trust and reciprocate actions. In this sense, based on self-knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses, managers are always supporting and giving support to their employees, which can create more dedication and engagement from their side according to the theory.

The managers also highlighted the importance of having humbleness and humility in their interactions and practices towards the employees. Humbleness and humility were expressed when the managers were working side by side with the employees in the workshop and expressing a sense of equality between them. These two attributes were exemplified when respondent 11 said: *"I am one of them, I am not more special than them"*, and from respondent 4: *"When there's a lot of work I put on my working clothes, I go work with them so they can feel supported all the* time.". Treating everyone equally helped the managers in their daily work when for example leading the team, enhancing the sense of community, and improving their interactions. In addition to that, the managers did not express any negative sides of this, for example, losing respect or legitimacy toward the staff, which seems to be a benefit to them. According to personal engagement theory by Kahn (1990), having humility and humbleness can also help the leader to achieve psychological safety. Personal engagement theory states that working with the subordinate at the same level is supportive, open, consistent, fair and conveys a sense of security that enables engagement.

The results also showed that altruism is a characteristic revealed by most of the managers. It was often expressed that managers find themselves happy and content when they see their employees succeeding in their careers, and this motivates them to improve and develop in their managerial role. It is reasonable to assume that personal engagement theory (Kahn, 1990) can explain this phenomenon, with individuals becoming more engaged in their jobs if it is perceived as meaningful for them or carries a purpose. In this example, it may be suggested that the manager gets meaning from his own work when being part of the success of his employees and consequently, they become more engaged in their roles.

Self-knowledge, humility/humbleness and altruism are elements of the self-awareness theme that can be identified in all the positive leadership styles. According to Eva et al. (2019) managers use their self-awareness to serve their followers, being genuinely convinced that this behavior would affect them positively, which was clearly shown by the interviewed managers when they used their self-knowledge on their technical strengths to support the employees in

the workshop. Self-knowledge, self-esteem and humility/humbleness are closely related to how Kernis (2003) described the authentic positive leadership style: a high level of self-esteem and self-awareness, a deep understanding of one's weaknesses, and confidence in one's strengths. The managers seem to understand the benefit of knowing themselves, putting their talents in a proper perspective when working together side by side with their employees, and their confidence in their mechanical knowledge, could help them to gain trust and respect from their subordinates. Self-awareness also helps the managers to become a role model, which is a characteristic found in transformational ethical leadership, as well as in authentic leadership, where the manager shows consistency and fairness in their practices and behaviors (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). Moreover, altruism is an element found in a servant leadership style, where the managers genuinely try to support and encourage the employees personal and professional growth. Self-awareness is indirectly or directly connected to two or more of the positive styles according to this analysis. So, it may be concluded that self-awareness is believed to foster positive outcomes on work engagement, service climate and quality (Schneider et al., 1998; Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Salanova et al., 2005).

In sum, our analysis showed that self-awareness was a recurring theme expressed by the managers and is important to take in consideration when investigating positive leadership practices and characteristics. It also showed that, according to the managers, it is necessary to have self-knowledge, humbleness/humility and altruism, as well as self-confidence and self-esteem, in order to be a successful leader. These skills and attributes help the manager in their personal development, competence development within the organization, and in interactions with others, especially when aiming to develop an engaged service team.

7.4 Influential Leadership

According to Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021), being a positive leader and promoting work engagement is essential to inspire, encourage and empower their employees. To do that, managers expressed three elements that facilitate this process: becoming a role model, having a clear vision to guide the employees, and empowering or delegating responsibilities and tasks. These elements were in turn connected with different skills and attributes, like negotiation, authenticity, self-motivation, adaptability and resilience.

First of all, becoming a role model appears to be important to the managers, to enable them to achieve legitimacy and respect with the group. The managers expressed their concern

about being fair and consistent in their practices and behaviors toward the employees, to develop trust and legitimacy among the group. This is backed up by social exchange theory (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006), where fair and supportive treatment is a sign of trust that the employees then reciprocate. When showing concern for the employees, making fair decisions and showing good morals, the leader becomes a role model. Therefore, according to the social exchange theory, the employees will become more engaged and put their trust in the leaders, because these are seen as role models (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006). When the leader becomes a role model for the team, there is also a possibility that the employees mimic his behaviors and attitudes, which then influences the staff to be more like them, in accordance with social learning theory (Hoch et al., 2018). This can be exemplified by the efforts one respondent made to demonstrate a positive mindset to influence the other employees to have the same. In addition to that, since most of the managers were former mechanics, the possibility to become manager one day can also be a factor that motivates the employees to look at the managers as role models and mimic their behaviors. According to the managers, being a role model is not an easy task and because of that, soft skills and attributes like authenticity, resilience and self-motivation were seen as important to help them be consistent in their practices and behaviors. Managers mentioned the ability to be resilient to exert self-control in difficult situations, and self-motivation to promote a positive environment on a daily basis. The managers also mentioned the importance of being authentic, or in other words, being themselves, which seems to help them to be consistent and fair in their practices and behaviors, and to develop more legitimacy towards the employees.

To bring the whole team in the same direction, managers then expressed the importance of having a clear vision of their desired direction and what they want to achieve. The managers highlighted the importance of having this information defined in order to communicate clearly and guide their team in the same direction with a stated purpose. According to personal engagement theory by Kahn (1990), when the purpose and vision are clear, it can trigger psychological meaningfulness to the employees, where the individuals feel that they are valuable and helpful to reach a specific goal, which can enhance their work engagement. In this sense, communication appears to be an essential soft skill when delivering a clear message to the employees, engaging and guiding them to reach the company's vision and goals.

To transform vision into practical actions, the managers emphasized that they need to delegate tasks and empower their employees with authority to do so. Delegation and

empowerment were something that the interviewed managers returned to several times during the interviews. According to the managers, when delegating tasks and giving authority, the employees seem to develop more autonomy, since they have to make their own decisions. Delegation of authority can provide psychological meaningfulness to the employees, where they perceive themselves important to their roles or tasks, and possibly positively affect work engagement, as stated by personal engagement theory (Kahn, 1990). In addition to that, if the group has the same goals and shared responsibilities between each other, it could also foster work engagement through sharing efforts to reach a goal, in accordance with self-determination theory (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). It was evident in the conversations that the managers aim to make everyone work towards the same goals and purpose, creating this interdependence within the group. It is important to highlight that to delegate, the manager needs to find a balance between work demands (i.e., tasks and responsibilities) and resources (i.e., competences, emotional and physical energy levels), which could possibly increase motivation and autonomy based on the job demands-resources theory (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, 2015). According to the results in "Managing Individual Needs", it is reasonable to assume that the managers tried to balance work demands and employee resources to foster work engagement.

In relation to soft skills and attributes, the managers perceived negotiation and adaptability to be relevant skills when it comes to delegation. The ability to adapt seems to help the managers to balance their requirements on work demands according to different situations and individual needs. Also, to these managers, negotiation was important, for example when bargaining about extra work hours with the employees and mediating conflicts between them. In addition to that, according to the managers, negotiation was believed to be affected by their levels of trust and legitimacy towards the employees.

In relation to positive leadership, the three different elements (i.e., becoming a role model, having a clear vision and guiding the employees and empowering or delegating responsibilities and tasks) and their respectives skills and attributes are related to two or more leadership styles. For example, striving to become a role model can be related to transformational, ethical and authentic leadership. From a transformational perspective, the leader focuses on being a truthful and admired person, with determination and persistence. From an ethical leadership perspective, the focus is on working with role model attributes through their high moral and integrity characteristics, and great attention to feedback, communication and fairness. From an authentic leadership perspective, their strong moral,

integrity, self-awareness, and transparency gives them the status as a role model. According to the managers, attributes like authenticity and consistency in their practices were connected with all these leadership styles, enhancing their legitimacy and trust. The managers believed these attributes to facilitating the process of them becoming role models, fostering more engagement in the group. When it comes to empowering leadership practices, the focus is on delegating, empowering and encouraging the employees to become more independent, which was evident during the conversations with the manager. Empowering leaders use the delegation to empower their employees, reducing barriers and developing more autonomy. These practices can also be found in transformational and servant leadership, since both leadership styles pursue to enhance autonomy and encourage their staff to work more independently. Transformational and servant leadership work on supporting their employees, focusing on their individual needs, and on the other hand, empowering leadership to support their employees, sharing power and assisting their decisions. According to the interviews, the managers expressed a great importance on empowering, supporting in order to develop autonomy to the staff. In addition to that, inspirational motivation (e.g., giving a purpose to the employees), can be found in transformational leadership, which includes the characteristics of having a clear vision and inspiring their followers in that direction. This is also important to empowering leadership, to create a meaningful goal and clear task to their employees. The interviewed managers possessed and described how they used these soft skills and attributes that are related to the different positive leadership styles. Therefore, in accordance with (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Salanova et al., 2005) it is reasonable to assume that the managers contribute to foster work engagement, and consequently service climate and quality provided to the customers.

Finally, it may be concluded that the ability to influence, inspire and empower require different skills such as ability to empower the staff, self-motivation, negotiation, adaptability and resilience which are part of several leadership styles. That is also the case with elements such as, becoming a role model, having a clear vision and translating into strategies to the employees and empowering or delegating responsibilities and tasks.

7.5 The Importance of a Mechanical Background

According to the results, this last theme discussed is not connected directly with any positive leadership practices, but it is believed to be essential in this context, working indirectly with the

previous themes. Managers expressed that their background as a mechanic was perceived to be of importance for their leadership in this specific service sector, because this experience enabled them to have technical knowledge in this area. A good example that sums up the importance of technical knowledge was expressed by respondent 10 in part "6.5 The Importance of a Mechanical Background". He expressed his thoughts about how the technical knowledge gave him respect and legitimacy when he put his manager role aside and his overalls on and helped the mechanics in the workshop. Three main components were identified when the manager's mechanical background was discussed in the interviews: being a role model, problem solving, and self-esteem. Furthermore, it can be assumed that these elements are connected to all positive leadership styles.

According to the managers, mechanical knowledge helps them to support employees in the workshop with technical problems in their tasks. It was clear that these practices of support helped the managers to develop their idealized influence, which is an attribute to become a role model for their employees. The managers expressed that their mechanical background and their technical knowledge enabled them to achieve legitimacy, trust and respect within the group. This achievement is similar to what we already discussed under "Influential Leadership", where the leader becomes a role model through trust, respect and legitimacy, and there is a chance that the followers start to reflect the same characteristics. According to social learning theory, managers have the power to enhance positive organizational behaviors, such as engagement, through behavioral modeling (Hoch et al., 2018). According to the managers, their technical skills and engagement to solve problems can inspire their employees to be better employees.

The managers also highlighted that a mechanical background is an advantage in problem solving skills, both with employees and customers. Problem solving was used as a tool to help customers, when explaining an issue and what is needed to fix the vehicle. Frenkel (2000) and Lin and Liu (2016) describe that this exchange between service provider and customer has a symbolic importance to the customer and can be affected by the attitudes, information given and communication styles, which can affect the reputation and profitability for the organization as well as the customer satisfaction both positively and negatively. Problem solving was also important to information sharing and support their staff when technical problems came up, highlighting the importance of their mechanical background on a daily basis. In addition to that, according to social exchange theory (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006), when the

managers and employees interact in high-quality relationships, helping each other, work engagement can be achieved, which seems to be recurrent in the workshops.

Moreover, a mechanical background was described as giving the managers a higher self-esteem and confidence to support their employees with technical issues in the workshop. When helping their employees the managers showed humility and humbleness when putting their status as a manager aside. This connects to personal engagement theory (Decuypere & Schaufeli 2021; Kahn, 1990) where the leader supports the employees to be confident in their tasks and responsibilities. The social exchange theory also circles around support (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006), where support from the manager is something that the employees will reciprocate.

Problem solving, being a role model and self-esteem are all aspects connected to positive leadership styles (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). The technical skills and confidence to support and develop their team could not be done without problem solving skills and information sharing, which is connected to ethical-, and empowering leadership, which shows an overlap between them (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021). According to Decuypere & Schaufeli (2021), idealized influence or becoming a role model for employees, is highly connected with transformational and ethical leadership, highlighting another overlap between two positive leadership styles. In addition to that, it was also shown in our results the manager's effort to become a role model. The managers also showed self-esteem during the interviews, when describing these technical skills as a strength to build stability and confidence to complete their daily work and support their teams, which is connected to authentic leadership (Kernis, 2003). Finally, they also showed humility and humbleness when putting their status as manager aside and used their mechanical skills together with the employees in the workshop, which can be connected to servant leadership and the sustainable and long-term performance they strive to create (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Sendjaya, 2015).

In sum, having a mechanical background seems to help the manager in his leadership through facilitating him becoming a role model, increasing his self-esteem, and improving the problem solving with the customers and employees. These are characteristics that are found in all the five positive leadership styles. It is hard to pinpoint one of the five leadership styles that is more important than the other, since they are all intertwined and are affected by external factors. However, having a mechanical background and the soft skills presented above was

clearly perceived as important in order to sustain and develop a positive leadership style in the workshops, leading to greater employee engagement.

8. Conclusion

Managerial work and leadership are linked to the organization of the work of others, their work is fundamentally relational and affects the work engagement and the service quality. The managers possess different skills and lead with different styles with the purpose of building a productive environment, work engagement and consequently, service quality for the customers (Schneider et al., 1998; Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2021; Salanova et al., 2005). This project presented a qualitative study on a multinational organization that explored practices and characteristics among managers in well-performing workshops in this particular service work sector. The main purpose of this study was to investigate and contribute with knowledge concerning positive leadership and its associated soft skills/attributes, as well as to highlight possible commonalities between the positive leadership styles. The project involved 12 semi-structured interviews with well-performing workshop managers from five different countries within the business area Europe North Central. The well performing workshops were chosen based on their high scores in two different surveys conducted by the organization, which evaluate work engagement and customer satisfaction among other performance indicators.

With respect to the first research question, "What constitutes positive leadership according to managers in well-performing workshops in the service sector?", communication, managing individual needs, self-awareness and influential leadership and have a mechanical background are important elements of the managers in this sector that, according to the managers, create an environment related to a positive work engagement: First, seems to be important to the managers to build an positive atmosphere that challenges the staff with clear goals, as well as supporting them in their professional and personal life (Kahn, 1990). Second, according to the managers, it was essential to have practices on delegation and empowerment to foster autonomy and stronger relations between the employees (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Third, the respondents expressed their efforts on developing an open and fair space to share opinions and personal experiences without being judged, a place where the employees can build their trust (Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2006). Fourth, the managers highlight the importance of being a role model, inspiring followers to mimic his/her behavior. And fifth, managers seem to try to find a balance between job demand and availability of resources to work with employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Schaufeli, 2015). In addition to that,

the study revealed the importance of having a mechanical background in this sector, which facilitates their positive leadership practices and positive outcomes on work engagement.

With respect to the second research question, "What soft skills do the different aspects of positive leadership require and how could aspects of positive leadership be associated with service quality?", several soft skills and attributes were identified by the managers. In relation to soft skills, self-esteem, self-motivation and empathy, as well as attributes like humbleness and humility, appear to be important to be a positive leader, according to the managers. These skills helped the leaders to work side by side with their followers, becoming a role model and inspiring the staff to become more like them. In addition to that, the managers showed high levels of self-awareness, which seemed to facilitate their relationships with the employees and to be a good leader. The managers also emphasized the importance of high interpersonal skills and practices on a daily basis, through information sharing, problem solving, communication exchange, teamwork and delegation/empowerment. According to the managers, these skills help them create more autonomy and independence for the employees, and also increase trust in their relationships. In addition to that, skills like negotiation, resilience/adaptability, coaching, support and feedback were soft skills also mentioned by the managers to be a positive leader. All of these identified soft skills were considered important for the managers and are related to each one of the themes already mentioned (i.e., communication, managing individual needs, self-awareness, influential leadership and mechanical background). As stated, according to Schneider et al., (1998); Decuypere and Schaufeli, (2021) and Salanova et al., (2005) it can be assumed that these soft skills are an essential part of the positive leadership practices and are associated to positive work engagement outcomes, and consequently, to a better service quality.

The study revealed that the managers expressed practices and attributes from all the positive leadership styles, which confirms the assumptions from Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021), that these styles overlap between each other in their characteristics, making it difficult to identify a specific style in each one of the managers. In that way, the skills and attributes presented in this study are the common factor between the leadership styles and how they contribute to enhancing the work engagement and a positive work environment.

The study contributes to a better understanding of which practices and skills well performing leaders make use of and value in this particular service sector, and where organizations should focus their efforts and investments to reach higher work engagement in their teams, better service climate, and in extension, higher service quality for their customers.

8.1 Practical implications

This project suggests that specific soft skills and attributes are essential for companies and organizations to invest in to create more and better opportunities for engagement and teamwork, it also highlights other possibilities for organizational development. This might help organizations create better and more efficient leadership training and development programs that focus on the findings in this research connected to the service sector; communication such as feedback, information sharing, decision making, coaching and support; the importance of managing individual needs such as professional development for the employees and empowerment to enhance the team spirit; manager's self-awareness when it comes to humbleness, humility and self-esteem to increase the cohesiveness in the group and the engagement of the employees; and influential leadership that delegates, inspires and empowers the employees, as well as for the manager to act as a role model to gain legitimacy and respect. The training and development programs should focus on training and preparing the employees to become future managers or to develop existing managers to provide them with tools to develop the mentioned skills further, for higher efficiency or future needs.

The findings in this study can also help organizations in the service sector work with talent acquisition when they are provided with an insight on which soft skills/attributes that are of importance when recruiting a manager similar to the ones investigated in this study. This can also help with the employer branding of the organization, to attract the best possible candidates, both mechanics and managers, when the possibilities for professional development within the organization are good.

It might also serve as an eye opener for some that a manager is not bound to either one of the positive leadership styles, but can rather be associated with several of them at once.

8.2 Future Research

This study has highlighted some of the commonalities between positive leadership styles and how they overlap. However, it would be interesting to conduct a meta-analysis or a quantitative research on the subject to further deepen the understanding of the commonalities and overlap between the positive leadership styles in other service sectors. Regarding leadership styles, we found that it was not possible to say that the managers belonged to one of the leadership styles alone, rather they expressed traits and abilities from several leadership styles, as expected. In

addition to that, there are also several other leadership styles that could be further explored when it comes to their similarities and potential overlaps.

It would also be interesting to conduct a similar study in a business that instead of male dominated is heavily female dominated, to see if there are any differences in which soft skills that are considered most important in that setting. On this subject, it could also be of interest to look further on national variations regarding organizational/leadership cultures, to gain an understanding of which soft skills are more or less important in different countries, cultures and businesses.

With regards to the request for future research in this area, previously mentioned in the study, on how the positive leadership styles overlap this research might also serve as a point of departure or pilot study for more comprehensive studies in this area.

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Email to managers

All managers:
Hi XX.

We are two students from the Strategic Human Resource Management and Labour Relations program at the University of Gothenburg and we are writing our master thesis together with *The Organization*. The purpose of this master thesis is to look into which leadership skills are most essential to develop a successful and effective workshop. We are going to conduct interviews with some workshop managers around Europe in order to explore their experiences as a leader, and also send out a survey with questions regarding their perception about the leadership skills of the organization in general.
We would very much appreciate it if you could help us out with our thesis work and answer this survey, it won't take more than a moment. All answers will be anonymous and deleted once the analysis of the data is completed.

Many thanks in advance for helping us out with our work!
All the best / Alexandre & Emil

Interviewees:
Hi XX.

We are two students from the Strategic Human Resource Management and Labour Relations program at the University of Gothenburg and we are writing our master thesis together with *The Organization*. The purpose of this master thesis is to look into which leadership skills are most essential to develop a successful and effective workshop. We are going to conduct interviews with some workshop managers around Europe in order to explore their experiences as a leader, and also send out a survey with questions regarding their perception about the leadership skills of the organization in general. XX has recommended us to contact you for an in-depth interview and we therefore wonder if you could help us out with this?
We would very much appreciate it if you could help us out with our thesis work and answer this survey, it won't take more than a moment. All answers will be anonymous and deleted once the analysis of the data is completed.

Many thanks in advance for helping us out with our work!
All the best / Alexandre & Emil

Alla verkstadschefer:
Hej XX

Vi är två studenter från programmet Strategic Human Resource Management and Labour Relations vid Göteborgs Universitet och skriver vår masteruppsats tillsammans med *Organisationen*. Målet med uppsatsen är att undersöka vilka ledaregenskaper och erfarenheter som är av störst vikt för att driva en så bra och effektiv workshop som möjligt. Vi kommer att genomföra intervjuer med ett antal workshop managers runt om i Europa för att få höra mer om deras erfarenheter, men även skicka ut en undersökning med frågor om uppfattningen om ledarskapet i organisationen generellt
Vi skulle uppskatta väldigt om du kunde hjälpa oss med vår uppsats och svara på enkäten, det tar bara en kort stund. Alla svar kommer vara anonyma och raderas när analysen av datan är genomförd.

Många tack i förväg för din hjälp med vår uppsats!
Hälsningar / Emil & Alexandre

Intervjupersoner:
Hej XX

Vi är två studenter från programmet Strategic Human Resource Management and Labour Relations vid Göteborgs Universitet och skriver vår masteruppsats tillsammans med *Organisationen*. Målet med uppsatsen är att undersöka vilka ledaregenskaper och erfarenheter som är av störst vikt för att driva en så bra och effektiv workshop som möjligt. Vi kommer att genomföra intervjuer med ett antal workshop managers runt om i Europa för att få höra mer om deras erfarenheter. XX har rekommenderat att vi intervjuar just dig och vi undrar därför om du har möjlighet att ställa upp?
Utöver intervjuerna kommer vi även skicka ut en undersökning med frågor om uppfattningen om ledarskapet i organisationen generellt, till alla workshop managers i Sverige, Norge, Danmark, Nederländerna och Belgien.
Vi skulle uppskatta väldigt om du kunde hjälpa oss med vår uppsats och svara på enkäten, det tar bara en kort stund. Alla svar kommer vara anonyma och raderas när analysen av datan är genomförd.

Många tack i förväg för din hjälp med vår uppsats!
Hälsningar / Emil & Alexandre

Appendix 2: Interview guide (ENG)

Interview guide (ENG):
Introduction and aim of the project
This interview is part of our master thesis course in the Master programme Strategic Human Resource Management at the University of Gothenburg. The aim of the interview is to investigate which leadership skills contribute to a successful workshop.

With your consent the interview will be recorded, anonymized, transcribed and analyzed and after the course is finished the recording will be deleted. With your participation, you will contribute to our learning which will be of great value for our master thesis. You are allowed to stop the interview at any time and you decide which questions you feel comfortable to answer.

Before we start the interview, do you have any questions for me?
Is it okay if I start the recording now?

Introducing questions:
Would you like to shortly present yourself? Age, backgroud and previous positions.
Can you describe the development of your education until now?
What is your role within the organization?
How long have you been working for the organization?
How long have you been working at your current role?
Have you done some leadership training in this organization or in another place?
      If Yes, what was the focus on?
      When was the last time?

Organizational Demographics Questions
How many people work in the workshop?
Could you briefly describe in your own words, your role in the organization?

Leadership questions:
- What is leadership to you?
- Which supporting skills do you think are most important when it comes to leadership?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
    - How would your colleagues describe it?
- What do you think is most important in creating a positive culture, atmosphere and environment at work?
- What are the greatest challenges of being a good leader?
- What values are most important to you as a leader?
    - Depending on the answer we can ask to elaborate.

- When do you feel proud of your work?
- In general, what are the major challenges of being a leader in this organization?
  - Express your own experiences.
- Can you remember certain experiences that shaped you to be the leader that you are today?
- How do your actions and words impact the people around you at work?
- To what extent are you afraid to make wrong decisions as a leader?

Authentic
- Can you describe your strengths and your weaknesses?
  - Can you tell me about a situation where you have asked for help?
- Can you describe your process of decision making?
- How would you react if an employee did something against your values or moral standards?

Servant
- To what extent do you think leaders should work to support personal growth?
  - How do you do it and what are the challenges?
- How is the relation between you and your subordinates?
  - Are they open with you about their thoughts?
  - Could you give an example of that?
- To what extent do you find being humble an important trait for leaders?
  - Can you tell me some situations where you were not humble?

Ethical
- Is there some reward system that you follow? Either your own reward system or a central reward system at *The Organization*.
  - How do you motivate your subordinates to work towards the organization's goals?
- How do leaders demonstrate fairness at work?
- How do you work to improve the communication of your team?

Empowering
- How do you work with delegation of authority to your employees?
  - Do you trust that they will complete the tasks you give them?
  - If they don't complete a task, what happens then?
- How do you work with information sharing within the workshop?
- Is there an individual skill development program for each employee?
  - How do you work with coaching your employees?

Transformational

- How do you describe your own work standards compared with *The Organization's* standards?
- Do you see yourself as an inspirational and creative leader?
    - Can you give an example of a situation when you were an inspirational and creative leader?
- Why do you think you are in a leadership position today?
- How do you picture your leadership in the future?
- Where do you see your team in 2 years from now?
    - How about 5 to 10 years?

Appendix 3: Intervjuguide (SV)

Intervjuguide (SV):

Introduktion och målet med projektet
Den här intervjun kommer vara en del av vår masteruppsats in programmet Strategic Human
Resource Management and Labour Relations på Handelshögskolan vid Göteborgs Universitet.
Målet med den här intervjun är att undersöka vilka ledarskapsegenskaper och erfarenheter
som bidrar till en lyckad workshop, och anledningen till att just du sitter här är för att den
workshopen du är ansvarig för presterar mycket bra.

Med din tillåtelse kommer jag att spela in intervjun och senare transkribera den. Du kommer
naturligtvis vara anonym och efter arbetet är färdigt så kommer inspelningen att raderas. Tack
vare din hjälp så bidrar du till vår uppsats och vidare examen. Du kan när som helst avbryta
intervjun och du bestämmer själv vilka frågor du känner dig bekväm att svara på.

Innan intervjun startar, har du några frågor till mig?
Då startar jag inspelningen nu.

Inledande frågor:
Vill du börja med att presentera dig? Ålder, bakgrund och tidigare roller du haft.
Kan du beskriva utvecklingen av din utbildning fram till idag?
Vad har du för roll i organisationen?
Hur länge har du jobbat för organisationen?
Hur länge har du varit på din nuvarande roll?
Har du gått någon ledarskapsutbildning, antingen in denna organisation eller tidigare?
                  Om Ja, vad var fokus under utbildningen?
                  När var det senaste tillfället?

Demografi:
Hur många anställda finns det på denna workshop?
Kan du kortfattat beskriva din roll i det dagliga arbetet, med egna ord?

Ledarskap:
- Vad är ledarskap för dig?
- Vilka stöttande egenskaper tycker du är viktigast när det kommer till ledarskap?
- Hur skulle du beskriva din ledarskapsstil?
    - Hur tror du att dina kollegor skulle beskriva den?
- Vad tycker du är viktigast när det kommer till att skapa en positiv
arbetsplatskultur, atmosfär och arbetsmiljö?
- Vilka är de största utmaningarna för att vara en bra ledare?
- Vilka värderingar tycker du är viktigast att en ledare har?
    - Beroende på svar, utveckla!

- Generellt sett, vilka är de största utmaningarna med att ha en ledarskapsposition i denna organisation?
  - Uttryck gärna egna egenskaper.
- Kan du minnas en speciell händelse/händelser som gjorde dig till den ledare du är idag?
- Hur påverkar dina handlingar och ord de andra människorna runt om kring dig tror du?
- Till vilken utsträckning är du rädd att fatta fel beslut som ledare?

Authentic:
- Kan du beskriva dina styrkor och svagheter?
  - Berätta gärna om en situation där du bad om hjälp.
- Kan du beskriva din beslutfattningsprocess?
- Hur skulle du reagera om en anställd gjorde något som gick emot dina egna värderingar och moral?

Servant:
- I vilken utsträckning tycker du att en ledare ska stötta personlig utveckling hos de anställda?
  - Hur jobbar du med det och vilka utmaningar stöter du på?
- Hur är din relation till dina anställda?
  - Är de öppna med sina tankar till dig?
  - Kan du ge ett exempel?
- I vilken utsträckning tycker du det är viktigt att vara ödmjuk som ledare?
  - Kan du beskriva en situation där du inte var ödmjuk?

Ethical:
- Följer du något speciellt belöningssystem? Antingen ett eget system eller ett centralt system på Organisationen?
  - Hur motiverar du dina anställda att tillsammans jobba mot organisationens mål?
- Som ledare, hur jobbar man så rättvist som möjligt enligt dig?
- Hur jobbar du för att förbättra kommunikationen i ditt/dina team?

Empowering:
- Hur jobbar du med att dela ansvar till dina anställda?
  - Litar du på att de genomför de uppgifter du ger dom?
  - Om dom inte gör uppgiften de får, vad händer då?
- Hur jobbar du med att dela information inom workshopen?
- Finns det ett individuellt utvecklingsprogram för varje anställd?
  - Hur jobbar du med personlig coaching för dina anställda?

Transformational:

- Hur skulle du beskriva dina egna arbetsnormer jämfört med *Organisationens*?
- Ser du dig själv som en inspirerande och kreativ ledare?
    - Har du ett exempel på en situation där du agerade inspirerande och kreativt?
- Varför tror du att du har en ledarskapsposition idag?
- Hur tror du att ditt ledarskap kommer se ut i framtiden?
- Vart ser du dig själv och ditt team om två år?
    - 5 till 10 år?

Appendix 4: Consent form

Information to Participants and Consent form

Our names are Alexandre Monteiro and Emil Fredriksson. We are students in the Master's Programme of Strategic Human Resource and Labor Relations at Gothenburg University.

Our master thesis project is intended to give us the opportunity to explore specific subjects in the area of Human resource management and improve our skills of scientific research. The responsible teacher of the master thesis course is Bertil Rolandsson, who is Associate Professor in Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.

Data Collection

The data collection consists of recorded qualitative interviews if the participant allows.

Participation

Participation is voluntary and anonymous according to the Swedish secrecy act. All involved in the project are covered by professional secrecy. Personal names are not registered or will be exchanged for fake names when field notes/interviews are transcribed/questionnaires are encoded. This also applies to city names, etc. Participation takes place on the research participants' terms. The participant can choose to change the terms of her/his participation or to cancel the participation (e.g., an interview) without giving reasons if he/ she so wishes.

Handling of collected material

Tape recordings and notes are kept locked away and are only available to authorized researchers. All interviews and notes will be transcribed to the computer. The transcribed documents are named and sorted by number or fake names. The collected material and transcription of interviews will not be used for any purpose other than the academia research and give an overview of the essential skills to the organization . The interview file will be deleted after the course has been completed.

Results and publication

The results of the study will be published at the library files at University of Gothenburg. In addition, the results will be presented to the University and to the management of The Organization. It is important to mention that no employee will be exposed or evaluated individually in this process.

CONSENT FORM - Consent to participate

I have read and fully understood the scope and implications of participating in this study. Any questions I had were answered satisfactorily. I agree that the interview can be digitally recorded. I agree to participate in this project.

☐ I agree to participate

☐ I agree to my personal details being handled as described above.

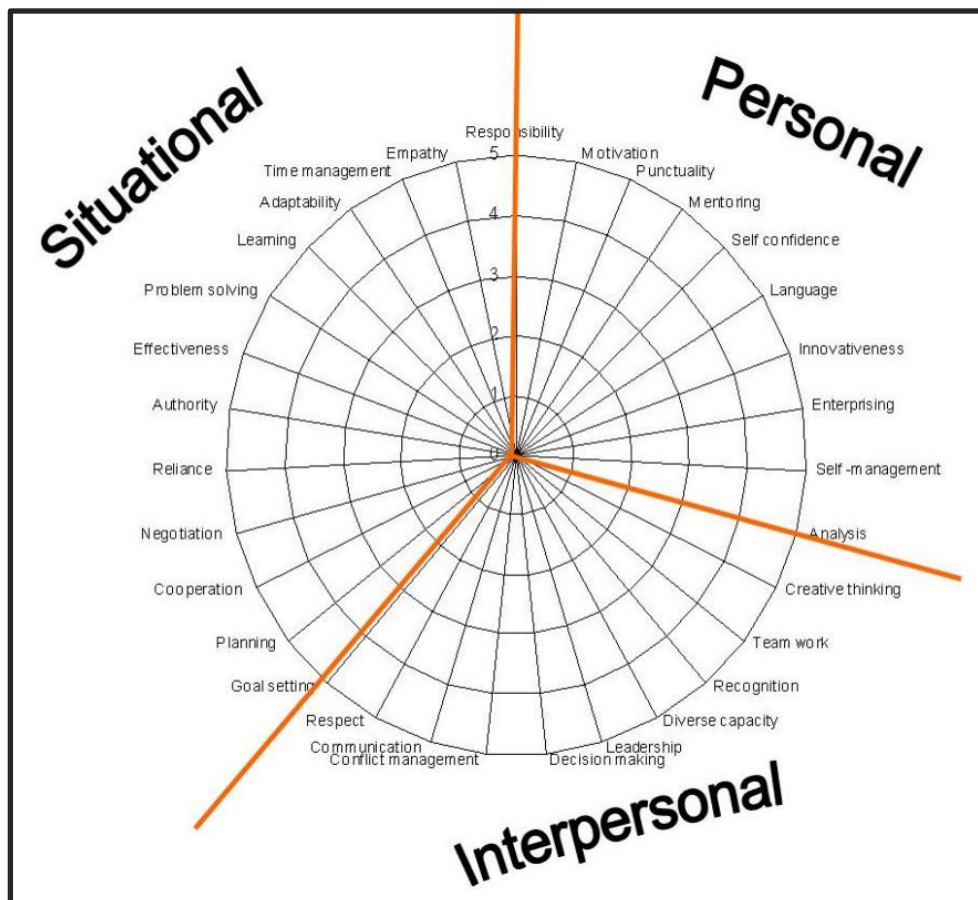| Date and place	Name and Signature (participant)

Date and place	Name and Signature (student)

Appendix 5: Figure

Figure 1. (Abduwani. 2012, p. 93)