Project Management
from a situational leadership perspective

Bachelor's thesis within Management
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Abstract

Introduction: Projects have become a key strategic working form and it has been shown that all industries can benefit from project-based working. Each project is unique and present different challenges to managers, which requires good project management skills in order to face these challenges. These skills are referred to as the science and art of project management. The science consists of skills in using different tools and techniques and the artistry refers to skills in practising leadership, which some researchers argue is the most important quality for managers to posses. Since each project is a new situation, project managers needs to be able to adapt their leadership style to the unique situation of the project. This way of exploring leadership has been done in the Situational Leadership Model originally developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. The interaction between a leader’s behaviour and the situational factors, ability and willingness, of the members are emphasized.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to study project management from a situational leadership perspective, using the Situational Leadership Model.

Method: The empirical research was conducted through interviews made with representatives from four different companies located in or just outside the city of Jönköping. The representatives included one project leader from each company as well as one or two project members.

Conclusion: The study showed that the Situational Leadership Model was able to predict the appropriate leadership behavior to adopt. Even though it was able to predict the appropriate behavior, it was not adopted in all projects. Two of the five project members were confronted with a faulty leadership behavior.
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1 Introduction

Introduction

There are estimates made that more than 80 percent of all projects fail to deliver what is expected of them (Maylor, 2003). The results are consistent outcomes such as missed dates, exceeded budgets and poor quality (Kliem, 2004). This has brought forth great problems for many organisations as projects are a known way to achieve competitive advantage over others. Having such high level of importance and at the same time being coincided with high levels of problems, brings forth questions of possible reasons. Answering this question is undoubtedly becoming more urgent as more and more organisations are adopting a project based work form. Understanding what needs to be done can have major economic benefits for the organisation. One stated reason for the array of projects failing, which is also supported by many researchers, is the project management in question (Maylor, 2003).

1.2 Background

Projects have become a key strategic working form and it has been shown that all companies can benefit from project-based working. This has lead to a widespread use and application of project-based management (Turner, 2003). The management form has gained recognition in a wide range of organisations and is increasingly being perceived as a fundamental skill of managing in these times of constant change. The flexible skills for developing and managing projects have overshadowed the old managerial skills needed for supervising daily and repetitive activities in companies (Dinsmore, 1999). The flexible skills are highly relevant as all projects are unique and thus present different challenges to managers. Great project management skills are needed in order to face these challenges, skills that are referred to as the science and art of project management. The science consists of skills in using different tools and techniques and the artistry refers to the practise of leadership (Heerkens, 2001). Forsberg, Mooz and Cotterman (2000) argue that having leadership skills is the most important for any project manager. The essence of leadership has however often been regarded in individualistic term where leaders are characterised by their personality, features or values. Leadership is in reality embedded within a much larger process that looks beyond the individual leader and focuses on the interaction with other resources, most notably the members in the company and their specific characteristics (Avolio, 1999). Avolio (1999) argues that it is a necessity to broaden the focus on leadership beyond the leader to include the members in the organisation, in order to get the essence of the practise. This way of exploring leadership has been done in the Situational Leadership Model originally developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. The two researcher claim that effective leaders adjust their behaviour in accordance to the characteristics of the followers. Characteristics that are made up of the ability and willingness of the members, referred to as situational factors. The researcher claimed that the ability and willingness will affect the leadership behaviour that will be adopted (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2001). Dubrin (2001) however states that the adopted leadership behaviour will be affected by a much wider scope of situational factors than those mentioned in the Situational Leadership Model. It can be affected by anything that is specific to a new situation, for example time,
budget or the structure of a task. This is also one of the reasons why the model has been targeted with considerable academic criticism. It has basically been criticised for its explanatory validity as a theory for leadership. Nevertheless, it has remained highly popular among practitioners and has shown intuitive appeal and acceptance (Avery & Ryan, 2002; Grover & Walker, 2003; Silverthorne, 2000). Thus the Situational Leadership Model can clearly act as an extremely useful tool for practising project managers.

1.3 Problem Discussion
Many projects fail due to leadership neglectance of situational factors in project management. Given that each project constitutes a unique situation the question is how leaders adapt and what they should do to achieve the project goals. The dynamic and ever changing project environment is the perfect setting to explore and study situational factors in leadership. It is hard to conceive of any other organizational structure in which situational factors seem to play a bigger part. Thus exploring the field of situational leadership in project management might prove a good help to project managers.

1.4 Purpose
To study project management from a situational leadership perspective, using the Situational Leadership Model.

1.5 Definitions
Many researchers have argued for the need of distinguishing between management and leadership (Kelley, 2002). Management is often seen as being task related whilst leadership is seen as the influence exercised over others through personality and actions (Maylor, 2003). Hersey (1988), on the other hand, argues that the two definitions are quite similar. Hersey states that management is a special form of leadership and the only thing that separates the two is that management involves aiming towards a specific goal. Hersey’s definition still emphasize a difference between the two and the authors will adopt an approach were a distinction is made. There will be a distinction of project management into art and science, where the former is people related and the latter task related. The focus will be on the art of project management. The authors are although fully aware that the two terms are intertwined.

1.6 Delimitations
The effect of situational factors on the process of project management will be limited to the factors that are regarded in the Situational Leadership Model. There are several other factors that can have a large impact on the outcome of a project, possibly more so than the factors that are mentioned in the model. This is nevertheless out of scope for this paper.

Another delimitation is the characteristics of the projects that were included in the study. The projects that are included are projects that were completed the latest. This decision was based on the author’s belief that the respondents still had the project fresh in mind as well as being able to answer reflective. Another reason was the desire to be able to get information about the outcome of the project.
2 Frame of References

This chapter aims to give an overview of project, the science and art of project management as well as the basis of the Situational Leadership Model. The chapter will end with critics of the model that will highlight its shortcomings.

2.1 Project

Each organisation has been structured to suit the daily operations that are being performed and all employees have some form of repetitive assignments to carry out. Every now and then however arises a task that the organisation and the repetitive procedures in place are not suited for (Andersen, Grude & Haug, 1994). It can involve everything from developing a new product, constructing a new facility or planning for a new contract (Davis & Pharro, 2003). It is in these circumstances that the project form comes into force. Projects can come in many different forms and shapes but there seems to be some common characteristics (Maylor, 2003; Lientz & Rea, 1999; Dinsmore, 1999; Young 1998);

- A non-repetitive task
- Temporary endeavour
- Clear start and finish
- A focused collection of activities
- The creation of a unique product and service
- Defined in scope, cost, schedule and performance criteria.
- Unique, as it is unlikely that the work being performed will be repeated in exactly the same way.

As the final paragraph stated, every project is unique and the tasks being performed is more than often completely different from previous undertakings. As a result, a great deal of uncertainty is present of how to approach and deal with the task in question. It therefore puts an immense emphasize on the responsible project manager to guide and help the members in the project. The manager needs to use his full artillery of skills, namely the science and art of project management (Larsson & Mullern, 1998; Maylor, 2003; Dinsmore, 1999).

2.2 The science of project management

According to Weathersby, “…management is the allocation of scarce resources against an organization’s objective, the setting of priorities, the design of work and the achievement of results. (Weathersby, 1999, p.5). Other authors that continue on the same path is Golin (2003, p.10), who identifies management as a “group of people who achieve orderly results by controlling schedules and budgets” and Davis and Pharro (2003, p. 7) who adopt a more general approach by stating that project management is “the combination of techniques and tools used in achieving a project’s objective”. So in general the essence of project management is applying authority over others through formalised arrangements of the organisation (Maylor, 2003). The formalised arrangements that project managers have at their disposal are; planning, organizing and scheduling. (Badiru, 1996; Shtub, Bard & Globerson, 2005; Maylor, 2003).

Planning is the first step in project management, which is an essential aspect in achieving a successful project (Badiru, 1996). Planning involves structuring the work and setting it up in a logical manner. In this phase, the guidelines are set, the objectives are stated and the
budget and time lines are confirmed. Responsibilities of the potential project members are determined and the functions of what needs to be done and when are stated (Lientz & Rea, 1999). The managers establish standards of performance that will help guide the actions of the project members (Maylor, 2003). The benefits of planning is the breaking down of complex activities in to manageable parts, the ability for both managers and the project members to grasp the sequence of activities that need to be done and facilitating the objectives of the project in a formal way (Maylor, 2003). The higher the complexity of the project the more detailed the planning needs to be (Dinsmore, 1999).

Project organizing refers to selecting the appropriate project members to be included in the project and also determining the appropriate project structure to be established (Badiru, 1996). The selection of project members should be based on them possessing the appropriate skills and knowledge for the project at hand (Eklund, 2002). However, too often the project members are not chosen in reference to these criteria’s, but more so by availability. Also, in many cases the project managers are not always involved in hand picking the members (Young, 1998). Young (1998) states that it is essential that the managers are involved and have a hand in choosing the members as many problems have arisen due to the “wrong team” being selected. Determining the appropriate project structure to adopt is another important aspect to consider in the organizing function. The choice of project structure should be based on choosing the structure that most clearly displays the management line and the responsibilities of the project members but also a structure that will facilitate the flow of information. It is however not uncommon that projects are run in structures that are inappropriate for the work being performed (Maylor, 2003).

Scheduling is concerned with timing the activities that has to be performed in project. Here managers assign time periods and duration to the different activities (Badiru, 1996). Knowing the duration of activities is a major step. This function is often supported by the use of software (Maylor, 2003).

Besides having skills in planning, organizing and scheduling a project manager needs leadership skills. This is the most essential attribute of a project manager. The managers need to lead the members through the course of the project and deal with problems that arise overtime (Shtub et al., 2005). The functions of planning, organizing and scheduling are enhanced and strengthen when implementing them with appropriate leadership skills. No matter how detailed and methodical the planning and scheduling are, the essence is to make the project members adopt and follow it, namely exercise leadership. Failure of projects can more than often be the result of spending too much time with project administration and not enough time with the project member (Lientz & Rea, 1999).

2.3 The art of project management

One good definition of leadership, that somewhat captures the essence of its features, which also is recognized by many others, is the one by Weathersby (1999, p.5) “Leadership focuses on the creation of a common vision. It means motivating people to contribute to the vision and encouraging them to align their self-interest with that of the organization. It means persuading, not commanding”. The same characteristics have been identified by Robinson (1999), namely that leadership focuses on people and by Maylor (2003) that states that leadership involves exerting personal influence over the project members in order to obtain the desired results. Influence can be exercised in many different ways, but the most common procedures to exercised leadership are through communication, the enserement of the members commitment motivation and control (Maylor, 2003).
Communication should be exercised in order to inform the project members of the requirements of the project and their progress in their work. It should be exercised and kept open throughout the course of the project. If clear communication is present between the project leader and the members, it can lead to a lot of problems and difficulties being averted (Badiru, 1996; Lientz & Rea, 1999). Dinsmore (1999) argues that everything that goes wrong in a project is always traceable back to lack of communication. Communication has to be present in order to ensure that the project members are going the same way and striving for the same goals (Dinsmore, 1999).

Effective communication can also, in many cases, ensure the commitment of project members. To secure commitment, leaders often have to bring forth the most positive aspects of the project in their communication with the employees. The leaders have to specifically outline what is expected of the project members and instil faith that the stated objectives are achievable (Badiru, 1996). Lack of commitment can be due to lack of interest. This is often the case for people that don’t work full time on the project. They do not have the time to be committed to a specific project. Lack of commitment can lead to lack of effort and in turn to the scheduling being overrun. What leaders have to do to ensure commitment is to actively update members of the progress of the project, provide feedback. Positive involvement and progress naturally leads to commitment (Lientz & Rea, 1999).

Project leaders have a responsibility to both the organisation as well as the project members to provide them with high levels of motivation (Maylor, 2003). The project leaders must be assured that the project members are motivated, if they are not it could lead to undesirable outcomes for the project. In order to secure effective work in the project, the members must be motivated as people work better when they are motivated (Badiru, 1996; Maylor, 2003). They are a number of ways that leaders can ensure the motivation of members. They can make sure that the members have responsibility and control over their own work but also see to it that the structure is appropriate, as the structure of a project can have a great deal of impact on the motivation of project members (Maylor, 2003; Hersey et al., 2001). Herzberg (1966) also states that finding a job challenging can act as a motivator and thus result in an enhancing performance.

Control is concerned with the actions that project leaders take to get the project back on track if they recognise that there are deviations from expected performance (Badiru, 1996). The most dangerous thing that can happen during the course of a project is that control is lost over the progress. Without control, the leaders lose the possibility to steer away from problems which most likely will lead to the project not finish on time, at the right cost and so on. It involves correcting and evaluating (Badiru, 1996). This can be made difficult if the planning phase has not been done properly. If there has been bad planning there may be confusion if the progress is acceptable or if the project leaders should intervene (Maylor, 2003).

The project members may respond differently to the influences exercised by the leaders. Some members may feel less/more motivated, less/more in need of control and so forth. Leaders have to acknowledge this and adopt a behaviour that will best suit the needs of individual project members. Plenty of research has shown that the success or failure of a project is highly dependent on how well an adjustment is made to these and other factors that the environment encompasses, namely situational factors (Hersey, 1988). Dubrin (2001) has put forth an equation to highlight this leadership process and dependence;

\[ L = f(l, gm, s) \]
This formula suggests that leadership \( L \) is a function \( f \) of the leader \( l \), group members \( gm \) and other situational variables \( s \). In other words leadership does not exist alone, it is dependant on many different situational factors and the leader needs to adjust to the factors that the environment encompasses and that change from one project to another (Dubrin, 2001).

### 2.4 Situational factors

Situational factors are, as mentioned earlier, factors that are unique to a situation and that leaders have to take into account and adapt themselves to (Hersey, 1988). The underlying question is if managers are capable of altering their leadership behaviour to match the surrounding and shifting environment. Many theorists argue that it is possible to change style to match the situation by assuming that a leader can adopt an appropriate style in order to fit the specific circumstances, namely adopt a situational leadership perspective (Forsberg et al., 2000). Others disagree. Opponents to the concept imply that a project manager instead should selectively seek the situation that would best match their leadership behaviour and avoid projects that are likely to present them with situations that are opposite to their preference (Kelley, 2002).

Taking the supporting view, namely an situational leadership perspective, there are a number of situational factors that leaders have to take into account; members, time and the nature of work just to mention a few.

The members are according to Hersey (1988) the most important aspect for leaders to consider. The thing that has to be considered is the personal attributes of project members and the effectiveness will be determined by how well an adjustment is made to these attributes (Hersey, 1988). Leaders often however misdiagnose personal attributes such as knowledge and skills of different project members, either undervaluing or overvaluing them. Wrongly assessing the skills and knowledge of members can lead to unpleasant surprises in the course of the project (Lientz & Rea, 1999). Dubrin (2001) however states that highly skilled and knowledgeable members may not need any leadership at all to accomplish their task. They are so assured in their work that they can handle their jobs without the need of a leader. He continues by stating that members that find their work highly motivating may also require a minimum of leadership. The task itself grabs all the attention of the member, making leadership encouragement and directives less important (Dubrin, 2001). Another point that can be made in reference to the members is trust. According to Shurtleff (1998), trust automatically leads to a delegating leadership approach. When trust exist, project managers delegate by handing over responsibility and accountability to the members, which according to Shurtleff (1998) will create a more efficient work process. Trust is nevertheless quite hard to define. Golin (2003) describes trust as the essence of all relationships and a process as well as an outcome. A more tangible definition, is given by Shurtleff (1998) who says trust is derived from experience. He states that it is often based on a person’s past experience as well as current observational experiences. Trust is the confidence from one person to another that the other person will do what she/he says she/he will do. Thus in order to reach a high level of trust you need “credibility of actions” meaning that you have consistently delivered what you promise (Shurtleff, 1998).

Another factor is time. Badiru (1996) states that the set up timeframe will be the most important aspect for a leader to consider when adopting an appropriate leadership behaviour, as delays of a project can have huge economic costs for a company (Badiru, 1996). The shorter the decision time the higher the degree of order given style the leader is forced to
use. A third factor is the nature of the work. If the members are not interested in the assignments it can be necessary to carefully supervise them in order for it to get done. If they on the other hand find the assignments to be interesting then supervision is not necessary (Hersey, 1988).

Research has nevertheless shown that there is one factor that is decisive. This is the relationship between leaders and the members. If the members decide not to pitch in, then all other factors are meaningless. Therefore it is essential that leaders maximises their ability to take care of the relationship to their members and adjust their behaviour to them (Hersey, 1988).

The most known and popular model that emphasises the interaction between leaders and members is the model originally developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. The model states that effective leaders adopt different leadership behaviours depending on the characteristics of the members (Avery & Ryan, 2002).

### 2.5 The Herschey-Blanchard model

The Hersey-Blanchard model was originally published in 1969 as the "Life-cycle Theory of Leadership". It was developed to assist parents in changing their "leadership" styles as children progressed through infancy, adolescence and adulthood (Avery & Ryan, 2002). In 1972 the two authors first termed the expression situational leadership (Hersey et al., 2001). The logic of the Life-cycle Theory of Leadership remained the same but the application setting of the model changed. The two authors went from parent-child relationship to applying the logic in regards to leader-follower relationship in workplace settings. Hersey and Blanchard placed an emphasize on the members and stated that leadership should be exercised using different leadership styles depending on the members (Avery & Ryan, 2002).

The model also brought forward a new perspective by looking at behavioural aspects in regards to leadership. Leadership models at the time did not take behaviour into aspect but concentrated instead on the philosophy of management and attitudes/values (Hersey et al., 2001). The two authors argued that behaviour is far more flexible than attitude and values. They stated that behaviour can be thought in order to get optimal result in a particular situation and that attitude and values, that are internal, are far less flexible (www.situational.com).

The model brings forth two behavioural aspects that make up the dimension of leadership; namely task behaviour and relationship behaviour. These two behavioural elements can be used in varying degree depending on the situation or more specifically on the members. The dimension of the members, that has to be regarded by the leader, have lead to the two authors taking somewhat different approaches. Paul Hersey is talking about regarding member’s readiness and Kenneth Blanchard has used the term development level. The biggest differences between the two are the terminology being used and a greater emphasis on group dynamics and group development by Blanchard (Hersey et al., 2001). This is also confirmed by Graeff (1997) that states that Hersey puts a greater emphasis on member’s individual interactions with the leader. In this study the terminology by Paul Hersey will be used due to the authors desire to study leadership process from an individual perspective.
2.5.1 The Situational Leadership Model

The Situational Leadership Model advocates that effective leaders provide members with varying amounts of task- and relationship behaviour, depending on the member's readiness level, to help them successfully complete assigned tasks (Hersey, 1988).

*Task behaviour* is defined as the degree to which a leader clearly states the member's duties and responsibilities. It is characterised by one-way communication and the leader directs and closely supervises the members in their work. *Relationship behaviour* is concerned with the degree of support provided by the leader. In this behaviour the leader engages in two-way communication with the members and exhibit characteristics of being a listener and a facilitator. There are different synonymous used for task behaviour and relationship behaviour that can bring clarity to the definitions. Task behaviour often goes under the name directive behaviour and relationship behaviour under supportive behaviour (Hersey et al., 2001). An effective leader then has to predict the amount of task and relationship behaviour to adopt, which is based on the readiness level of the different members. *Readiness* is referred to as the *ability* and *willingness* of a member to take responsibility for directing their own behaviour in relation to the specific task (www.situational.com). *Ability* is made up of the knowledge, experience and skills that members are equipped with when confronting a new task. *Willingness* incorporates the amount of confidence, commitment and motivation that members posses (Hersey et al., 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Willingness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of a task</td>
<td>Is demonstrated assurance in performing a task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is demonstrated ability gained from performing a task</td>
<td>Is demonstrated duty to perform a task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is demonstrated expertise in a task</td>
<td>Is demonstrated desire to perform a task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Factors that make up the readiness level (Hersey, 1988)

2.5.2 Leader's behaviour

The model is hence based on interplay between the amount of task/relationship behaviour a leader provides and the readiness level of the members.

The leader's behaviour can take four different forms in the Situational Leadership Model and are displayed in four different leadership behavioural quadrants that are labelled High
Task/Low Relationship, High Task/High Relationship, High Relationship/Low Task and Low Relationship/Low Task. These different combinations of task behaviour and relationship behaviour make up 4 four different leadership behaviours (Hersey et al., 2001);

- **Telling** (S1) Leaders define the roles and those performing them are closely supervised. The leader *tells* the members what to do, how to do and when to do it. Predetermined decisions are announced, resulting in a one-way communication.

- **Selling** (S2) Identifying roles and tasks is still in the hand of the leader, but ideas and suggestions from the members are taken into consideration. Decisions remain the leader’s prerogative. Two-way communication.

- **Participating** (S3) Leaders provide support in order to bolster the member’s confidence and motivation, although less direction is given due to their skills.

- **Delegating** (S4) Members are able and willing to work on a project by themselves with little supervision or support. Control is with the members and they decide when and how the leader will be involved.

The appropriate leadership behaviour to be used will be determined by where the members are situated on the different readiness levels. The readiness dimension is made up four different elements that range from R1 to R4. Members that are said to be located in **R1** are characterized as being unable and unwilling. A person that is unable and unwilling has a low level of knowledge, skills and experience for the task at hand as well as low levels of task commitment, motivation and confidence. In **R2** the member still lacks the necessary ability for the task but is, as opposed to the first readiness level, motivated and making an effort. The member is confident as long as the leader is there to provide guidance. The members that are seen as belonging to **R3** are those that have the ability to perform the task but are unwilling to do so. The final readiness level, **R4**, belongs to members that both have the ability and willingness to perform the task (Hersey et al., 2001).
The dynamic interaction

For a member that is of readiness level 1 for a specific task, it is appropriate to provide high amounts of direction but little supportive behaviour. The leaders should adopt a telling leadership style. Telling the follower of what to do, where to do it and how to do it.

The next level is R2. The appropriate behaviour is a combinations of high amounts of both task and relationship behaviour. The reason for a leader to adopt task behaviour is due to the fact that members are still unable and in need of direction. The members are nevertheless trying and the leader needs to be supportive of their commitments and motivation, namely the leader needs to display relationship behaviour. This style is known as selling.

The most appropriate leadership style for members that are belonging to R3 is participating. These members have shown ability in performing a task and it is not necessary to provide high amount of task behaviour. The leader needs to provide high amount of support and their major role will be to encourage and communicate with the members. The leader engages in shared responsibility for decision making with the members. In the final readiness level R4 the matching style is delegating. The leader does not have to provide high amount of direction nor support. The members can and are able to, in large extent, manage themselves. The leader has to give these members the opportunity to take responsibility and practice hands-off management (Hersey et al., 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness Level</th>
<th>Appropriate leadership behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1 Unable</td>
<td>S1 TELLING Structure, control and supervise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1 Unwilling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Unable</td>
<td>S2 SELLING Direct and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Willing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 Able</td>
<td>S3 PARTICIPATING Praise, listen and facilitate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 Unwilling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 Able</td>
<td>S4 DELEGATING Turn over responsibility for day-to-day decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 Willing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Relation between readiness level and leadership behaviour (Hersey, 1988)
2.5.4 Review of the model

The Situational Leadership Model has been subjected to a great deal of criticism but have also has some support among researchers. Vecchio was one of the first researchers that did a comprehensive test of the model. A sample of 303 high school teacher and 14 principals were included in the study. Teachers were asked to respond to questions regarding their relationship with their principals and both the teachers and the principals were asked to assess each teacher on their readiness level. Analysis of the data showed partial support for the theory. Vecchio found that the theory had the strongest support in the low-levels of readiness where the followers require more direction from their leader. Results were less evident in the moderate readiness levels and in the high readiness levels, the study stated that the theory appeared to be unable to predict the appropriate leadership style (Vecchio, 1987).

Vecchio revisited the testing ground of the Situational Leadership Model once again in 1997 with the assistance of Carmen Fernandez. This time the study included 332 university employees and 32 supervisors. The aim of the study was, once again, to test predictions of the outcomes of employee’s performance in regards to leader behaviour and employees readiness level. Evidence continued to shown that the model had little explanatory evidence. The researchers stated however, this time, that task behaviour had a positive impact for lower levels while relationship behaviour had a more positive impact for followers at a higher level of readiness. The researchers state that the measurement of readiness remains a continuing obstacle for assessing the model. They argue that readiness is merely an attribution that is made by the leader based on projected performance and not on identifiable measurements. Furthermore they regarded the model being limited in regards to leadership styles that are effective when influencing different individuals. They suggest that leaders use a much broader range of influencing behaviours (Vecchio & Fernandez, 1997).

Another test of the Situational Leadership Model was conducted by Goodson, McGee and Cashman in 1989. They studied 459 employees in which 85 managers, 56 assistant managers and 318 sales clerks were included. The interaction between the behaviour of the leader and the readiness levels of the followers were not found to be supported. Contrary to the models prediction of low level of relationship with low level of readiness and high level of relationship behaviour with high level of readiness the researchers came to a different conclusions. Relationship behaviour was found to be appropriate at all levels of readiness. They also found that the two leadership styles, selling and participating, were associated with higher level of follower satisfaction. The leadership that the researchers found to be the “worst” at all levels of readiness levels was telling. This style was consistently associated with lower level of follower’s satisfaction. The researchers also felt that by only relying on the readiness levels of the followers in adapting ones leadership style is an oversimplification. The leader has to include other factors in addition to the characteristics of the members (Goodson, McGee & Cashman, 1989).

Vries, Roe and Taillieu (2002) findings were also in line with Goodson, McGee and Cashman by stating that using to much of task behaviour can have negative consequences. They tested the Situational Leadership Model using a sample of 958 employees from a diverse set of organisation. From their study they found that if the leader uses too much of a task behaviour approach with followers that have a low need for leadership, it could lead to commitment being negatively affected (Vries, Roe & Taillieu, 2002).

Graeff is a researcher that, unlike the others, has not tested the Situational Leadership Model but has instead critically examined the model. He stated that a selling leadership
style for a follower that is of readiness 2, unable but willing, is an ineffective use of the leader’s time. Advocating high relationship to strengthen their willingness and enthusiasm seems irrational as the model recognizes these followers as already being confident, enthusiastic and willing. He also stated that the different terms that are used to describe the members readiness levels are too narrow and that the different terms are usually not task specific but more general (Graeff, 1997).

Other critics of the model include opinions that the concepts incorporated in the model have not been sufficiently operationally defined such as commitment, motivation and competence (Avery & Ryan, 2002). Questions have also been raised regarding the models usefulness in different cultures, due to the fact that almost all published research on the model has been conducted in the USA. There is little evidence of research in other Western countries as well as in non-Western cultures (Silverthorne, 2000). Finally, Zichy (2001) and Fairholm (1997) state that a new leadership paradigm has emerged, a paradigm that focuses on the freedom and empowerment of members. It counters the telling and selling behaviour in the Situational Leadership Model by stating that this new paradigm values things like decentralisation and delegation for all members.

The strong criticisms and the frequent neglect among academic scholars stand against the models apparent popularity among practitioners. This can suggest that practitioners and academics may evaluate the model using different criteria. For many practicing managers, what "works" and has face validity appears more important, irrespective of any academic concerns (Avery & Ryan, 2002).

Due to the paper being focused and based on practitioner’s personal experience and information, the model can still be of great interest when drawing conclusions. This despite several shortcomings in the models from a theoretical standpoint.
3 Method

This chapter will present the chosen method that the authors will pursue. The chosen companies will be presented as well as the people that were included in the study. The chapter will end with presenting the validity and reliability as well as the interpretation process in the study.

3.1 Research approach

Researchers mainly have two approaches at their disposal when conducting a study, namely a qualitative or a quantitative approach. The characteristics of quantitative methods are a greater emphasis on measurability and generalization (Andersen, 1994). Researchers make use of scientific instruments to measure and analyse the information (Bell, 1987). The material and method description should be so detailed that however wishes should be able to conduct the same investigation and come to similar conclusions. A quantitative study also demands a relatively large and statistically representative sample (Lindblad, 1998).

Qualitative studies are on the other hand the best choice when researchers are interested in bringing forth descriptions of sort. Descriptions of thoughts, circumstances, behaviour and emotions (Carlsson, 1991; Starrin, Dahlgren & Styrborn, 1997). The researcher is namely trying to get in the mindset of the research object in question (Jacobsen, 2002). This approach leads to interpretations of the collected information and the reader should be able to follow the reasoning in the study (Lindblad, 1998). The goal with a qualitative study is not to draw general and typical conclusions but instead shed light on the uniqueness of each circumstance (Jacobsen, 2002). The choice between the two approaches should in the end be determined by the purpose at hand (Carlsson, 1991).

The authors have chosen to conduct a qualitative research study in answering the stated purpose. The reason for selecting a qualitative approach is a wish to study the complexity of leadership processes. The authors believe that a qualitative approach will best grasp the perceptions and behaviours of the participants and the interactions between them.

3.2 Qualitative research process

Jacobsen (2002) has a set of guidelines that researchers can follow when using a qualitative approach. The research process, which the authors tend to pursue, is as follows;

![Figure 3.1 Conduct in a qualitative research process (Jacobsen, 2002)](image-url)

According to the stated model, the first step in the process is to determine the collection of data. The available methods in a qualitative approach are relatively limited as compared to
quantitative methods. The most important and commonly used methods to obtain data are through participant observation, interviews or action research (Carlsson, 1991; Starrin et. Al.1997). The authors have chosen to conduct interviews. This is based on the perception that it is the most suitable method for retrieving personal information regarding behaviours and experiences from single individuals.

3.3 Interview

Interviews can be more or less open or in other terms be more or less structured (Jacobsen, 2002; Carlsson, 1991). A fully structured interview makes use of questionnaires in order to draw statistical conclusions and an unstructured interview is characterized as resembling a daily conversation between two people. Between these two extremes lie different combinations and forms (Carlsson, 1991).

![Figure 3.2 Degrees of structure of an interview (Jacobsen, 2002)](image)

The researchers are not interested, as stated earlier, in drawing statistical conclusions but have instead decided to place a greater emphasis on individual perceptions and experiences. The best suitable interview approach, and the interview approach that was adopted, was an open and unstructured interview with a theme in which the authors used an interview guide with a set sequence of open answers (Jacobsen, 2002).

The authors interviewed both project managers and project members in different companies. This decision was made due to the authors conviction of needing “two sides of a story” to fully grasp the “true” interaction between the two. Twelve questions were posed to the project managers and sixteen questions were posed to the project members. The interviews had duration of approximately 45-60 minutes per person. The authors conducted individual interviews with each concerned interviewee. The initial interview that was conducted when arriving to the company was with the project manager and then continuing on with the individual project members. All the interviews were conducted during week 16.

Much research has shown that the environment (context) where the interview is taking place usually affects the content of the interview. Generally artificial environment gives artificial answers. The respondent usually acts different in an artificial environment than in a natural. There is however no neutral environment. What the authors need to be aware of is how the situation can influence the information retrieved from the interviews (Jacobsen, 2002). All the interviews were conducted in a conference room except for one, which was conducted in the office of a project leader. All the interviews were also conducted separately and behind closed doors.

Personal factors can also affect the outcome of an interview. This is especially pertinent in this method, where the researchers can act in a way so that the person being interviewed
understands either consciously or unconsciously what the researcher expects of them. This is known as the “interviewer effect” (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

3.4 Sample selection

The second step in the qualitative research process is selecting the sample. The sample selection was based on choosing companies that operated on different markets and in different industries to make the results more interesting. Four companies were chosen to be included in the study. When conducting qualitative research it is often stated that the sample selection can’t be that large due to the retrieved information being both rich in detail and information. By having too much of this kind of information can result in an inability to analyse it in a reasonable way. The researcher simply collects data until there is no new information to gather, when saturation has been achieved (Carlsson, 1991). After the completion of the interviews with the four companies, the authors realised that the retrieved information displayed a similar pattern and similar information. This realisation leads to a conviction that saturation has been achieved.

The four concerned companies are; SAAB Combitechsystems, Elmia Subcontractor, Skanska and Elextrolux Distriparts. The next section will provide the readers with an overview of the company, the project of interest and the respondents from each company.

3.4.1 SAAB Combitechsystems

SAAB Combitechsystems provides computer systems for different companies and its goal is to offer new and advanced technical products for major global companies. The specific project entailed developing a multimedia system program for Nokia and the duration of the project was two years, which included a 9 month delay. The project started in the mid of 2000 and ended in the mid of 2002. This was one of the biggest projects that the company had ever worked with. The project team consisted of approximately 70 project members, which were divided into 7 teams each consisting of ten project members. Each team was assigned a team leader. The authors conducted two interviews with SAAB Combitechsystems, one with a project leader and the other with a corresponding project member.

The project leader was responsible for a branch in SAAB Combitechsystem known as CDC (Combitech Development Center). He has been in charge over 10 quite similar projects and since 1996 it has become his main task. The specific project was formalised as there was a project model that guided the work. The problem that occurred in the project was delays with different subcontractor which affected the planning. The project leader stated that the project was successful due to them earning money on the project and the customer being satisfied.

The project members had worked in the company for five years when the interview took place and was employed in the company at the start of 2000. His responsibility in the project was to deal with the operative system. The member was not involved from the beginning of the project, but came on board after a couple of months. The project member stated that the project was both successful and at the same time unsuccessful. It was successful due to the company being able to deliver the product that they intended to as well as being competence enriching and developmental for him as a person. The project member stated that it was unsuccessful as it tore a lot due to the long hours and stress that was involved. An additional factor was that the intended customer, Nokia, backed out on the
project and the product was instead sold to another customer. The member reckoned that Nokia backed out as the project ran late a full 9 months.

3.4.2 Elmia Subcontractor

Elmia corporation goal is to offer a major trade exhibition to companies worldwide where they could meet and make business. The company has approximately 15-20 exhibitions every year. The specific project entailed organizing exhibition monitors for companies around the world and had duration of one year. The project followed a project model where the different phases of the project were shown. The project had a timeframe that was followed. The total project team included 10-12 persons. The goals were set up by the top executive, in terms of budget and time. The authors conducted interviews with the project leader and two project members at Elmia Subcontractor.

The project leader has been in charge over four different projects since his employment in 2001. The four projects were all quite similar, both by the fact that they all entailed selling and distributing monitor space but also by having the same time line of one year. Both of the interviewed project members were involved in all four projects. He stated that the project was successful in the sense that all goals were achieved. The leader did not personally pick the project members; they were picked by the top executive. He did however; bring forth his desires and requirements for project members.

The project member 1. The members had worked in Elmia Subcontractor since 1997 and with the project leader since 2001. They have worked on four projects together with each project having a timeline of one year. She was involved from the start to finish in the specific project. The member was an educated head secretary with a base in administrative tasks. The member stated that the project was successful by the fact that they achieved all their stated goals in terms of keeping to the budget and sticking to the set up timeline.

The project member 2. The member had worked with Elmia Subcontractor since 1995 and with the leader since 2001. This member also had prior experience from another company with similar assignments, namely Elmia Wood since 1989 that also deals with set-up exhibition monitors like Elmia Subcontractor. The member’s tasks were concerned with customer relations and international relations. She was involved in the specific project from start to finish. The member stated that the project was successful due to them achieving all the stated goals in terms of time, budget and the percent of foreign companies that bought monitor space.

3.4.3 Skanska

Skanska provides construction and construction related services and products. The company is active with developing, building and maintaining different aspects in the physical environment. The specific project entailed reconstruction of a building and the project team consisted of 45-50 members. The authors interviewed the project leader at Skanska and one project member.

The project leader. The project leader has been in charge over approximately 10 project and the similarities between the projects were that his assignments were always the same; having customer contact and developing plans and procedures. He thinks that there were no specific qualities that had an impact on him being selected as the project leader for the specific project. He stated that he was the only one that was not involved in any other pro-
ject, namely he was the one that was available. He stated that his role was to see to it that the project sticks to the set up timeline, the set up budget and the set up goals. All the goals are documented and spread to the different project members. His role is to see to it that the project members worked towards the deadline and in line with the timeframe. This was done by applying piece rate that entailed; works faster earn more, work slower earn less. The most common problems during the project were with the weather that caused delays in the planning and work, which caused a lot of time pressure. Another problem had to deal with the logistics; they did not get the material in time. The leader stated that logistics problems have been very occurring in all the projects that he had been in charge over. He stated that the project was both successful and unsuccessful, but mainly unsuccessful. They earned a lot of money on the project but there arises a conflicted with a part of the construction crew that resulted in the timeline being overrun.

**The project member.** The member had worked in the company since 1971, namely 30 years. He was involved in the project from the start to finish. He was responsible for supplying material. He had been involved in similar projects. The member stated that the project was successful due to it being technically successful but unsuccessful due to it overrunning the set up timeframe.

### 3.4.4 Electrolux Distriparts

Electrolux Distriparts supply consumer appliances to world markets. The goal of the specific project was to develop a new advanced machine designed for the consumer market. This project in particular was about developing a new washing machine with a modern look, better performance and less energy usage. The project included 7-8 members and had a time-limit of 2 years. The project had a fixed budget and a fixed time-frame of two years. However as the company section is quite small many of the project members are the same from project to project. The author’s interviewed the project leader at Electrolux and one of the project members in the company.

**Project leader.** The project leader had been in charge of 5-6 projects. The similarities between the projects have been that they follow a set project model and the work being quite standardised. The leader thinks he was selected due to his experience with similar projects and his success in the other projects. The most common problems have been with technical difficulties, which also was present in the specific project. The selected project members did not work on the project full-time. The leader stated that the project was successful as they accomplished their set up goals in terms of cost, sales volume, performance of the washing machine and sticking to the set-up timeline.

**Project member** The project member’s assignments were testing and developing the product and other things that had to deal with electrical aspects of the project. The member had experience form similar projects. These were also his usual assignments in the company as he is a laboratory engineer. He had worked in the company for 40 years. The member became involved in the project after one year had past. The member stated that the project was successful as they accomplished all the technical aspects.

### 3.5 Qualitative analysis

The third step in the process is conducting the analysis. After completing the open interviews the collected data was simplified and structured in order to get an overview (Jacobsen, 2002). In this study, data was structured by using the terms in the Situational
Leadership Model; namely the member’s ability and willingness as well as the leader’s task and relationship behaviour. From the members as well as the leader’s responses the authors tried to assess the readiness level of the members as well as the leadership behaviour that they received or desired. From this, categorises were then created, which according to Jacobsen (2002) is the next step in the study. To make a clearer transition from the results to the analysis, the same categorisation was used in the results.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity in qualitative research is concerned with how readers can relate to the categorisation made by the researchers and if the categorisation is a reflection of the collected data. The study has validity as the categorisations that were made had a clear connection to the Situational Leadership Model. Another important aspect to consider in terms of validity is to the sample selection. Questions that can be made are; have the right people been interviewed and have they delivered the right information (Jacobsen, 2002). The authors did not have the possibility to choose the project members that were interviewed. They were chosen by the project leader. These are all aspects that can affect the validity negatively. The leader could have chosen members that he knew would give a favourable view of him and his leadership behaviour.

Reliability in qualitative studies is concerned with how clear the researchers have painted the research process, the ability for other to understand how the researchers have reasoned and to what degree the set-up of the study and analysis can have influenced the results. The influence can be in terms of the chosen research method, the researchers themselves or the context in which the interviews were conducted (Jacobsen, 2002; Carlsson, 1991). The research process was quite clear as the authors tried to use Jacobsen (2002) set of guidelines when using a qualitative approach. The authors have used terms from the Situational Leadership Model in order to create categorisations in the results as well as in the analysis. This has given the result and analysis more clarity and thus reliability. The categorisation has influence the results since the authors have tied the answers to the models. This was however a conscious act, since the purpose of the study was to study project management from a situational leadership perspective, using the Situational Leadership Model. This could have affected the set-up of the study as the authors were focused on fitting the information into these categories. The results from the interviews could also have been influenced by the environment where the interviews were conducted namely in a conference room in the company, an environment that can give artificial answers.

3.7 Interpretation

The final step in the research process is interpreting the information from the interviews. No research can give objective, real and absolute answers. Therefore it has to be interpreted by the persons that have conducted the research. In an interpretation process the goal is to bring clarity to the readers. Normally this can be done in two different but excluding ways. One can conduct a comparison, in time or between different units or to make use of theories. Theories can help put findings in a bigger context and in this way understand why the phenomenon looks the way it does. (Jacobsen, 2002)

The authors plan to make use of the Situational Leadership Model in an attempt to derive clarity and draw conclusions from the empirical finding. It has nevertheless been discussed how wise it is to interpret the result from a research against a single theory. It is stated that a higher understanding by just using one theory is not possible as the reality is to complex.
If this is true or not depend on what the research wants to achieve. (Jacobsen, 2002). In this study the authors wanted to study project management from a situational leadership perspective, using the Situational Leadership Model. As the model has received great support among practitioners it is of interest to see if the theory can give a higher understanding of the reality.
4 Results

The empirical findings from the interviews conducted in the four companies are presented in this chapter. The information from the respondents were placed in appropriate categories. Categories that are inline with the Situational Leadership Model.

4.1 SAAB Combitechsystems

The project members ability. The member in the company was unable due to his lack of knowledge and skills. He had only worked in the company for six months before his inclusion in the project. The member had also never worked with the development of the specific product that was on the agenda, namely the development of a multimedia program. He did however have experience from similar projects in other companies, working with operative systems, but not of the same magnitude or scope;

“I felt that everything was quite new and different. I had worked with similar assignments in other companies but never of the same size or magnitude”.

Project members willingness. The project member was willing due to him being motivated and committed, which was mainly caused by the use of a new system application program that the member was looking forward to work with. The member also reckoned that his enthusiasm and interest in the application, could have played a significant role for him being included in the project. The member stated this by saying;

“My first reaction to the project was positive and I felt really excited as we used a new appliance in the project that I had never worked with before.”

“I think I was chosen because I displayed an interest and commitment to the task”.

The members motivation was also triggered by him having informal responsibility during the project, as other members asked him for advice and suggestions. He thought this was great and he stated that the reason for this was probably that they felt that he was the most appropriate person to ask as he had a lot of experience in other companies from operative systems;

“I thought it was fun that other people came to me for advice”.

The member was confident during most of the project as he stated that his assignments were quite clear to him. This nevertheless changed when the delays were set in, as it instilled a fear of not accomplishing the project. The member stated that the setup time line was also not realistic in the first place;

“In the beginning I felt that the stated goals were achievable but when the timeline was overrun, I was afraid that we would not be able to complete the project”.

Leader’s task behaviour. The project leader displayed low levels of task behaviour. The project member expressed a lack of direction from the project leader. The member stated that the reason for not getting the desired direction was largely due to the leaders lack of awareness in regards to the members assignments;

“He is very skilful in many aspects but sometimes he could not provide me with the technical answers I was struggling with”.

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“He never pointed with the whole hand and said this is how it is going to be”.

The leader himself confirmed that he was not directive as he expected the member to take own responsibility. This was confirmed in his statements;

“One of the most important qualities for members is to be selfdirective”.

“I strongly believe in a flat project structure”

The project member stated that the project model instead acted as a directive advice when it was needed. He stated that the goals were achievable but the means to get there were a little unclear, which brought forth a need for guidance.

“The project model helped me to get greater clarity and direction”.

The project leader argued that trust was an integral factor in determining the amount of task behaviour he would provide during the project. The leader stated that trust was correlated to experience and competence of the member. Members that the leader had greater trust in received less task behaviour and were given more lose lines to run with. To those having less experience, the leader provided higher amounts of task behaviour. This is shown in a statements made by the project leader;

“It does not matter if the person has a really good CV. I have to know if I can trust the person to conduct their assignments in order to delegate work”.

**Leader’s relationship behaviour.** The project leader displayed low levels of relationship behaviour. The project member as well as the project leaders himself stated that he was only involved when the members needed him to be. The members were forced to seek up the leader in order to get information and support, which the member felt that he needed. One reason given from the member for the leader’s lack of information sharing was personal attributes of the leader;

“He is like that as a person he is not that talkative”.

“If I wanted to get some answers I was forced to ask the project leader myself”.

“I act as a spring board for the member to exchange ideas, problems and information; when they feel that they need to.

These meetings were nevertheless rare as the member expressed a lack of opportunity in having meetings with the project leader due to the leader being to busy. The member instead pointed to the team leader as being his primary and closest communication source during the project;

“If something was unclear, I often got my answers from the team leader”.

### 4.2 Elmia Subcontractor

**Project member’s ability.** Project member 1 is able due to the members experience and knowledge gained in the course of the four projects at Elmia Subcontractor. This was also emphasised by the member as being the reason for being picked for the project. The leader also recognised the ableness of member by stating that he could not manage without her. The employee’s usual assignments in the company were administrative tasks and this was
her assignments in the projects as well. She had, as mentioned earlier, experience from similar projects. All the four projects she was involved with were almost completely similar;

“The tasks were always the same it was only the people that we dealt with that changed”.

“As all the project were quite similar you were very aware of what to do”.

**Project members 1 willingness.** Project member 1 is unwilling. The member was not confident as she was not assured and certain in her task. It showed itself in the need for confirmation from the leader about her work. The member also displayed lack of motivation as she did not find the goals to be especially challenging;

“It was great that the leader gave assurance on my work”

**Leaders task behaviour towards project member 1.** The project leaders displayed low level of task behaviour towards project member 1. The leader didn’t direct the member in her daily duties, but handed instead a lot of responsibility to the member. The leader also stated that he had great trust towards the member and as a result he felt that a directive behaviour was not needed.

“I had a great deal of responsibility in my work”

“He is a really good delegator”

It was only the project plan that worked as a directive tool because it stated the assignments that had to be done during the project. It did however not play an important part;

“As the work was the same every time, the need to rely on a blue-print is not that great”

**Leaders relationship behaviour towards project member 1.** The project leader displayed high relationship behaviour toward project member 1. The relationship was characterized by a two-way communication, where the leader gave assurance and feed-back to the member.

“He provided me with continuous feedback both positive and negative”

“We have an open dialogue between us”.

“He was always there to give assurance on my work”

**Project member’s 2 ability.** Project member 2 was able due to her extensive experience with similar projects both in Elmia Subcontractor and Elmia Wood. She worked with customer relations and international relations in Elmia Subcontractor, which she also had prior experience from Elmia Wood. These assignments were also her main duty in the specific project. The member had worked with the same assignments for approximately 16 years and the leader stated that the member was indispensable to him. The member, herself pointed to her experience as being significant in regards to her inclusion in the project;

“I think I was chosen due to my experience, language abilities and me being outgoing”.

**Project member ’s 2 willingness.** The member was willing. She found her job assignments as very interesting and very beneficial since they brought awareness to the region and lured companies to Sweden/Jönköping. She was also assured in her task;

“I have worked with the same tasks for such a long time”.

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“My work helps bring awareness to the region as I have contact with companies from every corner of the world”.

**Leaders task behaviour towards project member 2.** The leaders task behaviour was low towards the member. The leader didn’t exert any directive behaviour towards the member, which was also confirmed by the leader himself.

“My leadership style is informal. I don’t feel the structure to be hierarchic and that I am above her. I regard her as a colleague and not as my subordinate”.

“He never tells me, this is how it is supposed to be”.

Trust was important in the leader’s task behaviour. He stated that he has great trust towards the member due to him knowing her desires and commitment to accomplish the stated objectives and her being experienced enough to manage herself. He thus did not need to adopt a directive approach since there was trust between them. Those that lacked trust from the leader, were confronted with a more directive and supervisory style. This became even more evident under time pressure. The members that the leader trusted did not experience changes in the leadership behaviour which was only displayed to the other member, where a lack of trust was evident;

“I have basically the same leadership style all the way through namely because there is a greater trust between the two of us”

Eventhough the leader didn’t exert directive leadership there were routines on print that directed the members work;

“If by chance I am unsure we have pretty clear routines of the approach”.

**Leader’s relationship behaviour towards member 2.** The leaders relationship behaviour was low. The member didn’t express a need for getting feedback nor information from the project leader thus she didn’t need support from the leader. She almost laughingly said that;

“Why should I need feedback, I know if what I have done is good or not”

“The work is very individual and self directive”

### 4.3 Skanska

**Project members ability.** The project member is able as he had worked in the company since 1971. During these 30 years of employment, the member has worked with the same assigemnts. The member also reckoned that this was one of the reasons that he was choosen to be included in the project, namely due to his experience and skills. This was also confirmed by the projet leader, that stated that experience was the quality that he valued the most;

“I know what to do, I have worked in the company for so long now”.

**Project members willingness.** The project member is willing as he found the project to be interesting, exiting and challenging to confront. He also feelt that he was given the amount of responsibility that he needed and desired concerning daily issues. The member thought the goals were quite clear as well as the assignements that were needed to be accomplished. Eventhough the goals were clear it sometimes felt that they were difficult to accomplish,
most in regards to the time available. The member however stated that he was used to working under time pressure, so he was able to handle it and argued that it sometimes incited him to work even harder;

“One project is never the same as the other, it is exciting”

“Every project is challenging and new, and there are always element of surprise”.

**Project leader’s task behaviour.** The project leader displayed low levels of task behaviour as he handed over most of the responsibility to the project member. The leader let the member take his own decisions concerning daily issues and was not himself involved in the daily coordination of the members activities. The leader stated that he expected the member to be selfdirective, do a good job and have foresight. The member also expressed the lack of need for direction from the leader, as statements were made that;

“I take a lot of responsibility and I would not have it any other way”.

“He lets me take my own decisions concerning daily issues”

The project leader confirmed that he did not exert directive leadership towards the member but a more social approach. The leader also stated that he did not exert a directive behaviour towards members that he knew, trusted and that were experienced;

“We sit and drink coffee together and hang out every day”.

“I would cut a lot of slack to a person I consider experienced and let him handle a lot of things on his own”

“People with experience take care of themselves, you don’t have to say so much”.

**Leader’s relationship behaviour.** The project leader displayed low level of relationship behaviour towards the project member. The leader did not provide the member with information as the leader stated that this was only done towards members that lack in experience. The member stated that the leader was there if he ever needed him, which he stated was very rare;

“It is important to sit down and talk to the new people”.

The leader stated that he instead spent the most time with administrative duties such as planning and keeping in contact with the customer of the project.

**4.4 Elextrolux Distriparts**

**Project members ability.** The project member in Elextrolux Distriparts was able as he had worked in the company for 40 years with similar assignments and tasks. The project member’s assignments were testing and developing the product and other things that had to deal with the electrical aspects in the project. These were also his usual assignments in the company. The project member stated that he was selected due to him having the amount of experience that he has, having experience from similar projects as well as there not being others to choose from in the company. The leader stated that having the right competence and experience was important for project members to posses. The member stated that;

“Everybody simply does what they are best at”.

4


**Project members willingness.** The project member is unwilling. Eventhough the member had a long working experience, he expresses a worry for the task at hand. The member found the technical factors to be too challenging and demanding in reference to prior tasks in other projects, which influenced his confidence. The goals did not seem that achivable in the beginning;

“The first reaction was overwhelmingly, I thought that the step up in technical aspects from prior projects was too big of a leap”.

“As we had difficulties in prior project to achieve the technical objectives, it seemed a bit daunting this time around”.

Eventhough the member had a lack of confidence, due to the technical aspects, he felt that he had enough of responsibility in the proejcts as well as feeling motivated;

“The work was challenging but that was motivating to accomplish the task and make sure that the work would be done”

**Project leader’s task behaviour.** The project leaders displayed low levels of task behaviour. The leader himself stated that he was not directive as he saw the project member to be very knowledgable and assured in his work and thus, not in need for direction. The leader stated that if directives were needed, the member could turn to the set-up project model. The leader stated;

“He knew what to do and I did not need to be directive”.

The leader stated that he delagtes more if he trusts the member, if he know the person and if he know how the member functions and works e.g from prior projects;

“If I feel that the are competent and motivated, I have greater trust for them”.

**Project leaders relationship behaviour.** The project leader provided low levels of relationship behaviour. The member stated that eventhough the leader was there to provide support, he was always forced to seek him up himself. The member stated that he would have prefferd if he would have gotten more information. The project leader stated that he only devoted more time and support to teach members who did not have prior experience and not to members who had worked in the company for several years. The leader stated that he spent the most time with administrative tasks, working with the planning and presenting the work to the customer in question;

“I would have wanted to get some more information”.


5 Analysis

This chapter aims at tying the results from the interviews to the Situational Leadership Model. The authors will analyse if the model was able to predict the appropriate leadership behaviour to adopt.

5.1 SAAB Combitechsystems

Unable/Willing. The authors placed the project member from SAAB Combitechsystems in readiness level two R2, unable but willing. R2 is characterised by members that lack the necessary ability for the task at hand but are on the other hand motivated and committed (Hersey et al., 2001). The unbleneness of the member was recognised as a lack of skills and knowledge for the development of multimedia programs as well as the members brief employment in the company prior to his inclusion in the project. Eventhough the member had prior experience from quite similar project, the authors still viewed him as being unblenle, due to his unfamiliarness with the product, company, project structure and size. In regards to seeing the member as being willing, a number of factors played a part in the authors’ decision. The member’s first reaction to the project was as he stated it; exiting and interesting, mainly due to the application of a new system program that he was exited to work with. The member displayed positive fellings towards his involvement in the project. Lientz and Rea (1999) argued that positive involvement naturally leads to commiment. The member also had a lot of informal responsibility in the project that he felt was fun and great. According to Herzberg (1966) responsib ility could lead to an increase in the members motivation. The member was also confident during most of the project, but it started to wager when the delays were set in which instilled fear in the member.

Leaders task/relationship behavour. The project leader in SAAB Combitechsystems displayed low levels of both task and relationship behaviour towards the project member. Task behaviour is defined as the degree of direction a leader provides by clearly stating the follower’s duties and responsibilities (Hersey et al., 2001). This was lacking in the interaction between the project leader and the project member. The member expressed a greater desire and need for direction from the leader and the leader, on the other hand, stated that the member did not need directions as he expected the member to be selfdirective. This faulty estimate could have been caused by the leader assessment of the member as being very able due to the members experience in other companies with similar assignements. According to Lientz and Rea (1999) this is very common; leaders often misdiagnose personal attributes such as knowledge and skills of different project members. The leader perhaps disregarded the differences in technical aspects that the member had been involved with, which could be a dividing line between ablleness and unableness. The leader did not consider that the task was different from previous undertakings by the member. The leaders decision to provide low level of task behaviour could also have been affected by trust. The leader perhaps trusted the project member as he saw him as being experienced and competent and thus gave him more freedom to run with. Freedom that the leader perhaps would not have given to people that he did not trust. The project leader handed over responsibility to the member and according to Shurtleff (1998) it would lead to a more efficient work process. In SAAB Combitechsysstem the results were different. The project was concurrent with delays and this could have been the result of delegating to much by trusting to much. The leader did not rightly identify the ablleness and willingness of the project member, which also could have been the case for the entire project team. The project leader derived his trust in the member by relying on past experiences and not on personal
observations. Shurtleff (1998) states that trust has to be based on both and not solely relying on just one of them.

In addition to displaying low level of task behaviour, the leader also displayed low levels of relationship behaviour. This was shown by the fact that the leader was only involved when the member wanted him to be involved as well as being very limited in his communication and availability towards the member. The scarce information that the member received did not come from communicating with the project leader but instead with the team leader. According to Badiru (1996) and Lientz and Rea (1999) communication between leaders and members, can lead to a lot of problems and difficulties being adverted. Dinsmore (1999), takes it a step further, by arguing that everything that goes wrong in a project is always traceable back to a lack of communication. Communication has to be present in order to ensure that the project members are going the same way and striving for the same goals (Dinsmore, 1999). The nine month delay in the project could have been the outcome of a lack of communication. The lack of these factors from the leader, could be used as a base for stating that the leader did not provide high amount of relationship behaviour, which according to Hersey et al (2001) would characterise a leader that engages in two-way communication and supports the member. So the project leader in SAAB Combitechsystems exhibit low level of task and relationship behaviour, namely a delegating leadership behaviour. According to the Situational Leadership Model, the appropriate leadership behaviour for a member corresponding to R2, unable but willing, is not delegating but instead a selling behaviour. Selling is recognised as high level of task behaviour as well as high level of relationship behaviour (Hersey et al., 2001). The authors found that, according to the model, the project member was confronted with an inappropriate leadership behaviour. He was subjected to little direction and support by the leader, namely a delegating style but expressed a greater desire for more direction and information from the leader, namely a selling behaviour (Hersey et al., 2001). The members desires were inline with the models predictions, namely that an R2 member needs a selling leadership behaviour.

![Figure 5.1 SAAB Combitechsystem and the Situational Leadership Model.](image)

*The fully drawn line represents the actual interaction between the leader and the member. The dashed line shows the optimal relationship according to the Situational Leadership Model. A clear discrepancy is shown between the reality and the model.*
The inappropriate leadership style could have been the result of the leader either disregarding to adjust his leadership style to the member, misdiagnosed the members ability or an inability to adjust to the specific situation at hand. The leader did not approach the project as a new situation for the project member with its own unique challenges. He disregarded the differences in projects that the member had been involved in prior to his employment in SAAB Combitechsystems. The leader perhaps did not have the flexible skills needed to be able to adapt his leadership style to the unique situation of the project. Each project should be viewed as a new situation with unique leadership challenges, which basically is the essence of the Situational Leadership Model (Hershey et al., 2001). Whatever the “faulty” adoption was based on it resulted in the amount of information and direction being lower than needed. In conclusion, the project leader in SAAB Combitechsystem did not have a situational perspective.

5.2 Elmia Subcontractor

Project member 1 Able/Unwilling. The interviewed project member 1 from Elmia Subcontractor was placed in R3, that is able but unwilling. The member had the ability to perform the task due to the members knowledge and experience. The ability was gained over the 8 years the member had worked in the company as well as the experience gained from working in four quite similar project doing the same tasks. From Hersey et al. (2001) definition; ability is made up of the knowledge, skills and experience that members are equipped with when confronting a new task. One can state that the member is able as the tasks and the projects were completely the same. The member was equipped and prepared with the task she confronted in the project. Willingness incorporates the amount of confidence, commitment and motivation that follower posses and the unwillingness of the member was displayed as a lack of confidence as well as motivation (Hersey et al., 2001). The lack of confidence manifested itself as a greater need for assurance and support and the lack of motivation displayed itself by the fact that the member did not find the goals to be especially challenging. According to Herzberg (1966) finding a job challenging is a precondition to motivation. The task for the project leader is to assure that the project member is motivated, as it can secure effective work in the project (Badiru, 1996; Maylor, 2003). The project leader should take this into account and perhaps offer her new assignments to secure her motivation.

Leaders task/relationship behaviour towards project member 1. The project leader in Elmia displayed low level of task behaviour but a higher level of relationship behaviour towards project member 1. The project leader did not provide direction to the member by stating what needs to be done and how, which characterises high level of task behaviour (Hersey et al., 2001). This was left up the project member, as most responsibility was handed over to the member. The low level of task behaviour could also have been based on trust, as the leader mentioned. According to Golin (2003), trust is hard to define but if Shurtleff’s (1998) definitions is used; that trust is based on past experiences as well as having confidence in the other person, it can be applicable to this relationship. The leader was aware of the capabilities of the member from past experience so he trusted the member to continue on the same path and deliver the expected performance. Trust could also have been decisive in choosing the members. According to Young (1998) it is essential that the leader is involved in choosing the members as many problems have arisen due to the “wrong team” being selected and thus no trust being present between the members and the project leader.
The project leader did however display high levels of relationship behaviour, which is characterised as engaging in two-way communication and providing support to the member (Hersey et al., 2001). Communication has to be present in order to ensure that the project members are going the same way and striving for the same goals (Dinsmore, 1999). This was evident in the company as both the leader and the member stated the same goals for the project. According to the Situational Leadership Model, low task behaviour and high level of relationship behaviour is recognised as a participating leadership behaviour. This leadership behaviour is characterised as providing support to bolster the members confidence and commitment as well as providing low amounts of direction due to the members ability (Heresy et al., 2001). Statements can then be made that the member received the appropriate leadership style according to the Situational Leadership Model, namely participating. A behaviour where the leader provides high amount of support and low amounts of directive behaviour. The members desires were also inline with the models predictions. She did not only receive the appropriate behaviour according to the model, she also desired and needed the behaviour that she was confronted with.

Figure 5.2 Elmia Subcontractor(1) and the Situational Leadership Model

*The fully drawn line represents the actual interaction between the leader and the member. The dashed line shows the optimal relationship according to the Situational Leadership Model. A match is shown.*

**Project member 2 Able/Willing.** Project member 2 was placed in R4, as the member was able and willing. The member was able due to the members extensive experience in different companies with similar tasks, both in Elmia Subcontractor and in Elmia Wood, namely customer relations. She was equipped with ability when entering in the project as she had worked for almost 16 years with the same tasks. The willingness displayed itself as the member found her tasks to be interesting, exiting and beneficial. According to Herzberg (1966) finding a job challenging can act as a motivator and it can result in a enhancing performance. The member’s responsibility is another factor that could have enhanced her motivation as well as the project structure. The structure of the organisation can have a great deal of impact on the motivation of project members (Maylor, 2003). The project was characterized as a flat structure where the members had a lot of own responsibilities. A third factor that could have motivated the member was that she had control over her own work (Hersey et.al., 2001).
Leaders task/relationship behaviour towards project member 2. The project leaders displayed low levels of task and relationship behaviour towards project member 2. The leader did not provide directions to the member, with is characterised as low levels of task behaviour. The leader had instead empowered the member to the extent that the member perform the tasks without any directions from the leader. The leader adopted a hands-off approach and did also, in fact, expected the member to be inventive, able to make her own decisions and to be responsible over the outcomes of her own work. The control was namely put on the member and the member decided when and how the leaders was to be involved, or if involvement was needed (Hersey et al., 2001). Highly experienced and motivated members don’t need leadership to accomplish their task, they know their parts so well from previous experience that they can handle their jobs without the need of a leader (Dubrin, 2001). As to project member one, low levels of task behaviour could have also been caused by trust. The member had vast experience in the company as well as from other companies and as the leader stated himself; the member was indespensible to him. The project leader had a lot of confidence in the member and thus trust (Shurtleff, 1998). This lead to the leader delegating his work and according to Shurtleff (1998) they are intertwined. The positive outcome from trust is a more efficient workprocess according to Shurtleff (1998). This seemed to be evident in Elmia Subcontractor as all goal were accomplished according to the member and the project leader, in terms of keeping to the time-frame, budget and the procent of exhibition monters sold.

The leader also displayed low levels of relationship behaviour as he did not provide support to the member. The member stated that she did not need support or information from the project leader, as she claimed that she knew herself if her efforts was adequate or inadequate. Low levels of relationship behaviour together with low levels of task behaviour, is according to the Situational Leadership Model a delegating leadership behaviour. This approach is characterised by little direction and support from the leader. The adopted leadership behaviour, delegating, is also the appropriate leadership behaviour according to the Situational Leadership Model towards a R4 member. Thus, a delegating approach is desired for an R4 member and this was also the approach that was exersied towards project member 2 and the approach that the member herself needed and desired (Hersey et al., 2001). According to Vries, Roe and Taillieu (2002) a delegating style is the only appropriate style to adopt towards these members as a directive approach could also lead to commitment being negatively affected.
5.3 Skanska

Able/Willing. The project member was able due to the members vast experience in the company for 30 years. The members was a seasoned member and he knew what, how and when everything needed to be done, which lead to him having an autonomous role in the project. As ability is made up of the knowledge, experience and skills that followers are equipped with when confronting a new task, it is obvious from the interview that the member had all of these factors. Willingness incorporates the amount of confidence, commitment and motivation that follower posses (Hersey et al., 2001). The members willingness presented itself by a high level of motivation. Effective work is secured if members are motivated as they work and perform better when they are motivated (Badiru, 1996; Maylor, 2003). Herzberg (1966) states that finding a job challenging can act as a motivator and it can result in an enhancing performance. Responsibility is another factor that can affect motivation. The project member in Skanska, exerted both factors, as he found his assignments to be challenging as well as feeling that he had enough of responsibility in the project. The member thus belongs in R4, able and willing, given the independent nature of the project member as well as the members motivation and interest (Hersey et al., 2001).

Leaders task/relationship behaviour. The project leader displayed low levels of both task behaviour and relationship behaviour. The leader did not provide directions to the member or provide high amounts of support. The leader only set up some broad guidelines in the beginning of the project and then gave the member free hands to carry out his assignments in the project. The leader did not regard the member as being in need of a leader since he was experienced and able to handle his tasks independantly (Dubrin, 2001). The member did not need a high level of task behaviour as he found his work to be motivating. The task itself grabed all the attention of the member, which made leadership directives unnessesary (Dubrin, 2001).
Relationship behaviour is concerned with the degree of support provided by the leader. In this behaviour the leader engages in two-way communication with the members and exhibit characteristics of being a listener and a facilitator (Hersey et al., 2001). The project leader in Skanska exerted low levels of relationship behaviour as he did not provide support or share information with the project member. The project leader stated that he only did this with people that were less experienced. Low levels of task behaviour and low levels of relationship behaviour make up a delegating leadership behaviour. The project leader in Skanska used a delegating leadership style, which according to the Situational Leadership Model is the appropriate style to adopt for a member that is situated on a R4 level. The leader does not have to provide high amount of direction nor support. The member can and is able to, in large extent, manage himself. The leader has to give the member the opportunity to take responsibility and practice hands-off management (Hersey et al., 2001). This was practised and followed in Skanska. The member also expressed the desire to receive the behaviour that he received.

Figure 5.4 Skanska and the Situational Leadership Model.

The fully drawn line represents the actual interaction between the leader and the member as well as the optimal relationship according to the Situational Leadership Model. A match is clearly shown.

5.4 Electrolux Distiparts

Able/Unwilling. The project member from Electrolux Distiparts is able as he has been in the company for 40 years and has a lot of experience in the field of electronic testing and development in the company, which also was his assignments in the project. The member felt that he had enough of responsibility and he also felt that work was challenging. This is according to Hersey et al (2001) and Herzberg (1966) characteristics of motivation and commitment. Eventhough he was fairly motivated and committed it appeared to be lowered by the fact that the task seemed very complicated in technical terms, hence affecting the members confidence and thus his willingness to unwillingness. Eventhough the member had worked for such an extensive period of time, he still felt that the specific project was too overwhelming as it was a big leap in technical aspects. One could argue that the member should not have been included in the project in the first place due to his lack of confidence. The company however, was so small that the choice seemed to be made more by availability rather than suitability. This was also mentioned by the member, by stating that
one of the reasons he thought he was selected was the lack of others to chose from (Young, 1998). In conclusion, the member was able but unwilling and could therefore be placed in readiness level 3 according to the Situational Leadership Model, as a follower with a relatively high ableness but with a slightly wavering willingness (Hersey et al., 2001).

**Leaders task/relationship behaviour.** The project leader displayed low levels of task behaviour as well as low levels of relationship behaviour. The leader did not provide direction to the member as he saw him as being knowledgeable in his work. The project leader stated that the member knew what to do and he did not need to tell him or be directive. The leader had trust in the member as he was experienced and the leader had worked with him in previous projects. The leader therefore displayed low levels of task behaviour, which Shurtleff (1998) states is the norm in situations where trust exists. The project leader did not supervise the member or spell out the member duties, which are all characteristics of high levels of task behaviour (Hersey et al., 2001). The only directives that were present in the company was the project model. Maylor (2003) argues that projects model can act as a helpful tool for project members, as it aids to grasp the sequence of activities and in facilitating the objectives in a formal way. Statements can also be made that the adoption of low levels of task behaviour could have been influenced by the existence of the project model. The leader could have relied on the project model to provide directions to the member as opposed to himself.

Low level of relationship behaviour was also present. This was recognised by the lack of time devoted to the members as well as the information that was provided to the member. The project member expressed a desire for receiving more information from the leader. Statements were made by the leader, that support and information was only provided to members that were new and did not have experience, thus not to members that had worked in the company for 40 years. As the member was insecure about the task at hand, the leader should have been there to reduce his insecurity by providing more information (Maylor, 2003; Dinsmore, 1999). Thus, the leader displayed low levels of task behaviour as well as low levels of relationship behaviour but the member desired higher levels of relationship behaviour from the project leader. According to the Situational Leadership Model, the project leader displayed a delegating leadership behaviour, low levels of task- and relationship behaviour, but the member desired higher levels of relationship behaviour, namely a participating leadership approach. Participating leaders provide support to the members to bolster confidence but supply less direction due to the members skills (Hersey et al., 2001). This approach seem to fit perfectly with the needs that the members expressed as well as the members characteristics. The member needed more information, support, from the leader to increase his confidence in the technically complicated task he was confronted with. At the same time, the member had worked in the company for 40 years, so the member did not need directions from the leader. So, since the project member complained about there not being enough information about the project and since he had doubts whether it was technologically feasible the project manager should have spent more time communicating with and working on the relationship with the project member. The project leader used a more delegating approach, which would be the wrong way to do it according to the model. The project leader in Elextrolux Distriparts adopted a “faulty” behaviour towards the project member.
Figure 5.5 Electrolux Distriparts and the Situational Leadership Model.

The fully drawn line represents the actual interaction between the leader and the member. The dashed line shows the optimal relationship according to the Situational Leadership Model. A clear discrepancy is shown between the reality and the model.
6 Conclusions and Final Discussion

This chapter will summarise the results and the analysis made in the previous chapters. It will be followed by a discussion and the chapter will end with a brief suggestions for further research.

6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of the thesis was to study project management from a situational leadership perspective using the Situational Leadership Model. The Situational Leadership Model seemed to be fairly predictive in terms of it predicting the appropriate leadership behaviour to adopt. Every interviewed project member expressed a desire to receive the leadership behaviour that was appropriate for their readiness levels. The majority of members also received the behaviour that they desired. Three of the members received the appropriate behaviour in reference to the Situational Leadership Model and two of the members did not, even if they expressed a desire for it. In these instances the leaders failed to adapt the behaviour that was required. They were both confronted with a delegating leadership behaviour, but desired more support in one case and both direction and support in the other. In these projects the project leaders did not have a situational leadership perspective in accordance to the Situational Leadership Model. The leaders did not adjust to the surrounding environment. The leader’s adoption of an inappropriate leadership behaviour could be explained by misdiagnosis the members readiness level. Both the leaders saw the member to be more able and willing than they actually were.

This study also points out that the Situational Leadership Model has to take other situational factors into account. The two most predominant found in this study were trust and time. All of the project leaders in this study emphasized how important it was for them to trust a project member in order to delegate work to the project members. The members that the leader trusted all had extensive experience. People that had long experienced were trusted and confronted with a lower task behaviour and people that were less experience coincided with lower trust from a leader and a higher task behaviour. The Situational Leadership Model also states that more experienced members receives a lower task behaviour and that the less experience members receive the opposite. In conclusion one can argue that the way trust was displayed in this study, namely it being tied to the experience of the members, the Situational Leadership Model would still be valid.

6.2 Final Discussion

As was mentioned in the conclusion, two of the five interviewed project members received an inappropriate leadership behaviour. An obvious questions that follows is; why?. One noticeable difference was the environment. All of the project leaders in this study emphasized how important it was for them to trust a project member in order to delegate work to the project members. The members that the leader trusted all had extensive experience. People that had long experienced were trusted and confronted with a lower task behaviour and people that were less experience coincided with lower trust from a leader and a higher task behaviour. The Situational Leadership Model also states that more experienced members receives a lower task behaviour and that the less experience members receive the opposite. In conclusion one can argue that the way trust was displayed in this study, namely it being tied to the experience of the members, the Situational Leadership Model would still be valid.
appropriate factor to consider in isolation. Another reason that can be given for the members confrontations with an inappropriate leadership behaviour is the presence of the new leadership paradigm. Zichy (2001) and Fairholm (1997) state that in the present time there is a greater focuses on the freedom and empowerment of members and thus decentralisation and delegation for all members, regardless of their ability or willingness.

The Situational Leadership Model has been subjected to a great deal of criticism and Vecchio (1987) stated that the model was unable to predict the appropriate leadership behaviour. This study however showed the opposite, which was pointed out in the conclusion. All the members expressed a desire to be confronted with the leadership behaviour that was appropriate to their readiness level. The authors nevertheless acknowledged several shortcoming in the model. The measurement of readiness brough forth great obstacles, which also was recognised by Vecchio and Fernandez (1997). The authors found that it sometimes was difficult to determine the accurate placement of the members in the different readiness levels. The authors often found themselves asking; Does a member have to have all the three factor in either ability or willingness to be regarded as able or willing?.

Another thing that can be mentioned, was the difficulty in defining commitment, motivation and confidence (Avery & Ryan, 2002). There were no clear guidelines on how to define a member as motivated, committed or as being confident. The authors were forced to use complementary theories. Support was another unclear definition in the model. Does it include the sharing of information, or is this perceived as an directive device?. The authors perceived information as a supportive device as it made the best fit with the information in the Situational Leadership Model. Another question that can be asked is why the authors did not conduct interviews with members that could be categorise in readiness level 1. Did the project leader not want us to come in contact with a member that was most clearly confronted with a telling and directive approach? Vecchio (1987) stated that it is in R1 that the model has the strongest support for an directive behaviour. The leader perhaps did not want to provide us with a member that came across as being unmotivated, incompetent, unexperinced and so forth. He perhaps wanted to portray his company in the best way possible. Finally, questions can be made if there are people that could be regarded as both unable and unwilling?. Another thing that might have affected the selection of the interviewed project members, could have been trust. The leader could have deliberately chosen people that he trusted for the interviews, people that he knew would not give negative information. Trust was also the factor that seemed to be reappearing in all of the interviews that the authors conducted. At first glance, the authors thought that trust was a new factor to be reckoned with, a new revelation. A factor that could have brought an enhancements to the Situational Leadership Model, namely an enforcement in its predictions capabilities. After going through the interviews it however seemed, as was stated earlier, that it in every instance was tied to experience, which confirmed Shurtleff (1998) definition. Thus in conclusion the authors could stated that all the conducted interviews did not bring forth any new factors that rendered its prediction capabilities, only factors that seemed to strengthen it.

6.3 Theoretical contributions

The strength of this study is that it highlights project leadership from a situational perspective in projects, which is highly dependant on flexible skills. Much research, conducted on the model, have focused on scolural settings and company environment and not on the changing and diverse project milieu. By taking an in-depth analysis in four different projects the study has found that the Situational Leadership Model is an appropriate tool for
predictions in project management. This study recommends that project managers use the Situational Leadership Model for guidance.

### 6.4 Suggestions for further research

One interesting aspect could be to examine cultural differences between different countries in terms of leadership style. The Situational Leadership Model is based on research on American companies. Would the model look different if it was made on Swedish companies? Another fallacy of the Situational Leadership Model could be the inappropriateness of leadership behaviour due to the shift in the leadership paradigm that has occurred during the past decades. This shift has involved a focus from a directive and autocratic leadership style to a more participative and democratic leadership approach (Zichy, 2001; Fairholm, 1997). Perhaps a modified up-to-date version of the Situational Leadership Model would look more like this:

![Modified version of the Situational Leadership Model](image)

*Figure 6.1 Modified version of the Situational Leadership Model*
References


Appendix A- Interview questions for the project leader

Questions to the Project Manager

1. How many projects have you been in charge over? Where there similarities between them? If yes, what kind of similarities?

2. What did this specific project entail?

3. How would you define the project structure?

4. Why do you think you were selected to be the project leader for this project?

5. What do you think is your role in the project?

6. What would you say that you spend the most time with during the course of the project?

7. What are the most common problems you have run into when managing a project?

8. From your point of view, was the project successful? And why? If possible give some examples

9. How were the project members appointed? And what qualities where important for you that the project members possessed?

10. How did you lead your project members during the course of the project? And what did you base your decision on?

11. What do you expect of your project members during the course of the project?

12. How would you define your leadership style in relation to your co-workers? And how do you think the co-workers would define your style?
Appendix B- Interview questions for project members

Questions to the project members

Readiness Level

Ability

1. What are your usual assignments in the company? And how long have you worked for the company?

2. What did the specific project entail? And why do you think you were chosen to be included in the project?

3. What were your assignments in the project?

4. Do you have experiences from a similar project?

Willingness

5. Did you feel that the stated goal/objective for the project was achievable?

6. Where you involved from the start to finish of the project?

7. What was your first reaction, from the information given by the leader, before starting on the project work?

8. Did the leader provide continuous feedback on your work?

9. Did the leader give you enough responsibility?

10. Did you feel that the work was challenging?

11. Did the leader provide you with clear goals for the project?

12. Did you know from the get go what to do in the project? Where your assignments clear to you?

Leader’s behaviour

13. Can you describe, from your point of view, the leader’s role in the project?

14. What did you think of the leader’s directions and support in the course of the project?

General Questions

15. How long did the project run?

16. In your point of view was the project successful or not? And why?