



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Institutionen för
pedagogik, didaktik och
utbildningsstudier
Examensarbete inom
Masterprogrammet i
pedagogiskt ledarskap, 30
hp

Rapport 2014ht01423

Principals' goal-setting and actions while managing

An explorative study of locally-created goals and principals' actions
while managing their schools

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Holmberg, Staffan (2014). Principals' goal-setting and actions while managing – an exploratory study of locally-created goals and principals' actions while managing their schools
Master Thesis, 30ects, Department of Education, Uppsala University

Abstract:

Large amounts of research have been performed regarding goal-setting and leadership and its effect on organizational performance. However, in school settings, the amount of performed research about leadership performance in relation to goal-setting is limited. The aim of the study was, therefore, to analyze specificity of locally-created goals and the principal's performance-affecting behaviors during meetings, especially in relation to set goals. Based on Komaki's research on managerial behavior structured observation was used to analyze the principal's actions while leading meetings. Adding to the observations Locke & Latham's Goal-Setting Theory was used to perform a content analysis investigating the specificity of written goals. In total, 56 goals from seven schools in a large county/municipality in Sweden were analyzed. In total, 1,235 minutes of a principal leading their staff during meetings were recorded and analyzed. A majority of the goals written in the schools' work-plans lacked specificity. This study found that principals talked about their goals while leading their staff at meetings, and they changed their behavior towards a more performance-affecting management style while doing so.

Key words: School leadership, Goal-Setting, Leadership behavior, Principal actions.

Foreword

All work is performed in a context of both professional and personal experiences. This is a short description of my background before writing this thesis.

Looking at the practice of school, both as a student as well as after holding several positions within the field of social work, has shaped my interest for schools and the practices performed within them. What could possibly be done to make schools embrace knowledge that is well known in other professional and scientific fields? While working both as a tutor in the suburbs of the Swedish capital of Stockholm as well as a social worker with juvenile criminals, I often stumbled upon students who failed or were at risk of failing school. When we read the instructions handed to them from the school, formulated as goals, we often found that they used a language that was not-easily accessible for teenagers, and the feedback given was often nonspecific or nonexistent. When feedback was given, the teenagers generally felt it was because of poor performance, which only strengthened their poor self-belief in their own capacity. As a former manager myself, I also realize, from both personal experience as well as academic research, that the practice of leadership influences the practice being performed on a daily basis. With student goals being vague and hard to grasp, what do the goals for teachers, principals, etc. look like? Given the extensive research within psychology on goal-setting and the actions of leaders, is there anything that could be transferred into the practice of school? How do school leaders act while leading and how are goals set, worked upon and being met? These are the questions that became the foundation of this thesis. My hope is that you will find it interesting and might be able to take one or two things with you when done reading.

The project

The journey ending in this thesis and the questions asked have been an ongoing journey since 2008 when I first started to study education at university. The road has been long and several important people have crossed my path enabling me to reach a fuller understanding for the complex process of human behavior and leadership practice. Some have had a direct impact on this thesis while some have guided me earlier in my academic career and thought process. What made it possible for me in this specific context to apply my interest and curiosity regarding school leadership in writing this thesis was my contact with industrial PhD student Simon Elvnäs and his research regarding Applied Behavior Analysis in Management at the School of Technology and Health at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden as well as my supervisor PhD Pia Skott at the Department of Education at Uppsala University.

I would like to thank Simon Elvnäs, Nathalie Robert Edgar, Karl Hedqvist, Annika Elvnäs, Associate Professor Ned Carter and Professor Jörgen Eklund. I would like to give a special thanks to PhD and licensed psychologist Håkan Johnsson whom introduced me to the behavioral sciences many years ago. I would also like to thank my supervisor PhD Pia Skott at the Department of Education at Uppsala University for all the advice and support given and patience shown throughout the process.

Finally, special thanks to my mother Mia and my brother Håkan for their constant reflection and discussion.

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1. Purpose and aim

Leadership involves communication and one might argue that Educational Leadership contains even more so. The broad term Educational Leadership contains multiple definitions and areas of Leadership one of them potentially being how humans act while leading and what structures there are for enabling those actions. This thesis is concerned with parts of the broad field known as Educational Leadership, that of the organization and management of schools and is limited to school leadership performed by principals.

There are few, if any, political areas in Sweden that show such a complex organizational governing as the school system, with decentralization and introduction of new curriculums further increasing its complexity (Jarl & Pierre, 2012). This means that school research is both a vast and a large topic, with multiple scientific disciplines interested in analyzing its practice.

The school system is affected by multiple members and levels of government at both state and county/municipality (hereafter, referred to as county) levels. However, the responsibility lies with the principal, who can influence both individual and collective teachers' beliefs and, in turn, increase school efficiency (Ross & Gray, 2006, Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). Therefore, this thesis will be studying the practice of principals during meetings at the local level.

This thesis is the first leg a two-year collaborative research project between a Swedish county's Department of Education and the School of Technology and Health at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. It aims to investigate one out of three levels being investigated in the two-year project. The project aim is to visualize how leadership is performed in relation to the stated missions at multiple levels within the organization and, if possible, how it can become more effective. This is done by filming, coding and analyzing school superintendents and principals as well as head teacher meetings and documents. This method is new to the organizations so another aim of the project is to analyze whether this could be an interesting compliment to other ways of studying leadership.

The aim of this thesis is twofold, to investigate the specificity of locally-created goals and whether or not there is a connection between the actions suggested to affect performance and principals goal-related talk during meetings.

The following research questions will be answered:

A) *How are the locally-created goals formulated, and are they specific enough to be operational?*

B) *Are the principal's actions during structured meetings characterized by interactions suggested to be effective?*

C) *Do the principals talk about the formulated goals during meetings, and what behaviors do they use while doing so?*

D) *Do the actions of the principals change in regard to suggested effectiveness while talking about formulated goals during structured meetings?*

This thesis starts with a presentation regarding previous research, which also contains the theoretical framework. This is followed by a presentation of the methods used, the results and, finally, a discussion of the results.

2. Previous school leadership research

There is a vast amount of previous research in regard to the organization and management of schools. There are multiple methods and theories that can be used in the analysis of leadership practice - all potentially contributing to a greater understanding. Limitations were set for the literature search regarding text related to Leadership, Management, Goal-Setting and Feedback. For further information, see Appendix 1.

The findings from the literature are divided into three sections:

- Goals governing the Swedish school system
- Swedish principal and school leadership research
- International Principal and School Leadership

2.1 Goals governing the Swedish School System

Education is a practice concerning interaction between multiple levels and societal institutions and can be divided into the describing/formulating level and the realizing level of formulated visions and criteria (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, Skott, 2009). Its governing is based upon four control mechanisms: the judicial, ideological, financial and the evaluative (Jarl & Rönnerberg, 2010). In Sweden, there is a local mandate of responsibility given to counties, federal government or private companies holding them responsible for schools obeying the Swedish school laws (SFS 2010:800. ch.2 §8). Following an old Scandinavian tradition, school leadership means more than managing budget, personnel and buildings. It entails a responsibility for educating children into democratic citizens. According to Swedish law, principals should manage and lead the educational practice and take responsibility for their respective organizations (SFS 2010:800, Ch. 2 9§ & 10§, Moos, Möller & Johansson, 2004, Moller, 2009).

The function of goals in the Swedish educational system

The Swedish school system is not intended to be micro managed by government supervisors but rather by multileveled goal-setting, where schools have goals from at least three different levels that are supposed to be operationalized and achieved. Goals are part of the ideological control system, with multiple levels of government providing school leaders with goals to be interpreted and implemented (Jarl & Pierre, 2012, Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). Swedish law and policy

also define successful schools as those achieving high academic and social goals (Höög, Johansson & Olofsson, 2005).

Goal-guided Leadership

The curriculum reform of 1994 introduced wider visionary government-set goals in Swedish schools. This resulted in multiple laws, guidelines and principles regarding what was to be achieved, while leaving operationalizing and goal achievement up to the individual school (Jarl & Rönnerberg, 2010, Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, Jarl & Pierre, 2012). With external goals emphasizing accountability, effectiveness and local democracy, school leaders need to safeguard against outside intervention, while also discussing and implementing values and agendas that might be a driving force of their schools' success (Jarl & Pierre, 2012, Andersen, 2010, Moos, et al., 2004, Hansson & Andersen, 2007, Döös & Waldenström, 2008, Pont, et al., 2008). The local school, therefore, needs to operationalize and specify the goals given to them from above in the goal hierarchy and are not allowed to freely choose their goals. Since there are several different contextual/frame factors influencing the possibilities school leaders have, some being educational and some being organizational, school leaders need to adapt their goals to local conditions (Broady, 1998). National (curriculums and guidelines) and local government, the owners as well as Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) (e.g., parent unions, Save the Children, etc.) all try to influence goal-setting in schools. This, in turn, puts pressure on school leaders (see figure 1).

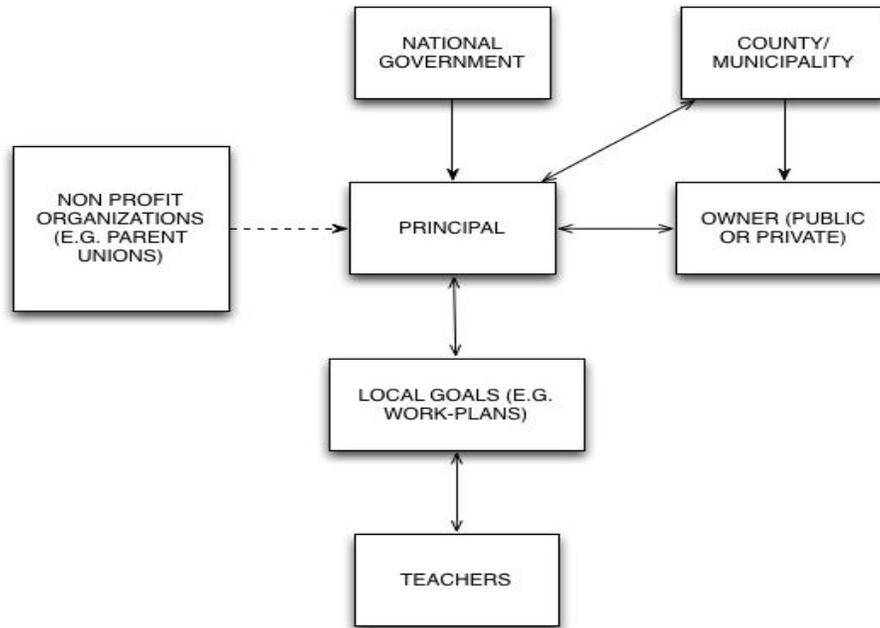


Figure 1. Members influencing what goals need to be set by the principal and how they are related and inter-related to each other. The differentiation between county and owner is made since boarding schools etc. needs to have demands from both the local county as well as their owners and these are not the same institutions while in public schools that separation would not be as useful.

Organizational conditions explain why different contexts need different amounts of time and actions to achieve the same results, leaders act within frames already set affecting their possibilities (Gustafsson & Selander, 1994). This is, however, not being fully implemented, with a lack of operationalized goals as well as goals not being specified and customized for the local school, resulting in a weak connection between goals, practice and evaluation (Schäfer, 2012). Consequently, due to school decentralization and local self-governance, the position of being principal has, perhaps, never been more important nor more difficult (Pepper, 2010).

2.2 Swedish principal and school leadership research

Scandinavian and Swedish research occupies itself with principal behavior and describes the aims and wishes that school leaders have as well as how they, themselves, experience their leadership styles. Culturally, Swedish leadership is contextualized by strong unions, democratic solutions and a short hierarchal distance between leaders and employees, with Swedish leaders being described as having a softer approach, being less authoritative and better listeners than their central European counterparts (Döös & Waldenström, 2008, Holt Larsen & Bruun de Neergaard, 2007). The tradition of viewing the principal as the first among equals, rather than a manager, has continued since the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) and higher accountability for school leaders (Moller, 2009).

Still, Swedish principals have quite vast, formal powers regarding implementation at a local level.

One of the main platforms for practicing leadership is structured meetings, making it important to analyze the communication that takes place. Meetings that include feedback/appreciation regarding teacher performance in regard to school goals and objectives seem to be rare (Ärlestig, 2008). Ärlestig also found that even if principals were thinking about teaching and learning-objectives, their teachers did not feel that this was being communicated and points out the need of further analyzing the communication between principals and staff (Ärlestig, 2008). Johansson & Ärlestig's (2011) analysis regarding principal research during a ten-year period (2000-2010) in northern Europe found that, of the total amount of research performed in schools, little concerns the leadership of the principal and, when it does, it normally refers to the term "educational leadership", which is not clearly defined (Johansson & Ärlestig, 2011). Little research is concerned with what the principal actually does. Instead, it aims to describe what the principal should achieve, omitting information about how the educational leadership for better learning is performed (Johansson & Ärlestig, 2011).

Principals and goal-setting

Principals need to lead towards specific goals and take responsibility for organizational outcome. This is strengthened when interviewing principals who emphasize the importance of clear goals and visions (Ärlestig, 2008, Leo, 2010). Successful principals have been found to give more frequent prerequisites for teaching and learning as well as steering their schools towards the national goals and objectives (Törnsén, 2009). Wanting clear goals and limitations, as well as support and feedback, are also mentioned when Swedish teachers describe what they consider to be a good principal (Höög et. al., 2005, Leo. 2010, Ärlestig, 2008).

2.3 International Principal and School Leadership

With an international perspective, school leadership research regards what counts as successful leadership practice in schools. Similar to the Swedish and Scandinavian research, the presentation will concern principal behaviors and goal-setting.

Principal behavior in international research

Expectations of school leaders are changing, and there is an increased need for support systems for both current as well as future leaders (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008, Pont, et al., 2008). Multiple researchers and studies have tried to describe what successful leaders achieve by creating four leadership models to describe school leadership (Pont, et al. 2008). *Instructional leadership* has five dimensions of importance (establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum, promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, as well as ensuring an orderly and supportive environment). *Transformational leadership* is often considered more powerful than other models (i.e., it incorporates all conditions affecting school outcome, not just instructional strategies). Transformational leaders are charismatic, seeing the individual while intellectually stimulating the organization's members. This way of leading has been found to have positive effects on teacher job-satisfaction and school effectiveness (Bass, Waldman, Avolio & Bebb, 1987, Chin Meng-Chun, 2007, Ross & Gray, 2006). Instructional and transformational leadership emphasize sense of purpose, high expectations, improvement focus, reward structures linked to school goals and intellectually stimulating and developing staff. This assumes that leaders may be both

instructional and transformational simultaneously, improving instruction and curriculum by focusing on expectations and common visions (Pepper, 2010, Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005, Hallinger, 2003). The other two leadership models are *Distributed leadership* and *Sustainable leadership*. Distributed leadership stems from the notion that leadership needs to be spread out (here, the practice of leadership comes from the meeting between people and their context), and Sustainable leadership consists of leaders who work intensively in their own schools while continuously connecting them with the larger society outside the school realm. No matter what leadership philosophy, the major challenge in school leadership is how to act in the organizational and leadership context (Mulford, 2008). While all the above models emphasize different aspects of what leaders are supposed to do and achieve, they all include leaders' actions.

Aiming to clarify the theoretical models of principal leadership, several researchers have tried to create instructional tools. Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008) claim that almost all leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practice that is grouped into four categories: building vision/setting direction, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organization and managing the teaching/learning programs. Other studies claim that principals who model behavior, provide contingent rewards, inspire group purpose and hold high performance expectations as well as provide support contribute to increased teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, Hipp, 1996, Nir & Kranot, 2006). Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu & Brown. (2010) lists eight key dimensions of successful leadership. One of these key dimensions includes defining values and vision as well as restructuring and redesigning leadership roles and responsibilities. Mulford et al. (2007) also attempts to standardize successful school leadership with the Social Success Index (SSI), wherein success is defined in terms of student-outcome such as students developing self-knowledge or students having a critical approach. Other factors that are considered important are trust, respect, empowerment, shared and monitored vision and supported experimentation (Ibid.). Ylimaki, Jacobson & Drysdale (2007) concludes that, even though there seems to be an understanding of the core practices and traits of the successful principal, there is a lack of knowledge as to how these skills are acquired.

Goal-setting in international principal research

Several of the international studies emphasize the importance of clear goals, visions and feedback on performance. How this is performed, however, is left up to the individual principal to decide. Principals are expected to create visions as well as clear, articulated goals concerning how to achieve lasting change. The goals, then, need to be connected to annual school improvement and development plans by providing the teachers with feedback, direction, monitoring and communication (Rieckhoff & Larsen, 2012, Sinnema & Robinson, 2012, Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe & Aelterman, 2008, Pavan & Reid, 1990, Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, Leithwood, 2005). In case studies, successful school leaders were found to set ambitious goals for their schools and establish conditions that supported teachers and students (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, Ylimaki et. al., 2007). There have been some studies regarding the amount of goals and how they are written in schools. In England, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills recommends three to six goals, with at least one of these goals focusing on leadership and management and another goal focusing on student progress. Also, while analyzing goals set by principals in New Zealand, even though 89% were performance-related, 71% were so vaguely described that they lacked the specificity needed to have a motivating effect (Sinnema & Robinson, 2012).

The presentation of previous research places emphasis on how principals should behave. How goals should be set remains unanswered.

3. Conceptual Framework

All research is based on making choices in regard to theory that enables the formulation of hypotheses. Initially there was no clear path of what theories and methods to use, however there was a will to look at what leaders actually do while leading. Initially the work started from a behavioristic standpoint which by reading and contemplating developed in to a Social-Cognitive theoretical foundation taking influences from school research especially frame-factor theory. This still enabling some behavioristic observational methods to be used which went along with the initial interest of the study looking at how leaders act. This gives that even though every situation has multiple angles a specific paradigm gives specific ways of viewing the world, this without being biased (Phillips, & Burbules, 2000). The observations conducted in these studies can be considered part of a post-positivistic tradition creating knowledge through observations still refuting the fact that there is an objective absolute truth (Ibid.). So even though the theories used here can't provide a full explanation of the world as it is it can contribute to our understanding of parts of it.

Theoretically this thesis is thereby based on Goal-Setting Theory by Locke and Latham (Locke & Latham, 2013) as well as Komaki's research (Komaki, 1998b) on effective leadership actions based on Operant theory (Skinner, 1974) and Banduras Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1976) with influences from other theoretical models as well.

In this section, the theoretical framework used in the analysis is presented together with some background regarding how the theories came to be as well as an introduction to organization and management. It is divided into three sections:

- Organization, Leadership and Management
- Goal-Setting Research
- Coding performance affecting leadership behavior

3.1 Organization, Leadership and Management

While the world is under constant change, organizational research still heavily depends on models created for the large-scale industrial society. Today, in a state of constant change and increased job insecurity, organizations need to increase production and use fewer resources. This influences attitudes and health as well as work-related behavior (Sverke, Hellgren & Näsvall, 2002). Organizational context influences practice and the measures needed to generate specific results (Lindblad, Linde & Naeslund, 1999). Post-bureaucratic/industrial organizations function differently than earlier industrial organizations. Despite this, leadership research tends to use old models, which limits the possibilities of understanding post-industrial organizations (Barley & Kunda, 2001, Döös & Waldenström, 2008). Early organizational studies were conducted at the workplace. However, a later theoretical shift made them more abstract, crippling the possibilities of understanding the process of organizational change (Barley & Kunda, 2001). Changes in society affect organizations. Therefore, it might be useful to, once again, apply organizational studies to the actual place of origin (i.e., the organizations) instead of relying on “ad hoc” theoretical models from the past.

Leadership and Management

Leaders and managers stand at the core of the organizational practice and play a key part in affecting what other organizational members do. Organizational scholars have multiple approaches to leading an organization, one being “the use of power and given means to secure resources and direct collective and individual behavior in a given direction”. Another approach is described as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Alveson & Sveningsson, 2007, Northouse, 2010). Leadership is said to act as a catalyst and necessary cornerstone for other good things to happen within organizations (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). This results in multiple ways of looking at the actual practice based on complex contextual factors as well as leader-behavior (Bolman & Deal, 2005). What the different aspects agree upon is the importance of leadership. However, most research is concerned with what leaders achieve as well as abstract descriptions of what they should do. Research on what leaders actually do is limited, with self-ratings showing a gap between

perceived and observable actions (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997, Dierendonck van, Haynes, Borrill & Stride, 2007, Döös & Waldenström, 2008).

As stated above, there are multiple descriptions as to what defines leaders and managers. It could be said that a leader is someone who leads others whether they are supposed to or not, and a manager is someone who is supposed to lead whether he/she does so or not. Leadership that emerges can be separated from the term “management”, which can also be limited to an assigned role (Northouse, 2010). This postulates that leaders do not have to manage, and managers are not always leaders, even if a certain overlap exists (Yukl, 1989). Management is often described as administration-centered (i.e., focusing on production, effective problem-solving, task-handling and ways of supporting and acting within the organization). This is sometimes referred to as *transactional leadership*, while “leadership” is referred to as *transformational leadership* - centered around values, feelings, attitudes, etc. (Bass et.al., 1987, Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2008).

An early spokesperson for the importance of management was Henri Fayol (1841-1925). Fayol described a rational ideal, claiming that the administrative part of organizations should concern itself with planning, organizing, leading and giving orders as well as coordinate and control (Abrahamson & Andersen, 2005, Lind, 2002). Successful managerial positions, therefore, emphasize creating clear structures by organizing, planning, guiding and controlling the performance of others, rather than micromanaging each step (Ibid., 2005, Ibid., 2002). Adizes (1979) argues that the two main functions of management are to make sure that the members of an organization will follow given direction and that they remain motivated to do so. He states that for this to work, managers need to possess productive, administrative, entrepreneurial and integrative skills (Ibid., 1979). Organizational and Leadership literature, thereby, implies that organizations need to be guided with clear guidelines and that it is the manager’s job to make it happen.

The earlier implied separation between managers and leaders can be quite fuzzy. For example, a manager focusing on transactional leadership is supposed to motivate the group. Motivation might be a part of the transformational leadership. Therefore, the question is whether the person who motivates is a manager, a leader or both. Yukl & Lepsinger (2005) downplay the difference

between the transformational/transactional, claiming that both leadership and management can be held by the same person, concluding the need for further research in order to bridge the gap between academics and practitioners. In conclusion, there is no single definition of leadership and management; however, the common denominator between the two is the influence of one or more humans on other humans and the way they think and behave.

Understanding leadership practice is important, but a clear definition does not exist. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate leadership based on multiple sources and levels to enable organizational development. Organizational growth aiming to create learning organizations demands the use of authentic evidence and a variety of motivational techniques (Lewis & Caldwell, 2005, Komaki, 1998b). There is also evidence that certain managerial behaviors have been found to increase managerial effectiveness (i.e., the effect managerial work has on group-performance), and there is a gap to fill regarding understanding the actions of leaders (Pont. et al., 2008, Yukl, 1989). Therefore, managerial/leadership evaluation with several different sources may provide a fuller understanding of the actual leadership practice (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997, Mulford, 2007).

Döös & Waldenström (2008), among others, suggest future leadership research aimed at clarifying, how research can be attached to actual practice, and if there are more objective data besides self-evaluation available while looking into leadership practice.

What do leaders/managers do; behavior analysis in Leadership and Management

As described above, there is a need for more studies describing what leaders actually do, how they do it and how it affects others. Finding how leadership is performed is described as a key to creating learning organizations. Through Applied Behavior Analyses (ABA), effective leaders are seen as interacting with their group, providing information about their progress as well as their performances by using socially important variables (Komaki, 1998b, Komaki, 1981). Continuous involvement in the performance of co-workers creates a more effective managing style by specifying what is desired, measuring the frequency and securing positive, frequent and contingent consequences for desired behavior (Komaki, 1986, Komaki, 1994, Stajkovic & Luthans., 2003). The management of others and self-management follow the same basic

principles of reinforcement by giving the opportunity to change the behaviors of others by acting differently ourselves (Skinner, 1974). This assumes that leaders could potentially change their organizations by changing what they, as leaders, do themselves. This, in turn, postulates the need of describing what leaders do, what they should do and how they are supposed to act while doing it.

3.2 Goal-setting research

According to Goal-setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2013), human action, aware or unaware, is always driven by a purpose or a want of something that we still do not have. To be used effectively, this purpose needs to be clear for the individual and/or group. One way to give purpose to others is by setting clear and challenging goals, adhering to the psychological axiom “what gets measured gets done” (Locke & Latham, 2009, Latham, 2003). Goals set by governmental agencies and politicians are often specific in what they want to achieve; however, they lack measurability and descriptions of how to achieve them. This creates broad, and often abstract, goals that are at risk of remaining empty promises. To minimize this risk, the goals need to be operationalized (Mager, 1975).

What constitutes a goal can have multiple definitions. In the Cambridge dictionaries online, it is described as an aim or purpose (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/american-english/goal_2); while, in the Oxford Dictionaries, it is described as the object of a person’s ambition or effort; an aim or desired result (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/goal?q=goal).

The definition of goals in this thesis is taken from Locke & Latham and defined as a desired result of action.

Background to Goal-Setting Theory

In the 1960s, as part of a cognitive trend in psychology that was influenced by the shortcomings of behavioristic research at the time, an increased focus on the cognitive process that precedes action took place (see figure 2 and 3).

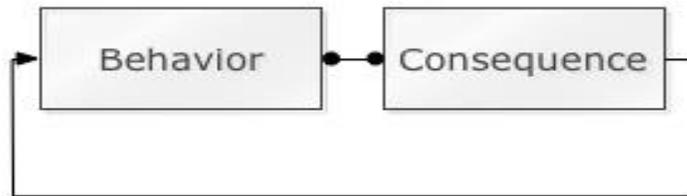


Figure 2. Illustration of cognitivists' perceived problem with behavioristic research (free interpretation).

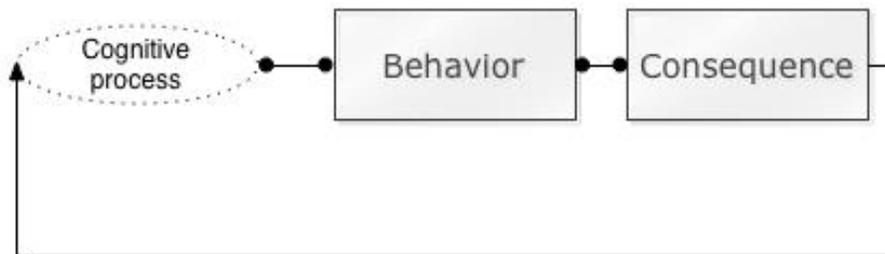


Figure 3. A model closer to how the cognitivists viewed human behavior (free interpretation).

Two of the leading figures in this particular research were Bandura, with the Social Learning Theory, and Locke, with the Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives (Locke, 1968, Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Bandura's model, which has become widely accepted within behavioral psychology, can be seen in figure 4.

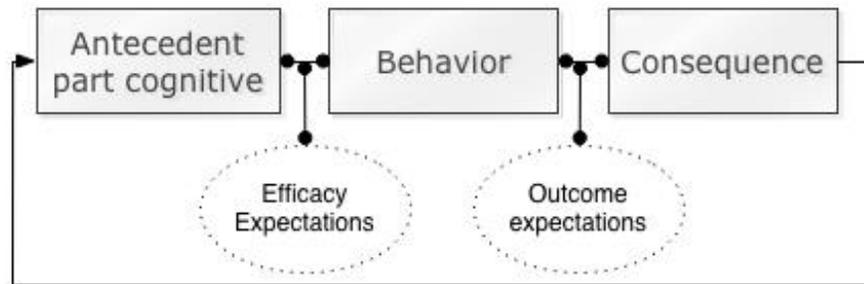


Figure 4. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and its influence on human behavior and research (free interpretation) (Bandura, 1977).

Locke's theory later developed into, amongst others, Locke & Latham's Goal-Setting Theory (GST). It states that effective goals are specific and difficult, affect both individual, group and organizational level and balance between learning and performance aspects, thereby, energizing the work situation (Locke & Latham, 2002). Specific goals are those that clearly identify what needs to be done, for example, complete X number of things in the next X minutes. This is in comparison to so-called "do your best goals", which have a tendency to make individuals and/or groups underperform (Latham & Locke, 1991). The key moderators of making goal-setting effective are feedback, commitment, self-efficacy, viewing the goals as important, task complexity in relation to task knowledge and making the goals public together with a need for achievement (Locke & Latham, 2006, Hollenbeck, Williams & Klein, 1989). Effective leaders, therefore, need to develop a vision that can provide distant goal together with specific challenging goals to help implement the vision. Vision and short term specific goals based on an evaluation of staff efficacy, attributes and emotions regarding goals and vision improve performance and provide purpose for the organizational members (Latham & Locke, 1991, Eberly & Mitchell, 2013).

Operationalizing goals

The operationalization of goals is basically a detailed description of how the specific goal is supposed to be achieved and evaluated. There are multiple tools for creating descriptions of how written goals can be transformed into actions. Some of these models will be described below. To operationalize a goal, it needs to be written down and given a timeframe as well as a description of how it is to be accomplished and evaluated (Rader, 2005). One model that is widely used to create operational goals is the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-framed (SMART) goals model (Latham, 2003, G. Latham, personal communication on October 7th, 2013).

Doran (1981), who introduced SMART goals, had a slightly different definition, claiming that A stands for Assignable. SMART goals may not be optimal in every situation and have been criticized. Since both the objective of the goal and actions taken are important, tightly specified goals for complex tasks can lead to performance-pressure and, therefore, may result in choosing a problem-solving tactic prematurely (Doran, 1981, Sinnema & Robinson, 2012). Day & Tosey (2011) criticized SMART goals and introduced the POWER acronym, where goals are to be; Positive striving to achieve something rather than avoiding it, evaluated upon the actors action, providing actors with a clearly defined task with a start and end as well as a description of resources available. Actors should also be informed of what evidence that indicates that they're moving towards the goal and supported by minimizing of goal conflicts between same level goals or goals at different levels.

Komaki (1998a) presents a third model with the SURF & C, arguing that goals and operational targets need to be based on primary sources (i.e., the goal-setter's actor's own performance should be the actual goal and be under the direct control of the people acting for goal accomplishment). Komaki also emphasizes the importance of the described goal as being critical to the fulfillment of the written mission statements as well as frequent goal evaluation.

In this thesis, goals will be evaluated based on criteria from all the above models, analyzing the *Aim* (describing clear boundaries), *measurability* (how the result gets measured), *carry-through* and *evaluation* of the stated goals. This is in agreement with results from earlier research regarding several of the factors reported by staff to be important for goal fulfillment. These factors include: asking for support and participation of management, clear description of why the

goal is important, a relation between feedback and goals, minimizing goal-conflicts, devoting resources to goal fulfillment, minimizing dysfunctional effects of different goals and providing clear goal-description (Kwan, Lee, Hui & Wright, 2012, Lee, Bobko, Early & Locke, 1991).

Benefits and important aspects about operationalizing organizational goals

Having clear goals enables organizational members to know what is expected of them.

Operationalizing the goals increases the possibilities of achieving them. This is because it enables clarification of several important aspects of human action such as why, how, with what, how often, etc., these goals should be achieved. Managers need to provide clear instruction and knowledge regarding goals and visions among staff members when creating goals for their organizations (Austin, 2000). An individual's goal-commitment regulates their effort. Therefore, organizational members need to regard their organizational goals as important as well as attainable. Without commitment, people do not understand the value of goal-fulfillment, i.e., the goal needs to be meaningful for the person who is supposed to achieve it (Locke 1996, Locke & Latham, 2006, Moeller, Theiler & Wu, 2012, Latham & Locke, 1991). If goal-setters lack stable and consistent goals, they cannot ever fully fulfill them, and organizations cannot thrive without being focused on what they want to achieve. Effective goal-setting can, therefore, help reduce goal "fuzziness" (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, Locke & Latham, 2009, Latham, Borgogni & Petitta, 2008). Environmental factors such as individual evaluation of gain versus loss, uncertain work conditions, task complexity, support from managers and social influence may have a negative effect on goal commitment. Therefore, leadership needs to support and reinforce participation in goal-setting actions by creating reward structures for goal-achievement and sub-goals within a shorter timeframe as well as with a rationale for each goal (Neck, Nouri & Godwin, 2003, Locke & Latham, 2006, Latham, 2003, Latham & Locke, 1991, Latham, Mitchell & Dossett, 1978, Borida, Hobman, Jones, Gallois & Callan. 2004, Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987).

Goals and Motivation

The function of goals that visualize where to go, and the gap between where an individual is and is supposed to be, becomes a motivator that potentially strengthens self-efficacy for future action. Cognitive process regulates the perceived effort needed regarding what to achieve and the external behavior needed to achieve it (Locke, 1996, Latham & Locke, 1991). When people

commit to specific goals, they experience negative discrepancies between where they are and their goal, which acts as motivation to close the discrepancy (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). People who reported high levels of goal-commitment reported low levels of content-related problems as well as a larger sense of coherence; this, in turn, reduced work-related stress and indicated the importance of goal clarity (Bipp & Kleingeld 2011, Nel, Crafford & Roodt, 2004). The satisfaction of reaching goals can also create further interest in the performed task, which increases self-efficacy and, thereby, increases the likeliness of more advanced future tasks (Bandura, 1982).

Therefore, leaders using specific goals while managing might find it to be an effective instrument in achieving results. GST states that for goals to be effective they need to be specific. Several models exist for how to write specific goals such as SMART, POWER, SURF & C, etc., and a questionnaire exists in order to evaluate how employees experience goal-related work (Kwan et al. 2012, Lee, et al., 1991). However, there still seems to be a lack of a questionnaire asking whether or not the existing goals are specific enough therefore a questionnaire for this purpose was developed for this thesis.

3.3 Coding performance-affecting leadership behavior

So, what do successful leaders actually do and is this behavior observable? To answer this question, Judith Komaki, who was influenced by the behavioral science of Skinner and Bandura, developed a behavioral categorization system called Operant Supervisory Taxonomy Index (OSTI). The OSTI model was developed in order to specify what leaders should do to constantly and compellingly motivate their team members and, thereby, achieve organizational results (Komaki, 1986, Komaki, Deselles & Bowman, 1989, Komaki & Citer, 1990, Komaki, Zlotnik & Jensen 1986).

This model states that that there are three main actions taken by leaders that have a large effect on team performance. These include:

- a. Performance antecedents that occur before behavior and in an educational setting; these can consist of rules, training, goals, etc.
- b. Performance monitoring, which involves gathering information about an employee's performance, for example, by work sampling, self-reports, etc.

c. Performance consequences that occur after the performance and communicate knowledge about performance, e.g., providing feedback, recognition and correction.

Leaders have a responsibility to create a motivational environment as well as increase organizational effectiveness and performance. However, when studied, there seemed to be a gap between what leaders do and what they are supposed to do. Effective managers go beyond providing antecedents (i.e., instruction) by providing monitoring and consequences as well. Losada & Heaphy (2004) used a different technique of structured observation of high-performing teams, which strengthens the notion that feedback affects performance. Despite this, most leaders still rely dominantly on antecedents, rather than consequences, to control and monitor employee behavior. However, this has been found to vary throughout training sessions (Komaki, Minnich & Grotto, 2011, Tittelbach, Deangelis, Sturmey & Alvero, 2007).

OSTI includes eight categories of leadership behavior, designed to be mutually exclusive from each other. Exclusive categories are important when creating observational tools (Komaki, 1986, Komaki, 1998b, Einarsson & Hammar-Chirac, 2002).

The categories are as follows:

- Performance Consequences: communicating or evaluating knowledge of another person's performance (C)
- Performance Monitors: collecting information about group-performance (M)
- Performance Antecedents: providing instruction about how someone is supposed to perform. This can include inspirational speeches, rules or policy statements (A)
- Own Performance: referring to the manager's own performance (O)
- Work-related: referring to work but not regarding someone's performance (W)
- Non-work-related: not talking about work-related issues (N)
- Not communicating: when the leader is interacting but not contributing to the conversation, e.g., when the manager sits and listens to someone. (X)
- Solitary: not interacting with others. (S)

According to OSTI, the most important actions in regard to influence on group-performance are Consequences, Monitoring, Antecedents and telling group members about one's Own performance. Analyzing meetings based on the frequency of these four actions which have a larger effect on performance might therefore provide indications of meeting effectiveness. (Figure 5).

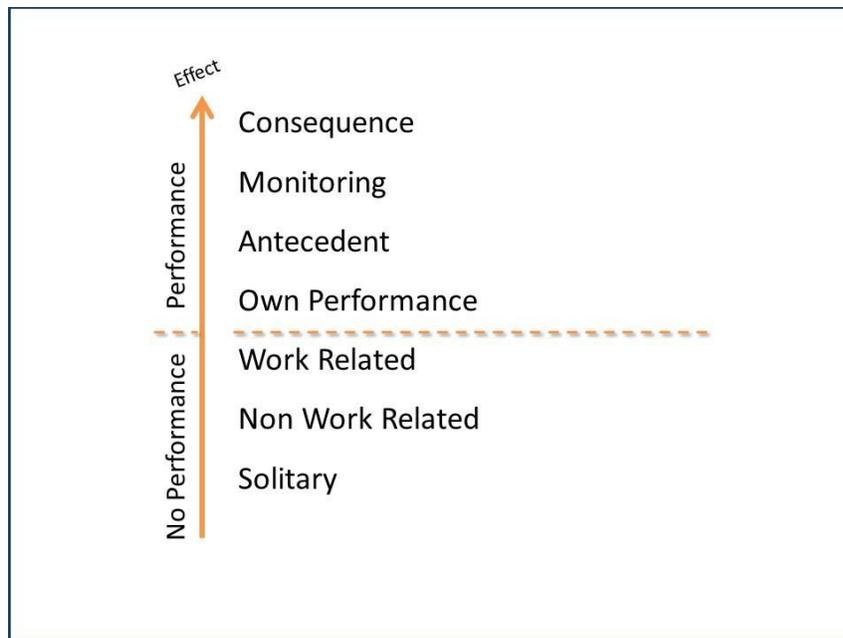


Figure 5. The behaviors coded in OSTI and their effect on group-performance on a falling scale, with Consequences at the top and Solitary at the bottom. (Elvnas, S., 2013).

Effective leadership

In clinical as well as field studies, effective leaders have been found to provide Instructions (A), Supervision (M) and Feedback (C) in so called A-M-C sequences more often and faster than less effective leaders. Effective leaders, thereby, provide instruction, monitor the performance of their staff and provide consequences based on what they see in that specific order. They also provide fast A-M sequences while waiting longer until providing C as well as monitoring actual performance before giving instructions (Komaki, 1998b). Komaki (S. Elvnas, personal communication, February, 2014) further developed this model by shifting the sequences of behaviors. According to the adjusted model, effective leaders rather start the sequence with

Supervision (M) followed by Feedback (C) in regard to what they see and hear, followed by Instructions (A) for future action. When the group member describes their own performance, it gives the following behavioral sequence: M-o-C-A (see figure 6), with the small “o” representing the group member’s description of their performance (O).

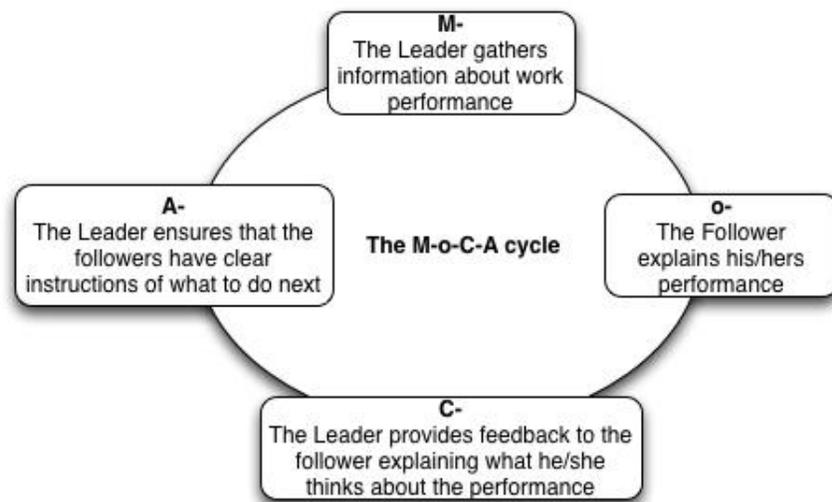


Figure 6. The M-o-C-A cycle, describing the behavioral sequence as having a larger impact on group-performance (Elvnas, 2013).

4. Method

This is a cross-sectional exploratory study containing two separate studies, one content analysis of locally-formulated goals in the written work-plans and the other a structured observation of a principal’s actions while leading groups during meetings. The first study of documents was in full performed by the author whom collected all documents, read all and chose the work-plans to be analyzed; the instrument for goal-analysis was also developed solely by the author. The second study of structured observation was done with help from two research assistants whom helped with coding the actual film and distribution of video-cameras. This was decided since the time frame of the project would have unlabeled a full analysis of the recorded material without assistance. The second part of the structured observations regarding goal-talk was performed solely by the author who developed the coding instrument that could be compared with the

coding with OSTI, the full analysis and statistical analysis of the results was performed by the author.

4.1 Gathering Data

Selection of schools

Eight public schools in a large county in Sweden were invited to participate. One school dropped-out, making the participating schools seven in total (2.5% of the total public schools in the county). See table 2 for description of the included schools. The schools were selected by the superintendents and the director of the city public schools. The participating schools consist of both suburban and inner-city schools and located both south, north of the city center. The participating principals included four men and three women.

Table 1. Characteristics of the seven schools included in the study based on three separate criteria.

Included schools	Inner city (IC)/ Suburban (SB)	Student age-span
1	IC	6-16
2	SB	6-16
3	IC	6-11
4	SB	6-16
5	SB	13-16
6*	SB	6-11
7*	SB	6-11

*Schools only included in part A, work-plan analysis.

Selection of documents

Goal-describing documents from the principals were gathered by asking them to send their goal and visionary documents to the researchers. All seven principals also received personal visits to secure that all the documents relevant to stated goals had been included. Furthermore, informal interviews with the school superintendents were held to understand what documents they

considered to be managing the school. These documents were read and discussed with the school superintendents, resulting in choosing the document entitled “Arbetsplan” (Swedish for work-plan) for further analysis. Out of the multitude of goals and guidelines from multiple institutions and government agencies, the local goals in work-plans are based on goals given to the principals from the school’s owner, as shown in figure 7. The locally-formulated work-plans are, together with the quality-report and the budget, common documents of local school governance (Jarl & Pierre, 2012).

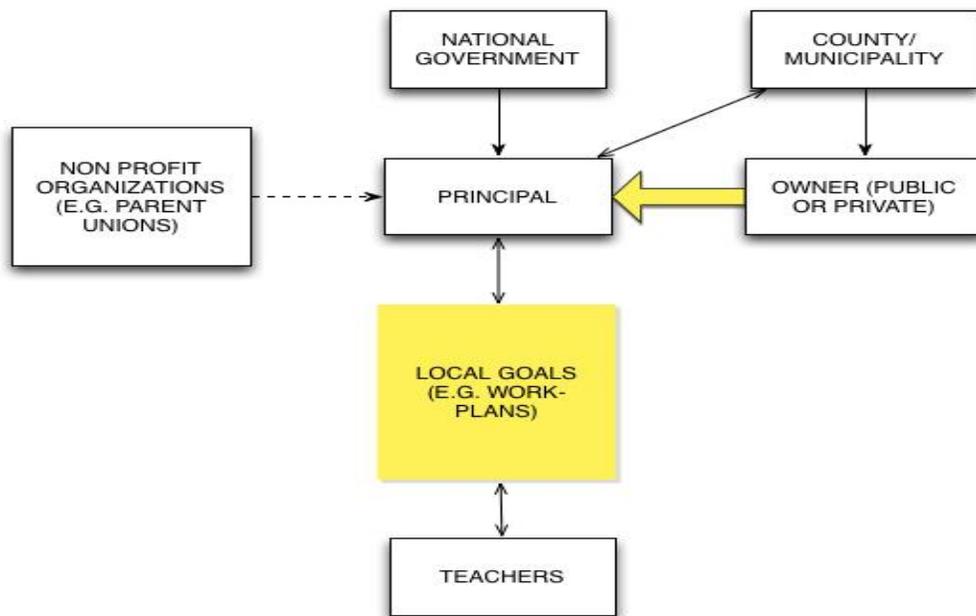


Figure 7. The yellow arrow indicates which member, out of several, who provides the guidelines for the creation of locally-formulated work-plans.

4.2 Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the locally-created goals in the work-plans. Content analysis has multiple definitions and, in this thesis, it is performed as both a qualitative method to interpret the meaning of written text as well as a quantitative method to measure whether a category is there or not. Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as a scientific method that regards an objective, systematic and quantitative description of the concrete and manifested information within communication. Common for definitions of content analysis is emphasis on

objectivity and systematics in analyzing data (Bryman, 2008). The most common field of application is the analysis of written and printed sources (Ibid.). This thesis analyzed goal-setting documents according to a pre-determined set of questions acting as a coding scheme. Despite Berelson's definition, there will still be qualitative parts of the analysis as well. As sources, the work-plans were created by the principals themselves. Therefore, they can be considered both valid as well as primary sources (Bell, 2006).

Structured observation was used to analyze the principal's actions during meetings. Structured observations are systematic observations based on a fixed category scheme (Bryman, 2008). Observation, as a method, is important within the behavioral sciences since it records what actually takes place in social situations, rather than what people think is happening (Einarsson & Hammar-Chirac, 2002).

The material was gathered through video observation to record what took place during the meetings. Video observation, as a scientific technique, has been around for more than 100 years. However, small camcorders, the digitalization of recorded material and the computerized editing programs have made it economically realistic for research practice (Loehr & Harper, 2003). Video observation adds aspects and qualities to the method of observation for several reasons (Jordan & Henderson, 1995). It bridges the gap of what people do and what people say they do, thereby, giving a better description of what really happens. It also replaces the bias of the researcher with the bias of the machine, which is a bias that is rather consistent. Video recording also keeps the primary observational resource complete in full richness, enabling the return and multiple analysis of the observed material as well as having fewer people actually analyzing the material since the coding process can be substantial.

To avoid potential methodological problems, the checklist developed by Crang & Cook was used as a template. There are no straightforward answers to these questions, and each project needs to reflect upon its own specific complexities. Therefore, some part of the checklist was left out since it was not considered relevant to the specific project (Crang & Cook, 2007). For the checklist used, see appendix 1.

The films were coded using two different coding schemes:

1. The OSTI coding manual based on the research by Komaki presented above.
2. Identifying if and when the principals talked about their written goal.

4.3 Procedure

Content Analysis

All work-plans were read in full from beginning to end, creating contextual understanding. In total, the seven work-plans contained 56 (range 5-15) goals. These goals were analyzed according to four categories from the goal setting literature:

1. Aim - included the overall and actor specific why. It also included descriptions of background, potential goal conflicts as well as connections to other goals and visions
2. Measurability - included whom, what and when as well as a description of the differentiated steps to be taken. It also included whether the goal was positively stated, what the indications of desired results was, if information of where the organizations stands today was provided, the given timeframe and resources as well as with whom the goal should be achieved.
3. Carry through - included assigned responsibilities, connection to that person's performance, and follow-up
4. Evaluation - included tools for evaluation, frequency, primary sources, and stated definition of fulfillment

Each goal characteristic was evaluated using a checklist created by the author. Goals were assessed as having either achieved (2), partly achieved (1) or not achieved (0) the criteria in each category.

Observing Leadership Behavior

The principals were handed small video cameras and asked to record themselves on four separate occasions during meetings where they consider themselves leading their staff. They were asked, if possible, to record the same type of meeting four times. Four principals recorded the same kind of meeting on all four occasions - the school managing team meeting (Skolledningsgruppen).

Two principals recorded the same school managing team meeting on three occasions. However, the fourth meeting was, in one case, a workplace meeting (arbetsplatsmöte) and, in the second

case, a meeting with the head teachers (arbetslagsledarträff). After filming themselves, they sent the video camera back to the researchers. In total, this gave close to 21 hours of total recorded material. The films were then selected based on length, with the one closest to 60 minutes being coded in full and giving almost 5.5 hours of total material coded. All the coded films consisted of meetings with the school managing team.

The first observation was regarding what leaders actually do according to the eight categories in OSTI: Providing performance consequences, monitoring performance, providing performance antecedents (e.g., instructions), describing own performance, talking about work-related topics, talking about non-work-related topics, not interacting and solitary behavior.

The coder was a research assistant trained in accordance with the OSTI manual (Komaki, 1998b). The coder was required to achieve an intra-observer agreement of 90% meaning that when later re-coding his own coded material there needed to be 90 % alignment. Approximately 120 hours of training was required for the coder to achieve this. It might be of importance to raise a concern regarding what OSTI codes and what it does not code. The manual developed does not code intentions or other non-visible behavior but only fully visible actions and their function in relation to effect on performance. The choice to use an external coder was made because of the 120 hours needed to reach 90 % accuracy the author could not have completed the project doing all the coding.

Coding Leadership Behavior

The coding process starts with the material being uploaded to an encrypted web-based platform where the principal is unidentified and given an individual code for identification.

The coder then views the video from each meeting individually, with the possibility to replay passages until he/she can identify and categorize the target behaviors as they occurred. Seven behavioral categories were coded, and one non-behavioral category because video quality was too poor. The coding process contained several steps where the actual coding was performed by a coder while the analysis was performed by the author.

From the entire material coded, the coder re-coded one entire film as well as three 5-minute clips of other films. These were all selected through a randomized process to secure intra-observer reliability by measuring accuracy levels between first and second observation (see table 2).

1 Hour	TOTAL	C #	M #	A #	O #	W #	Average
1st observation	935	91	3	111	67	658	94%
2nd observation	953	100	3	122	74	645	
Accuracy	98%	91%	100%	91%	91%	98%	
5 minutes	TOTAL	C #	M #	A #	O #	W #	Average
1st observation	74	11	2	13	7	36	93%
2nd observation	74	12	2	13	9	34	
Accuracy	100%	92%	100%	100%	78%	94%	
5 minutes	TOTAL	C #	M #	A #	O #	W #	Average
1st observation	74	3	3	7	5	50	95%
2nd observation	78	3	3	9	5	52	
Accuracy	95%	100%	100%	78%	100%	96%	
5 minutes	TOTAL	C #	M #	A #	O #	W #	Average
1st observation	69	11	1	23	0	31	98%
2nd observation	71	12	1	23	0	32	
Accuracy	97%	92%	100%	100%	100%	97%	
5 minutes	TOTAL	C #	M #	A #	O #	W #	Average
1st observation	59	4	0	13	2	40	90%
2nd observation	64	7	0	13	2	42	
Accuracy	92%	57%	100%	100%	100%	95%	
TOTAL	96%	86%	100%	94%	94%	96%	94%

Table 2. The re-coding of the recorded films to secure intra-observer reliability based on the five categories that dominates meeting time and have the largest effect on follower performance according to OSTI.

One principal had all four films coded as a control for discrepancy between meetings (see table 3).

Table 3. The difference between the meeting coded through randomized trial and all four meetings combined coded with OSTI presented in both percentage and in number.

Principal with all four meetings coded	First film	No. Behaviors (N 720)	Four films	No. Behaviors (N 1549)
Consequences	9%	65	5.3%	82
Monitoring	1%	7	3.8%	59
Antecedents	14%	101	16.3%	252
Own Performance	6%	43	4.8%	74
Work-related	69%	497	68.3%	1058
Other	1%	7	1.5%	24

Principal's talk about the formulated goals during meetings

This second observation identified the parts of the meetings where the principals talked about their work-plan goals. A coding scheme was created that included the goals written in the work-plans and the actions to be taken in regard to them. This was placed on the Y-axel. On the X-axel, time was measured in five-minute intervals (0-5 to 55-60 minutes). Four films for each principal were coded. The coding process was stopped after 60 minutes, even if the actual meeting continued. While observing the films when conversation related to one of the written goals took place, the film was paused so that the time interval, as well as the goal mentioned, could be written down.

The relation between effective interactions and talk about formulated goals

The time intervals wherein the principals talked about their work-plan goals were then compared to the coding according to the OSTI manual during that time interval. This enabled a comparison to be made between total meeting time and the behaviors of the principal and the behaviors during the time periods coded as goal-talk periods.

4.4 Ethical aspects

In constructing this study, the guidelines of the Swedish Research Council were followed (<http://codex.vr.se/en/forskningsetik.shtml>).

Some things may need to be mentioned specifically.

According to the law on research ethics, it is required that the subject be informed about:

The overall research plan the aim of the research, the methods to be used, the consequences and risks that the research can entail, who the principal investigator is, the fact that participation is voluntary, the fact that the subject has the right to cease participation at any time

This was done in a seminar for most participants and in private for two of the principals they were also handed all necessary information in writing as well as given contact information regarding how to reach the researchers.

The Swedish Research council also emphasizes that according to Good research practice, the information is also to comprise:

Potential conflicts-of-interests on behalf of the researcher

The role of the researcher was clarified in writing and during the held seminar or personal meetings. No conflict of interest existed.

A description of how collected data will be handled so that unauthorized persons will not have access to them

All data was uploaded on to an encrypted web-platform with copies saved locked inside a safety cabinet at the office of the research group.

What will be done to compensate a subject if his or her participation results in injury or discomfort

This was something that had to be dealt with between the employer and the employee however no immediate risk for this was observed while planning the project.

Also the person who is visible on the recorded film is important since the interest of this study is to examine the principals and not the staff. However, all staff members attending the meetings were informed that there would be a camera recording the principal and that it was only the principal's behavior that was of interest. It is possible, when listening to the recorded material, to hear other voices as well and other participants are visible on camera for short periods of time. However, they are viewed solely as a backdrop to the principal.

To avoid misuse of the recordings, all video was uploaded to an encrypted, data-logged and password-protected platform. The films were then deleted from the video cameras.

All participants and results are fully confidential. Participation was voluntary and had no positive or negative effect upon work status. Participants had the full right during data collection to withdraw their approval.

5. Results

Both the specificity of the locally-formulated goals as well as the principals' behaviors while managing have been analyzed. The results will be presented in four sections:

- The specificity of formulated goals in the work-plans
- Observed principal's behavior
- Observed principal's behavior while talking about goals
- Difference between goal-related talk and overall meeting time coded with OSTI

5.1 The specificity of formulated goals in the work-plans

Research question: How are the locally-created goals formulated, and are they specific enough to be operational?

Seven work-plans from seven schools were analyzed, containing, in total, 56 goals. The full list of goals can be found in appendix 2. The 56 goals were analyzed based on the predetermined criteria regarding:

1. Aim - included the overall and actor specific why. It also included descriptions of background, potential goal conflicts as well as connections to other goals and visions
2. Measurability - included whom, what and when as well as a description of the differentiated steps to be taken. It also included whether the goal was positively stated, what the indications of desired results was, if information of where the organizations stands today was provided, the given timeframe and resources as well as with whom the goal should be achieved.
3. Carry through - included assigned responsibilities, connection to that person's performance, and follow-up
4. Evaluation - included tools for evaluation, frequency, primary sources, and stated definition of fulfillment

Goals were assessed as having either achieved (2), partly achieved (1) or not achieved (0). The results for each category can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. A summary of results of the goal analysis based on goals that either achieved (2), partly-achieved (1) or not achieved (0) the pre-determined criteria in the four categories: Aim, Measurability, Carry-through and Evaluation.

Goals evaluated from work-plans (N 56)	Aim	Measurability	Carry-through	Evaluation
Achieved	17	0	0	0
Partly-achieved	34	52	38	40
Not-achieved	5	4	18	16

Aim

Providing a clear aim requires explaining why the school should work with the goal as well as what, in the history of the school, indicated this to be important. Seventeen goals met all the criteria, providing information as to why the school had chosen to work with this specific goal as well as providing background on the goal (i.e., the reason why the goal was chosen). These goals, generally, had an inspection report from the school inspectorate or a reference to their own prioritized areas of improvement as motivation for why they had chosen the goal.

The largest group was the partly-achieved group, with 34 of the goals being part of this category. The majority of these goals connected to a goal stated by the school board and were in alignment with it, without visible goal conflicts. However, they did not explain why the goal was important or why the school chose to work with this goal.

Finally, five goals were assessed as not-achieved. These goals did not describe why the goal was chosen, lacked connection or were in conflict with higher hierarchy goals (e.g., a school board goal was to increase the frequency of a certain aspect, while the school stated that it wanted to remain the status-quo).

Measurability

Goals being measurable regard how someone will know when the goal is achieved. It can be a description of quality, accuracy or time as well as a description of what the goal is to achieve. Measurability of improvement also needs comparable data, i.e., a description of where the organization begins to compare with where the organization ends up.

This was an uneven category, wherein none of the goals met the full criteria. Some of the goals were closer than others, but all goals failed to provide information about where they stand today.

Without knowing where they stand, it becomes difficult to evaluate success in percentage since it lacks relation to something. There was also a tendency to not mention what resources were provided to achieve the goal or when the goal was supposed to be achieved. Only four goals did not meet any of the criteria. These goals were generally not stated as an expected performance, but rather as something that would exist in the school without further explanation.

Carry-through

Carry-through is defining who is supposed to act in order to achieve the goal, making sure that this person can control whether the goal is actually met or not and describing how the person responsible can evaluate their own performance while performing. Thirty-eight goals partly achieved these criteria.

Several goals did not provide any assigned actors. Either “we” were supposed to do something or things were just supposed to happen, without stating by whom.

Eighteen goals did not fulfill any of the criteria since no actions were mentioned at all, rendering a situation where goal-evaluation, based on how it was supposed to be achieved, became impossible.

Evaluation

Evaluation describes how the organization will find out if they reached the goal or not and needs to describe both the tools used and how often it should be done. Another aspect of evaluating performance is that the evaluation is of the actual performance and not of something that will hopefully be a result of that performance.

Several goals were categorized as partly-achieved since they would evaluate using the county’s “user evaluation” form at the end of the school year. No goals stated that they intended to evaluate performance based on primary sources but rather all used secondary ones.

Another 16 goals did not meet any of the criteria. Either they did not state that they would be evaluated at all, or they mentioned evaluation without any further information regarding how it was supposed to be carried out.

Conclusion

The aims of the goals were more often specified in relation to the other categories. However, the written goals in the work-plans generally lacked the specificity needed to make them operational.

5.2 Observed principal's behavior

Research question: Are the principal's actions during structured meetings characterized by interactions suggested to be effective?

In total, 1,235 minutes of film were recorded and 300 minutes coded, with 4,141 behaviors identified and categorized according to OSTI:

- Consequences - communicating or evaluating knowledge of another person's performance
- Monitoring - collecting information about group-performance
- Antecedents - providing instruction about how someone is supposed to perform. This can include inspirational speeches, rules or policy statements
- Own performance - referring to the manager's own performance
- Work-related - referring to work, but not regarding someone's performance
- Non-work-related - not talking about work-related issues
- Not communicating - when the leader is interacting but not contributing to the conversation (e.g., when the manager sits and listens to someone, see table 5).

Table 5. The amount of behaviors and the percentage, out of the total (N 4,141), in each category during five meetings according to the OSTI manual. (coded time 5x60 min)

OSTI category of leadership behaviors (N=4141)	Number of behaviors (n)	%	Range (%)
Consequences	319	7.7	4 – 14
Monitoring	41	1.0	1-2
Antecedents	509	12.3	11-14
Own performance	207	5.0	3-7
Work-related	2998	72.4	66-76
Other (Non-work-related, Solitary, not assessable)	67	1.6	_*

*range not provided since this category consists of multiple behaviors

The majority of the observed meetings were spent talking about work without referring to performance. Of the total 4,141 behaviors, 72.4% were coded as work-related talk, being on the lower end of behaviors that affect performance according to OSTI. This indicates that principals spend most of their meetings discussing different issues without ending with an instruction or decision about expected performance. The three behaviors with the largest effect on group-performance were coded as follows: Consequences = 7.7%, Monitoring = 1% and Antecedents = 12.3%, giving a total of 21% of the meeting time. This indicates that group members receive limited amounts of recognition for the work they have done during meetings. Principals also spent 5% of their meetings explaining what they had done or were about to do, which indicates that group members will have a limited understanding of what their principals do. According to OSTI, leaders whose actions have larger effect on group-performance provide more A-M-C sequences than less effective leaders. Because of the low number of monitoring performed by the principals, there were few A-M-C sequences.

Conclusion

While managing their staff, principals mostly talked about work without relation to past or expected performance, thereby, giving the staff members little feedback and recognition of their performance.

5.3 Observed principals behaviors while talking about goals

Research question: Do the principals talk about the formulated goals during meetings, and what behaviors do they use while doing so?

The time intervals where principals talked about their locally-created goals were separated from the total meeting time. Principals talked about goals during 273 minutes, 28% of total meeting time (958 minutes, range 14-52%). The principals' behaviors during goal-talking periods were coded according to OSTI (see table 6).

Table 6. The amount of behaviors and the percentage, out of the total (N 4,462), in each category during the 273 minutes coded when principals talked about goals

OSTI category of leadership behaviors during goal-talk (N=4,462)	Number of behaviors (n)	%	Range (%)
Consequences	598	13.4	9- 58
Monitoring	120	2.7	0.5-4
Antecedents	750	16.8	9-16.5
Own performance	228	5.1	4-6
Work-related	2,677	60	54-71
Other (Non-work-related, Solitary, not assessable)	89	2	_*

*range not provided since this category consists of multiple behaviors

While talking about goals, the coded behaviors present as follows in relation to the three categories, with the highest effect on performance: Consequences = 13.4%, Monitoring = 2.7% and Antecedents = 16.8%, giving a total of 32.9% of the total meeting time. This indicates that during periods when the principals talk about their goals, the staff receives more recognition and feedback on their performances as well as more instructions regarding what they should do in the future. At the same time, the amount of work-related talk was 60%, following the trend that goal-talk is more performance-focused. The range was larger in some categories while talking about goals (e.g., the range of providing consequences differed by 49%, and the work-related talk differed by 17%).

Conclusion

The principals talked about their formulated goals during less than one third (1/3) of the meeting time. While talking about their goals, they increased the amount of performance-affecting behaviors.

5.4 Difference between goal-related talk and overall meeting time coded with OSTI

Research question: Do the actions of principals change in regard to suggested effectiveness while talking about formulated goals during structured meetings?

The coded result from overall meeting time and the periods where the principals talked about locally-created goals were compared. As implied above, the principals, while talking about goals, increased all three of the performance-affecting behaviors, together with a decrease of non-performance related discussion. For full comparison, see table 7.

Table 7. Comparison between observed behavior during total meeting time and observed behavior during goal-related meeting time, in percentage.

OSTI category of leadership behaviors	Overall meeting %	Goal-Talk %	Difference %
Consequences	7.7	13.4	5.7
Monitoring	1.0	2.7	1.7
Antecedents	12.3	16.8	4.5
Own performance	5.0	5.1	0.1
Work-related	72.4	60	-12.4
Other (Non-work-related, Solitary, not assessable)	1.6	2	0.4

The observation regarding goal-related talk and performance-affecting behavior shows that there is an increase in effective behavior while talking about goals. During the total meeting time coded, there were 41 questions asked regarding performance. This is in comparison to 120 questions asked about performance while talking about the goals. The same is observed with the other two performance-affecting categories (Consequences rising from 319 to 598 and Antecedents rising from 509 to 750). The increases also follow a decrease in work-related talk from 2,998 to 2,677 behaviors coded, which might indicate that talking about goals makes the principal's leadership style more performance-oriented in regard to general meeting time. However, it is important to mention that the goal time that was coded came from four meetings

per principal, while the ordinary meeting time data comes from one single meeting from each principal. If goal-related talk increases the principal's effectiveness, it might indicate a potential benefit of structuring meetings in alignment with the locally-formulated goals. This might also show how the goals stated in the work-plans are of actual importance for the principals since they choose to ask more questions and give more feedback and instruction when talking about them. However, these conclusions cannot be certain, and further research is needed.

Conclusion

While talking about their goals, principals used more performance-affecting behaviors.

Summary of conclusions

The aims of the goals were more often specified in relation to the other categories. However, the written goals in the work-plans generally lacked the specificity needed to make them operational. While managing their staff, principals mostly talked about work without relation to past or expected performance, thereby, giving the staff little feedback and recognition of their performance.

Principals talked about their formulated goals during less than one third (1/3) of the meeting time.

While talking about their goals, they increased the amount of performance-affecting behaviors.

6. Discussion

To summarize the results of this thesis this will now be discussed following a discussion of chosen methods and a final word.

A majority of the goals written in the schools' work-plans lacked the specificity needed, according to the pre-determined criteria, to have an effect on performance and motivation.

During meetings, principals mostly talked about work without relating it to performance. The locally-created goals occupied less than one third of total meeting time. However, during that time, principals interacted with more performance-affecting behaviors in comparison to the overall meeting time.

6.1 Discussion of results

Specificity of locally-created goals

None of the goals in the analyzed work-plans met all the criteria regarding specificity. This is in agreement with earlier findings by Sinnema & Robinson (2012) as well as Latham, Borgogni & Petitta (2008), who also found principals' and public institutional goals as being too fuzzy in regard to affecting performance. As both Mager (1975) and Austin (2000) point out, abstract goals are hard to achieve, given that the goals stated in the work-plans, if not further specified, might be hard to fulfill. Successful school leaders have also been found to have a clear set of goals and visions connected to annual school improvement and, as argued above, it is the school leader's responsibility to operationalize and specify the abstract goals given to them (Törnsén, 2009, Ross, & Gray, 2006, Pont. et al., 2008). However, this study shows, together with earlier studies from Schäfer (2012) and Ärlestig (2008), that there is a gap between theory and practice. There seems to be a discrepancy between what school leaders say to be of importance regarding clear goals and visions and how they specify their own goals.

The most criteria met were in regard to providing aim and purpose. As shown by Locke & Latham (2009) and Latham (2003), clear purpose is necessary to direct human action. Seventeen goals fully provided aim and purpose; however, one specific school was responsible for the majority of these results, meaning that most work-plans did not explain why goals were important in the first place. As Neck, Nouri & Godwin (2003), amongst others, state, it is important for leaders to provide a rationale (i.e., an aim and purpose describing why the goal is important). If not provided, goal-commitment might decrease, producing less motivated employees. Giving clear aims and purpose might also aid the principal in adjusting the more visionary government goals into goals adjusted to the local school context. This is further strengthened by Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008), who claim that building vision and setting direction are some of the fundamental characteristics of leadership. Clarifying why the goals are important might, therefore, be beneficial for the schools.

Out of the three remaining criteria investigated (measurability, carry-through and evaluation), none of the 56 goals fully met the criteria. Additionally, in regard to measurability, none of the goals provided data on where the schools stand today. As shown by Bandura & Cervone (1983), visualizing the difference between today and a potential future state has a motivating effect, and schools could, therefore, potentially benefit from doing so. Several goals also had descriptions of goal-achievement containing emotional states of a third party. Aiming to make a third party not directly involved in striving for goal-achievement can be counterproductive. This thesis is in agreement with earlier research by Day & Tosey (2011) as well as Komaki (1998a) in regard to the importance of measuring success on mainly primary sources of time, quality or accuracy of the actual performer.

In regard to carry-through, several goals did not state who the intended actors of the goals were. Instead, they claimed that actions should be taken by “we” or without any actor at all. Komaki (1998) argues that goals need to be closely linked to the actor’s performance, something that becomes difficult when there are no assigned actors. Another aspect found in regard to carry-through was the resources provided to accomplish goal-achievement. Several goals lacked descriptions regarding the time, money or knowledge needed, and some goals lacked signs of having any resources at all. As stated by Rieckhoff & Larsen (2012), principals need to provide clear direction for how goals are to be achieved. It is argued here that giving resources to enable a new way of acting is a potential cornerstone in achieving this. The last category regards goal-evaluation. Most schools claim that they use the “user survey” to evaluate goals. However, this makes the act of asking questions regarding attitudes of students a factor that is not under the direct control of the school. To evaluate the actual performance, rather than a hoped-for consequence of performance, is as emphasized above important when evaluating goal-related performance. The stated goals also claimed to be evaluated once or twice a year in regard to something that the school should implement in their daily practice, given that long periods of time will pass between action and evaluation.

In conclusion, it could be considered beneficial for principals who wish to guide their school with clear guidelines and visions and increase likeliness of goal-achievement to specify their work-plan goals.

Principal's behaviors while leading meetings, both in general and in relation to set goals

The majority of coded meeting time was spent talking about work without relation to performance. This indicates that if principals wanted to increase the effect their behavior has on group-performance, they could change the way they act by increasing the amount of monitoring, consequences and instructions provided. This is in agreement with the common denominator regarding definitions of leadership by both Northouse (2010) and Alveson & Sveningsson (2007), mentioned above, as well as Skinner's (1974) idea of humans being able to change the behaviors of others by acting differently themselves. What leaders do affects the group, and the strength of the rules that govern cognitive behavior should not be underestimated in their ability to transfer from one human to another (Bandura, 1974). Notions regarding the ethical and moral aspect of controlling social behavior can possibly be brought up regarding the will to find effective methods for reaching stated goals. Bandura (1974) argues that all actions are under some kind of control and that the notion of influencing people to act noble as well as horrible has been a part of human society long before the science of behavior clarified it. Psychology, therefore, cannot tell people how they should live their lives, but rather give them effective methods and tools for affecting the social change that they want (Ibid). Traditional management theories provide abstract descriptions about what managers can and should do and focus on traits, abilities and trying to describe the personality of the effective leader (Komaki, 1994). If a leader monitors performance (i.e., ask questions in relation to what the group has done and provide more consequences in relation to what they think about that performance), they could potentially increase the perceived amount of feedback given to the group. Giving clear instructions could also enable the principals to provide clearer direction to their staff, which Adizes (1979) claims to be one of the main functions of managers. Still, the results do not indicate if the principals are actually successful or not. It is strictly a measure of how the principal's behaviors fit in to predetermined criteria based on psychological theory. This assumes that the results do not have to be taken as an indication of whether the principals are good leaders or not. Rather, the results are an observation of what the observed principals do. Based on this, they might continue to reflect and learn about their own leadership style, shaping it into what they prefer. The governing of schools is a complex process with, as mentioned above, multiple actors influencing what school leaders are supposed to do (see figure 6). Leadership is, therefore, contextual and needs to be adjusted to where it is to be acted out. However, being able to actually see what leaders do might

enable them to adjust their practice to a specific context since there is, as Yammarino & Atwater (1997) and others mentioned above, a gap between what leaders do and think they do.

The principals did talk about the goals in the work-plans (if not explicitly, they did so by talking about the actions that were mentioned as a part of the specific goal). The behaviors of the principals also changed while talking about their goals, which could indicate that the goals stated are both important and cared about at the school. The principals increased all three performance-affecting behaviors while talking about their goals in relation to ordinary meeting time. This might indicate that goals are a part of the link between what leaders do and why they do it (i.e., the results indicate that by having a clear purpose for conversation, the communication becomes more performance-related). This is in agreement with the energizing-effect of goals in work-settings, as stated by Locke & Latham (1991) above. However, to make any conclusions like this is beyond the scope of this thesis and could be further investigated in the future.

The results indicate that a large amount of meeting time is spent talking about work, without relation to past or future performance. This raises questions about what function this talk has since, during all meetings, it takes up a considerable amount of time. To simply say that it has no function would be unrealistic. So, what is the function of this work-related talk, and are there different subcategories that could be analyzed within the material? There are, within other theoretical frameworks, other aspects of the functions of leaders' actions besides their effect on group-performance. However, this has not been studied within this thesis.

6.2 Methodological discussion

Theoretical and methodological choices limit possibilities regarding what type of research questions can be answered in a given study. The following discussion regards methodological strengths and weaknesses within the given theoretical framework as well as potential biased regarding selection.

The methods used in this thesis are both based on content analysis and structured observation. Using two methods together can bring a wider perspective on leadership practice in the school and can also strengthen the validity of results (Bryman, 2008). Content analysis is argued here to

be beneficial since it, as claimed by Berelson (1952) above, strives to be both objective and systematic. The instrument created for this specific thesis has, however, not gone through a validation process, and the categorization was performed by a single researcher. Results presented should, therefore, be interpreted with this in mind. This assumes that a replication of the performed analysis, using the same instrument and the same work-plans, would be useful to secure or refuse the results presented above. Despite this, the results may still be of interest for school leaders who might, by themselves, be able to reflect on whether or not the analysis performed is potentially relevant for their school and their future goal-setting practice.

The schools that participated in the studies were chosen by the head and superintendents of the county's public schools. This is a potential weakness since it might lead to biased choices, by either choosing schools with great results if wanting to give a better impression or with weaker results if wanting actual improvement. However, the selection of schools above does seem to be rather diverse. Still, the small amount of participating schools makes this study unable to make any generalization about the situation at other county schools. Another aspect of importance in the selection is the difference between contextualization (e.g., U.S. and Sweden), with inner-city schools traditionally having more children from highly educated families and with larger incomes and suburban schools being more diverse with a larger percentage of low income families with lower educational background. This is contrary to the situation in the United States. This contextual differentiation between Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian schools is also a reason behind separating between International and Swedish/ Scandinavian research. Another potential weakness is the large amount of data being handled within the project and the multiple actors involved. Being part of a large research project can potentially be beneficial since it might provide an opportunity to perform more detailed studies on larger amounts of data. However, it also might increase the risk of human error in regard to the results when there are several steps between data gathering, analysis and presentation of the results.

Choosing to focus on the locally-formulated goals is a potential weakness. As stated above, schools have multiple goals being presented to them. Despite this, it is argued that the goals formulated by the principals might be the ones that matter the most, on a personal level, and if the principals want to, they are allowed to change them. Still, other goals or documents might

influence practice as well. Therefore, future research aligning different levels of the goal hierarchy and aimed at analyzing impact on practice could be useful. The goal-analysis performed does not evaluate whether the goals are correct in the sense that they are positive or negative if achieved. Rather, it aims to analyze whether the goals are written in a manner so that they can be acted upon and, thereby, achieved. Whether or not they are good goals for a school to have is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to emphasize that whether or not the goal is considered good or not, accomplishing it might suggest the need of adding certain aspects to the goals. To specify the goals and evaluate performance might, in some cases, be argued to be part of a micro-managing process, wherein the principals, in this case, would seek to control every movement of the employee's performance. This might be a realistic concern. However, specifying the goals and micro-managing employees does not necessarily have to be equivalent. Instead, as stated by Bandura & Cervone (1983) and Bandura (1982), it is argued that specific goals, when fulfilled, might increase self-efficacy, and principals who steer their schools towards clear-set criteria are more likely to be successful (Törnsén, 2009). Another aspect might be whether the criteria chosen are valid in evaluating the goals and whether specificity of goals is preferable. It is argued here that they are and that specific goals increase the likeliness of performance. There might be other reasons to not specify goals, which are beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze. Also, there might be other documents and practices that balance the lack of specificity of the work-plan goals, given that these goals are not likely to be the tipping point as to why a school fails or succeeds in their work towards educating children. Still, it is arguable that these documents do carry importance and, based on earlier research, both teachers and principals put emphasis on clear boundaries, visions and goals (Leo, 2010, Ärlestig, 2008). The Swedish school system is organized by goals and visions rather than micromanagement (Jarl & Pierre, 2012, Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000). Also, when asked, both school superintendents as well as the principals mentioned the work-plans as a key document for school governance, which is further strengthened by Jarl & Pierre (2012), who have suggested that work-plans are one out of three common instruments for school governance. Another observation made is that the work-plans vary in their quantity of goals and contextual information provided. The work-plans differ in amount of pages and goals written in them, despite the fact that the schools have the same goals given to them from the school board and are located in the same county. This might indicate a relative freedom in how school management is applied, with leaders adapting their

work-plans to their local school context. How to best achieve this contextualization is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis, which has investigated how the goals have been operationalized.

In regard to the observation with OSTI the hierarchical structure of the coding scheme having some behaviors seen as more effective than others might be problematic. Here, it might be important to clarify that OSTI only claims that some behaviors affect group-performance more than others (i.e., OSTI is concerned with performance and not with a multitude of other aspects that might be just as important such as creativity, social relations, health, etc.) Therefore, it is not to be taken as the gold standard of how to be a great leader but, rather, as one with many potential ways of analyzing leadership practice. Also, the range between different principals was quite large (10%) concerning work-related talk as well as providing consequences, indicating that there might also be a considerable difference in leadership-style preference within the group of principals, making it essential to state that being a principal, just like all leadership, is contextual and that it is unlikely that one size fits all. There are concerns that the use of observation disregards the underlying wants and needs of why an individual performs in a certain way (Bryman, 1989). Despite this, the presented thesis is not the first social study that uses structured observation of video recordings; still, there are certain aspects that need to be discussed. The fact that the principals handled the recording and were responsible for sending the cameras back to the researchers could be considered a weakness. This means that if a principal felt displeased with the meeting, they could potentially delete it and re-record the next meeting without the researchers knowing. The principals also had the possibility to make one recording and then review their behavior and, even though they did not know what the researchers were looking for, still evaluate and potentially change their actions until the next meeting was recorded. There are no indications that this actually took place, but the potential risk cannot be ignored. Furthermore, there is a potential debate as to whether or not video cameras are actually able to observe all the different aspects of human interaction. Here, it is argued that, based on the criteria of OSTI, which codes behaviors in relation to their effect on performance, it is a useful way of collecting data. There is also earlier research indicating it to be favorable by letting the actual people being observed place the cameras where they need to be and without camera crews behind them, thereby, making the camera a normal part of the work environment (Jordan & Henderson, 1995). It is unknown whether or not there are situations in which leaders lead more than in others. The

selection of recorded meetings was based on the school leaders' own opinions of when they lead. The final selection of recordings for coding leadership behaviors were all the same kind of meetings, i.e., school managing team meetings (Skolledningsgruppen). However, regarding coding goal-related talks during the meetings in relation to the behaviors shown by the principals, all recorded meetings were used. This included the two meetings that were not from the school managing team meetings. This could potentially be a methodological flaw. The actual method of video recording the meetings could have been complemented by participative observations which might have been able to provide a richer description in to why the leaders do what they do. Too perform this kind of observation where however beyond the scope of this thesis and time frame of these studies. It was also thought to potentially alter the natural setting of the meeting to have a researcher actively participate in the meeting.

The actual coding process is a potential weakness. As presented in table 2, an intra-observer agreement was performed. However, the fact that there is no inter-observer agreement (i.e., two different coders comparing their results) is a weakness. Also, in the original coding manual by Komaki, the one most significant behavior was coded each minute, resulting in a need for a higher amount of coded interactions to achieve a baseline of a specific leader's behavior. The research group has been in personal contact with Komaki regarding the way the behaviors were coded in this study. There is a need for further evaluation as to whether it is the time period, the amount of total significant behaviors or the amount or character of meetings that is the critical component in evaluating a leader's standard performance.

Selecting a theory is also a limitation while coding since it excludes other potential perspectives when analyzing data.

For future research, it is important to gain knowledge about the variation of leadership behaviors shown by a specific person and how this varies over time and in specific situations. This knowledge could influence what situations to observe, how many sessions need to be recorded and over what time period they should be observed. These methodological shortcomings are especially important since this part of the thesis is using quantitative methods.

6.3 Final word

This thesis aimed at studying what the principals do and how their goals are formulated. This in comparison to another potential study of interest investigating why principals do what they do and the goals look the way they do, where other methods and theories need to be used. Questions can be raised as to whether or not you can observe human behavior and whether or not this it meaningful. The observations used are founded on well-established psychological theories and methods. It is argued here that it is, not a sole explanation to individual or organizational outcome, but rather as one potential method of explanation. Other theories could potentially have been used to put alternative aspects of leadership in to perspective, each methodological choice could be argued also being not choosing something else. A qualitative analysis trying to clarify the purpose behind actions could provide a fuller and deeper understanding of why leaders act the way they do. This thesis is not a statement in to the unimportant aspects of the why we act on the contrary this could be highly interesting for future research. The studies taken place could therefore be seen as a compliment in our possibility to broaden our understanding, investigating what leaders do can give raise to future investigations in e.g. why they act that way.

Leadership is, as argued above by Lindblad, Linde & Naeslund (1999) and Barley & Kunda (2001), contextual and, therefore, hard to understand solely based on abstract models regarding traits. It could, therefore, be potentially beneficial to perform leadership studies at the actual workplace and focus on what leaders actually do. To focus on behavior is, therefore, argued to provide a possibility to analyze what people do and, by doing so, be able to provide more effective tools for them to change their behavior. Placing this study on a transactional/transformational scale is argued to be of less importance since it does not take a stand for a certain leadership style, but asks leaders the open-ended question: “what do you want to achieve as a leader” and then aims to provide information about where that leader stands today.

7. References

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8. Appendix

APPENDIX 1. Literature search.

A first basic search in three separate databases, PsycINFO, Education Research Complete and ERIC was performed. These databases were chosen since they include a broad selection of published educational and psychological research. The following phrases were used:

Leadership, Management, Goal Setting, Feedback, Leadership AND Goal setting, Leadership AND Feedback, Management AND Goal Setting, Management AND Feedback.

The limitations were: Full Text available, English as language, Peer reviewed, years 2000-2013, search phrases set in Title. The limitations and search string were set out of convenience to limit the vast amount of research that is produced in the field. However, if the initial search resulted in more than 500 hits, the search string was refined to narrow the amount of articles.

The search string was further specified with organization and management to find articles that are relevant in aspect to the purpose and aim of the study.

The selection process between articles began by first reading the title. If the title included organization and management, the abstract was read. Articles with abstracts containing studies of organizations and management were read in full.

After the basic search, sources were added by reading the references from the articles found as well as literature in the field of school research. Sources were added from the Swedish School Inspectorate, VINNOVA (Sweden's innovation agency), the Australian Council for Educational Research and the Swedish Research Council as well as the OECD

Appendix 2. CRANG & COOK CHECKLIST FOR VIDEO OBSERVATION

1. Planning:

a. Were the images staged or candid, or staged as candid?

All images were staged in the sense that all participants knew that there was a meeting to be held and that it was supposed to be recorded. There were also agendas for the meetings, and the meetings were returning practices at the schools.

b. Were the people in the video aware of the video-recorder?

All meeting participants were informed of the camera and the recording, both in written form and verbally.

To further ensure an ethical practice, the Swedish Ethical Commission regarding science performed on humans was asked to contribute their opinion. After being asked to clarify the participation agreement, the application was approved on 2013-10-13, with the commission finding no ethical concern regarding the continuing of video observational research.

2. Filming events:

a. What events were depicted and what events (often necessary for the image to have been produced) were not?

The recorded meetings were selected by the principals, who were asked to record meetings where they consider themselves to be managing their staff. They consist of video sequences of approximately one hour each. This means that several interactions between principal and staff were not recorded. How these interactions potentially influence the meetings are not described further.

b. From where was the film taken?

The film was taken at meetings between principals and their staff, recorded upon request from the researchers.

c. How was it set up?

The cameras were placed on a desk facing the principal with the help of a tripod and no other staff members visible in the frame.

d. How was it decided who should take it and who should be in it?

The participating schools were selected by the local school superintendants; however, all schools had to voluntarily participate and could withdraw their participation at any time.

3. Editing process (one question was left out because of irrelevance):

a. How and why were certain images selected to (not) be shown to the researcher?

Whether certain images were left out by the principals cannot be controlled; however, no editing of films handed to the researchers was detected. If so, it most likely had to be done professionally.

b. How are they cropped, blown-up or otherwise altered?

The material was uploaded to an encrypted, web-based platform where it was given an identification code that needs a separate id-key to be interpreted. Further description of the coding process takes place further below.

c. How and where are they stored and/or displayed?

All material is stored on the web-based platform. This means that only the research group can access the material. Without the external id-key, they cannot interpret who they are watching.

4. Display:

The questions asked in this section of the checklist were not considered relevant for the specific project.

5. Power relations *(there are several other questions asked in the original checklist; however, they were left out because of lack of relevance):*

a. Who controls and edits a film?

The main coding process regarding how principals act was performed by an independent coder with no prior knowledge of the schools. The coder followed a manual developed by Komaki. A further description is described below.

APPENDIX 3. Goals as written in the local work-plans, evaluated with the four-theme checklist. 2=achieved 1=partly achieved 0=not achieved

Written goal	Aim	Measurability	Carry-through	Evaluation
<i>Together with the students, we undertake to attend to and develop our working environment. Our school shall be a safe, pleasant and equal work environment for both children and adults.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>(We will) work with norms and values to make the students feel safe and increase their well-being in school.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We work to make (schools name) a safe school and to prevent the emergence of bullying.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We undertake to provide a safe physical and psycho-social school environment for your child, where values and respectful treatment are a natural part of learning.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We actively prevent bullying and derogatory or discriminative behaviors.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We undertake to give students expertise in their learning. A minimum of 90% of the students in 9th grade should obtain the grade E (on a A-F scale authors notice) in all subjects.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Mutual value system based on curricular principles and a clear approach related to the teacher's assignment.</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>All students shall reach the required levels in all subjects.</i>	0	1	1	1
<i>We undertake to give all students the best possible conditions for their learning.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>No matter their gender, all students will have equal opportunities to obtain good results. We shall challenge and energize the students to make gender-neutral choices in their learning. We shall work against peer pressure and choices made based on tradition.</i>	2	1	1	0
<i>We undertake to collaborate with the social services, pre-schools, police and parents.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We undertake to strengthen the collaboration between parents, social services, pre-schools, police and the community.</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Develop the collaboration between submitting pre-schools, receiving schools and the local social services.</i>	2	1	0	0
<i>We undertake to work for a collaborative environment with the parents of our students, social services, pre-school and police.</i>	0	1	1	1
<i>We want a good collaboration within different activities, both in and outside the school.</i>	0	1	0	0
<i>We undertake to give students the possibility to take responsibility and influence over their</i>	0	1	0	0

<i>learning and affect the daily practice. All students shall have the opportunity to contribute and feel that they are partaking.</i>				
<i>We undertake to collaborate with the members who are important for the students' and the school's development.</i>	0	0	1	0
<i>(The school's name) will work to increase the amount of students eligible for High School.</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Students' academic results shall improve.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Develop the teaching methods.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Active student councils</i>	1	0	0	0
<i>Collaboration with pre-schools in (school's name) school catchment area.</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>We collaborate with different companies within the project X (project's name)</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>Collaboration with the unemployment office.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We undertake to work towards creating a calm environment during all school activities as well as during recess, school lunches and transportation within the school.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>Increase student participation and influence over their learning.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We undertake to increase the dialogue with parents.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We undertake to have a deliberate gender-perspective in our organization.</i>	1	0	1	1
<i>We undertake to give the students the opportunity to affect their teaching situation and the rest of the organization.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We undertake to develop our contacts with organizations, businesses and others who can enrich the school, both close by and internationally.</i>	2	1	0	0
<i>We want all students to have a good working atmosphere in school.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We want students to be able to influence the teaching process, both in direct relation with the responsible teacher as well as formally through the student council.</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>We want a good collaborative relationship with the student's legal guardian.</i>	1	1	1	0
<i>Simultaneously first.</i>	1	0	1	0
<i>Collaboration with external members, both in the vicinity as well as internationally, shall increase.</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>All students shall feel safe and learn how to take consideration and respect of others.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We undertake to provide our students with a good physical and working environment.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>All students shall gain adequate knowledge in the subjects taught in school, thereby, becoming</i>	1	1	1	1

<i>educated and prepared for life.</i>				
<i>We undertake working towards giving students a larger responsibility for their individual work and for the school environment in order for them to have a real effect on the conceptualization of their education in relation to their present condition by democratic methods.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We undertake to actively work towards an increased collaboration between social services, pre-schools, school, police and the parents of our students.</i>	1	1	1	0
<i>We undertake to increase our collaboration with outside members, both in the vicinity and internationally.</i>	1	1	1	0
<i>We shall establish good routines so that we, regularly and with increased quality, can analyze students' results and make conclusions for how they can be improved.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We shall examine our central mission according to the national curriculum and systematically evaluate and develop our core practice.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We will establish clear subject-groups in our school, where all teaching staff will be included and have a clear mandate and responsibility.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We will develop our extracurricular activities so that they respond to the national curriculum's demand on educational and social development amongst students.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We develop clear routines and approaches towards student homework.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>The adults in school shall, in a systematic way, follow-up on students in need of support - socially, educationally or knowledge-wise.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We finalize and establish our routines regarding offensive behavior at school.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We continue to improve the study environment during class and the social interactions between the school's students.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We shall establish clear routines regarding, student, extra-curricular and class councils in school.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We shall develop processes and routines that, in a clear way, involve the students in planning teaching and extra-curricular activities.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We will develop our routine in regard to student's performance-appraisals so that they will be as rewarding as possible and to increase the actual participation of the students.</i>	2	1	1	1
<i>We continue to establish our internal e-mailing system (name) for all school practice.</i>	2	1	1	1

<i>We will investigate the possibilities of a closer cooperation with the cultural school (in the city).</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We continue to develop our system of quality that helps us effectively handle the everyday practice and, thereby, create an opportunity to develop our core practice.</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>We enhance the social climate in school within the student body as well as between adults.</i>	1	1	1	1