



Decision-making at work:

An explorative study of employees leading themselves through decision-making in a consultancy company.

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Abstract

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to gain deeper understanding of employees' decision-making processes within a consultancy firm. The study aims to provide knowledge of what impact a self-leading role with large decisional mandate has on decision-making. The importance of the study lies in the reach of deeper understanding of companies' decisive behaviour. This, through the research question: "How do employees experience their decision-making in an autonomous role with high decisional mandate?".

Theory: Dual-System Theory and the concept of Self-leadership are used in this study to help fulfilling the purpose and answer the research question. Dual-system theory is used to analyse and discuss the respondents' behaviour while decision-making. The concept of self-leadership is useful while analysing and discussing the respondents' decisional behaviour and how they lead themselves through decisions in situations where they have high decisional mandate.

Method: An explorative and qualitative case study have been conducted with 14 semi-structured interviews with the respondents having different roles within a Swedish consultancy company. Focus is put on employees' experiences of their own decision-making in regard to decisional frames and self-leadership. The case company is chosen due to their flat organisational structure, the high level of autonomy, decisional mandate and self-leadership. Previous research of self-leadership and decisional frame, Dual-System Theory and the concept of self-leadership are chosen as an analytic perspective.

Results: The consultancy practice affect decision-making in different ways. Autonomous roles with large decisional frames requires an open, flat, non-hierarchical culture where employees feel trusted by the formal leaders and feedback is close at hand. Self-leadership is a concept with different implications depending on the employees' own perspective of it. Decision-making is affected by employees' self-leadership which in turn is affected by bias and heuristics. Fast, intuitive and impulsive decision-making is commonly based on experience. Reflection is most common when unexperienced situations.

Foreword

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1. Introduction

Over the last decades, the increase of knowledge-based economies has resulted in a shift in professional working life. Organisational structures have become more flat and dynamic than before, and company environments have become more agile and fast changing. The changed working life further implicates that employees are being interrupted in their work more frequently than before. Due to these changes, employees' mandate in decision-making and managing their own work, deadlines and goals have largely increased. In line with these organisational changes, a debate and practice of self-leadership has increased over the last 30 years. The concept of self-leadership was introduced by Manz (1986) as the ability to lead oneself in the direction of an intended performance or goal. It is spoken of as a valuable ability for employees to have when managing dynamic circumstances and complex decision-making at work.

Furthermore, the growth of knowledge-based economies has resulted in an increased need for special competencies. As a result of this, consultancy companies who offer staffing alternatives have largely increased. Common characteristics of professional roles within consultancy companies are a high level of independency, a large decisional mandate and freedom to structure their working days (Muzio et al., 2011). A higher level of decisional mandate and employee independency and freedom further enhance the importance of employees' decision-making. In this study self-leadership is approached as described by Bryant and Kazan (2013), as the practice of intentionally influencing our own thinking and behaviours towards self-set objectives. A suitable self-leadership is directly affecting the ability in adequate and beneficial decision-making (Manz, 1986). Inadequate decision-making can result in loss of value such as time and capital (Pircher, 2016). Therefore, it is of high importance that employees have the abilities in leading themselves through advantageous decision-making processes. Understanding employees decision-making behaviour is of importance to sustain valuable decision-making processes.

Employees' self-leadership and decision-making are connected, and it is important for decision-makers to have sufficient self-leading skills while decision-making (Manz, Andersson and Prussia, 1998). Employees are most commonly unaware of what is influencing their decision-making at work (Campbell, Whitehead & Finkelstein, 2009). Tversky and Kahneman (1974) stress that individuals everyday decision-making processes are affected by heuristics and bias.

Heuristics assist the decision-maker to rely on its previous similar experiences when making everyday decisions. Decision-making led by heuristics is most commonly an unconscious act and is fast in its character. Kahneman (2011) emphasises that employees who are aware of the influence heuristics and bias have on their decisional behaviour can make more accurate judgements of uncertain situations at work.

Due to today's flat organisational structures and dynamic ways of working within the consultancy practice, it is important to study decision-making processes of employees in relation to the self-leadership ability. Having a large decisional freedom of ones' work put higher pressure on employees everyday decision-making processes. Another increased pressure on decision-making processes is the high level of independence within the consultancy role. Today, there is a lack of research within the field of decision-making and self-leadership at work. Hence, this study will fill that research gap where focus is put on employees' experiences of their own decision-making in relation to their professional roles.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain deeper understanding of employees' decision-making processes within a consultancy firm. The study aims to provide knowledge of what impact a self-leading role with large decisional mandate has on decision-making. The importance of the study lies in the reach of deeper understanding of companies' decisive behaviour. This, by realizing how employees lead themselves through decision-making processes.

1.2. Research question

- How do employees experience their decision-making in an autonomous role with high decisional mandate?

1.3. Case company

A business case has been carried out in a Swedish private consultancy company. The company focus lies in consulting other firms by offering staffing-, recruitment- and employee education alternatives within different business areas. The largest business area the company is consulting other firms in is within HR. Other areas are marketing, IT, sales, finance and management. To study employees' decision-making and how they practice self-leadership, this case company was chosen because of the flat organisational structure and the employees working

autonomously with a large decisional mandate. Further, the case company was chosen because self-leadership is practiced by all company members. The company provides employees and other firms with self-leadership training programs. In the context of this firm, self-leadership is about several key aspects such as being conscious about one's goal-setting, knowing ones' decisional mandate, sustaining a healthy work life balance, creating motivation and continuous development. Further, self-leadership incorporates that employees on their own are creating and planning their work weeks in the most suitable way for themselves, such as prioritising their own business deals towards a monthly goal. Their self-leadership within their professional roles requires adequate decision-making in their everyday work. In turn, it is important to make decisions that lead them towards fulfilling set goals.

2. Previous research

Previous research is presented to highlight the importance of adequate decision-making processes within organisations. Previous research of what impact different aspects such as bias and heuristics have on decision-making is presented. Further, how employees' self-leadership, decisional frames and the consulting practice affect decision-making processes.

2.1. Inadequate decision-making within organisations

Kaufman (2018) emphasises that all decisional processes within companies affect the development and progress of the organisation. Companies need to make decisions that favour increase of current and future value for them. Inadequate decisional behaviour is common due to lack of necessary information required in a specific situation. Inadequate decision-making is defined as decision-making processes not efficiently made towards an intended goal or performance. Hammond, Keeny and Raiffa (1998) emphasises that decision-making is the most important, toughest and riskiest job of any company member. Bernardez and Kaufman (2013) stress the difficulty for organisations to make value-creating decisions characterised by efficient problem-solving and growth while being part of a complex environment which is constantly changing its demands. The environment is becoming more and more agile and employees must have adequate methods to prevent harmful and damaging organisational decision-making and still be able to reach their own and the organisational objectives (Bryant & Kazan, 2013). Hirokawa (1980) stress that the level of value in decisions is affected largely by the level of interaction with others and own reflection. Less interaction with others and reflection in a decision-making process can create inadequate decision-making. Nevertheless, everyone can learn how to effectively manage ones' decisional behaviour. Hammond, Keeny and Raiffa (1998) discusses what creates inadequate employee decision-making. Decisions can be a result of the way the decision was made, for instance the decision-maker not having the right information or a fully comprehension of alternatives, costs, consequences, risks or outcomes of a decision. It is further emphasised that inadequate decision-making often lies in the mind of the decision-maker, known as bias and heuristics, and affects the decision-making process.

2.2. The impact of bias and heuristics in decision-making

Individuals like to think they are being objectively and rational in their decision-making. However, truth is that every individual bear bias and heuristics that influences their decision-making processes. Campbell, Whitehead and Finkelstein (2009) accentuates the importance of

understanding that individuals cannot eliminate bias and heuristics affecting their decisional behaviour. Bias and heuristics are regularly used by most decision-makers in order to make the decision-making process easier and quicker (Bateman and Zeithaml 1989; Jackson and Dutton 1988; Kahneman et al. 1982; Zajac and Bazerman 1991). Barney and Busenitz (1997) describe bias and heuristics as subjective opinions in the human brain that lead to shortcuts while decision-making. The shortcuts are most commonly unconscious and used when making everyday decisions. Kahneman (2011) emphasises that bias and heuristics are common to mislead individuals and companies in their decision-making. The reason for this is misjudgements of situations to be similar to a past one. Bias and heuristics evolve to help and lead individuals in the direction to find patterns from past experiences to make decision-making processes fast. It is a biological behaviour that is beneficial for individuals in different aspects. However, Hammond, Keeny and Raiffa (1998) call this use of heuristics while decision-making as psychological traps. It is stressed that in modern company contexts, this decisional behaviour can lead to inadequate decision-making. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) stress that heuristics can be used effectively to ease decision-making processes under uncertainty but in some cases, they mislead the decision-maker to make an inappropriate decision instead. Understanding bias and heuristics is important to understand why individuals make inadequate decisions. By an increased understanding of where bias and heuristics derives from, individuals could improve judgements and decisions under uncertain situations. Having the ability to lead oneself through bias and heuristics is important when decision-making (Kahneman et al. 1982; Schwenk 1988).

2.3. The self-leadership of employees

Over the past 30 years, substantial research has focused on the concept of self-leadership within organisations (Manz, 1986; Manz, Anderson & Prussia, 1998; Manz & Pearce, 2005; Stewart, Courtright and Manz, 2011; Bryant & Kazan, 2013; Pircher, 2016). Before this, research focused on self-management which is about applying behaviour-focused strategies in how to accomplish goals defined by external sources, such as the organisation system or higher management (Manz, 1990; Manz & Pearce, 2005). In addition to the simpler approach of self-management, self-leadership includes not only behaviour-focused strategies but also cognitive strategies which incorporates what these goals should be and why they are important (Manz, 1990; Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2011).

Bryant and Kazan (2013) stress the benefits of self-leadership where awareness and reflection of ones' own behaviour can result in advantages, both on individual- and organisational level.

Individual benefits that derives from practicing an adequate self-leadership are an increased sense of dedication, resilience, meaningfulness and achievement to ones' work. Organisational benefits from employees practicing self-leadership are higher creativity and innovation, more adequate decision-making processes, improved goal settings as well as higher engagement and empowerment among the company members. Manz and Sims (1980) emphasise that every individual practice self-leadership, however, not everyone lead themselves through decision-making in a conscious way.

Most research has focused on self-leadership on an individual level in organisations where some studies have applied a multilevel perspective of the concept. Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) did a review of self-leadership in organisations from a multilevel perspective including both individual and team levels of analysis. On an individual level, results show that with increased practice of self-leadership among employees there is an increased level of work performance. Self-leadership where teams decide their work schedules and budgets as well as having the authority to select and terminate workers, seems to be moderated by contextual factors. Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) further identified internal and external factors within an organisation that is affecting self-leadership. External factors, such as formal leadership, was shown to be especially important for the basis of practicing self-leadership since self-leadership cannot take the place of formal leadership and is not functioning without it. Further, Bryant and Kazan (2013) studied the influence of self-leadership on both individual- and team levels in organisations. Results show that self-leadership should be the foundation of any organisational development program in order for a learning organisation to develop. It is expressed that employees should take ownership of thinking, feeling and actions for personal and career development.

Middle management must engage by co-creating goals and giving feedback and support. Further, senior formal leaders must practice self-leadership and communicate the company vision and culture through their actions. Pircher (2016) studied self-leadership in relation to decision-making, on the individual level. The aim was to study self-leadership and individual perception of the organisational context to understand how that can develop more integrated decision-making processes. Further, how decision-making processes in organisations are affected by individual behaviour and in turn how individual behaviour is unconsciously influenced by external factors. The results show that self-leadership is about ones' ability to consciously organise ones' habits for a specific purpose, and consciously deal with ones'

influences and intuitions. Further, that self-leadership is a condition of employees' behaviour that is prerequisite for preventing inadequate decision-making within organisations. It is further emphasised that self-leadership is especially important when having a large decisional frame within a professional role.

2.4. Impact of decisional mandate and frames

Within the last decades, several studies have investigated decision-making in relation to decisional frames from different perspectives within companies. Barney and Busenitz (1997) examined differences in the decision-making process between employees with managerial responsibilities and entrepreneurs in large organisations. Managerial responsibilities within the study were employees responsible for two or more functional departments. Heuristics and bias were defined and used in the study as shortcuts in decision-making processes individuals use as a guide to easier make decisions in complex circumstances. The differences were studied in relation to the heuristics of overconfidence and representativeness. Overconfidence is when company members are overestimating the probability of something being right whereas representativeness is the tendency to overly generalise something from a limited and inadequate number of influencing aspects.

Overconfidence and representativeness are two of the most common heuristics highlighted while decision-making. It is stated that entrepreneurs were more susceptible in using heuristics and bias in their decision-making processes than managers. It was concluded that the cause might be the decisional limitations the managers were operating within in relation to the entrepreneurs large and freer decisional mandate. It is further stated that using heuristics and bias can be necessary for entrepreneurs when overcoming and managing obstacles hindering business decisions to strive forward. Using the heuristic of overconfidence can be especially important for entrepreneurs when decision-making in complex company situations (Barney & Busenitz, 1997). However, as overconfidence can be highly favourable in some situations it can be the direct unfavourable in others (Barney & Busenitz, 1997; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Studies have been made on decision-making in relation to the decisional frame, where individuals are limited to decide within, to understand the impact of decisional frames on decision-making (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). A decision frame can be identified in different ways depending on whose perspective it is identified from. Hence, it is concluded that individuals are most commonly irrational in their decision-making. The decisional frame is

different depending on every decision-makers perspective of it. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) conclude that making judgements under uncertainty often are of a risk taking characteristic and under influence of heuristics.

Skulimowski (2011) highlights the importance in freedom of choice during complex decision-making. Decision-making processes are investigated where decision-makers are unable to have all the necessary facts before making a decision and are therefore unable to follow decisional standards or rules. By analysing decision-making processes and the decisional conditions such as the decisional frame to operate within gives companies important knowledge. It is stated that aspects such as having to make quick decisions, loss of information or data, lack of competencies or capabilities and not knowing monetary or performance boundaries are aspects that affects the decision-making process. Creativity in decision-making is identified when the decision-maker are unaware of opinions of others within the same institution. It is further stated that decisional freedom is a crucial aspect to build creative decision-making processes. Muzio et al. (2011) stress that the consultancy practice is characterized by decisional freedom as well as other aspects that affect decision-making processes.

2.5. Impact of the consulting practice

Vieira and Proença (2010) stress that successful consulting means employees making favourable business dealings with clients. To do that, decision-making that favour sustainable customer relationships built on trust is crucial. Within the consulting practice, decision-making processes must at all times be focused on the clients' needs and what can be offered to them. It is the clients' needs that mainly steer the decision-making processes of a consultant. Muzio et al. (2011) emphasise that the consultant occupation is common to be characterised by employees conducting own business dealings, cooperation's and projects with clients. The consultant often has a large decisional freedom where the main decisional frame to operate within is to sell their services to clients. Further, the professional role of a consultant is common to be characterised by independence and self-support. Machuca and Costa (2012) also highlights the autonomy within the consulting role. In an industry where the needs of clients are in focus decisions often must be made fast. The needs of clients may change direction quickly and it is the consultants job to be flexible and customer oriented in the decision-making processes throughout every business dealing. Malhotra and Galletta (2003) stress the importance in maintaining motivation and commitment as a consultant due to the independency and high tempo within the consultancy practice. Further, the consultancy role can imply having

distant managers with slim contact with managers. It is stressed that clarity and trust between managerial teams and consultants is a key aspect in creating adequate decision-making processes of autonomous consultants.

3. Theory

3.1. Choice of theoretical framework

Dual-System Theory and the concept of self-leadership are used in the study to help fulfilling the purpose and answer the research question. Dual-System Theory is used to analyse and discuss the respondents' behaviour during the decision-making process. Kahneman (2011) emphasize that the theory highlights two different mind-sets, system 1 and 2, while decision-making. The first system represents automatic, less conscious, intuitive and therefore fast decision-making while the second system is used while more mindful, analytic and slower decision-making. Dual System Theory was chosen because the analysis of the empirical data showed that the respondents had a dual decision-making behaviour. The two systems, system 1 and 2, will be spelled out in numbers instead of letters throughout the study due to the spelling within the theory itself. The concept of self-leadership was chosen because the respondents have autonomous, self-leading roles with a large decisional mandate of their own work. The concept of self-leadership is useful when analysing the respondents' decisive behaviour in relation to their self-leadership skills.

3.2. Self-leadership

Self-leadership is explained as individuals influencing themselves to reach inner motivation and guidance to act towards intended performance or goals (Manz, Anderson & Prussia, 1998; Manz & Sims, 2001). It is about having an adequate understanding of ones' own personality, qualities, values and capacities, and the awareness of where one is going while influencing ones' behaviour through communication. Self-leadership is the practice of intentionally influencing ones' own mind-set and actions towards set objectives. To manage an adequate and successful self-leadership, one must be well-aware of ones' goals and ensure to get in the best state to achieve set objectives. Successful self-leaders understand that they need their own motivation through their intentions so that they can positively influence themselves and others. Through the practice of self-leadership, one can create more self-awareness and knowing what bias that influence and steer decision-making processes (Bryant & Kazan, 2013).

According to Manz (1986), self-leadership is about cognitive self-influence where the individual focuses on strategies like thought patterns, beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery and self-dialogue. These cognitive self-influential patterns contribute to continuous development of performance and well-being (Ibid.). Further, self-leadership is conceptualised

as a comprehensive self-influential behaviour, leading oneself towards both naturally motivating tasks as well as non-motivating tasks (Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2011).

3.2.1. Self-regulating process

Manz (1983) emphasises that every individual practice self-leadership, however, not everyone leads themselves in a positive and efficient way. Nevertheless, Manz (1986) emphasise that everyone can learn in time how to effectively manage ones' performance. This might be crucial in some companies since applying a self-leadership is directly affecting the ability in adequate decision-making. Manz (1986) introduced a theoretical framework for self-leadership was presented (see Appendix 3) which distinguishes the self-regulating process when self-leadership occurs. At first, the individual is self-regulating by becoming aware of the present conditions as well as examining and noting the similarities and differences of the present situation with identified standards. Second, the individual chooses to engage in changing behaviour by overseeing activities and cognitions in order to reduce the gap between the current situation and desired state. Third, knowledge is gained by perceiving and evaluating the new behaviour and how it impacts the situation. Fourth, the self-regulation cycle starts again. Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) stress that the skills of self-leadership increases to the degree that individuals not only regulate compliance with external standards but also establish those standards internally and consciously reflect upon them.

3.2.2. Cognitive strategies are added to self-leadership

Manz and Pearce (2005) accentuates that self-leadership goes beyond the earlier, and simpler, research approach of self-management. Self-management is about how employees manage their behaviour to reach goals specified by someone other than themselves (Manz & Sims, 1980; Manz, 1990; Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2011). Behaviour-focused strategies are central for both of these self-influence processes (self-management and self-leadership), but self-leadership additionally includes cognitive strategies which self-management does not. Self-leadership is about both meeting external goals, but also autonomously setting and incorporating the goals as well as expressing why they are important (Manz, 1990; Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2011). Manz and Sims (1980) additionally emphasise that self-leadership differentiate itself from self-management with the ability it provides of consciously leading oneself in a direction to reach a self-set performance or goal. According to Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011), cognitive strategies creates conditions for continuous improvements of ones'

thinking patterns and behaviours. Employees who possess the skill of self-leadership succeeds in influencing and evaluating their performance by self-set measures. Bryant and Kazan (2013) stress that employees who engage in self-leadership can experience increased achievements and better relationships with colleagues. Further, employees can gain a higher level of job satisfaction, enthusiasm towards ones' work and mental performance. Additionally, a decreased level of nervousness is experienced compared to employees who are not practicing self-leadership (Neck & Manz, 1996).

3.2.3. Benefits on both personal- and organisational level

Neck and Manz (1996) emphasise that employees who engage in self-leadership can gain job satisfaction, enthusiasm to ones' work, higher mental performance and decreased anxiety compared to those who are not practicing self-leadership. Bryant and Kazan (2013) highlight individual benefits such as increased sense of happiness, resilience, meaningfulness and achievement. As well as a decreased stress level and better relationships to colleagues. Further, the practice of self-leadership is also beneficial for the organisation. Some of the organisational benefits are described as higher creativity and innovation, better and more efficient decision-making processes, improved goal settings, higher collaborative team efforts as well as higher engagement and empowerment among the company members. Pircher (2016) has made research on self-leadership in relation to productive behaviour and decision-making at the workplace. Focus is put on employees' perception of situations as an effect on their self-leadership that lead them in their decisions. Special attention is also put on the aspect of unconsciousness of individuals' behaviours towards external stimuli, which can affect decisions made.

3.3. The Dual-System Theory

The Dual-System Theory highlights a duality of the human mind in regard to decision-making. Two different decisional processes are described, system 1 and system 2 of individuals decision-making processes. The two systems mainly contradict each other in regard to their impact of resulting in fast or slow decisional processes and that one of the systems is most commonly an unconscious behaviour (Kahneman, 2011). Dual-System Theory is developed by Daniel Kahneman (2011) and has derived from previous Dual-Process theories where it is stressed that the mind of individuals is dual and so therefore thinking and decision-making processes are as well. Dual-Process theories divide thinking processes into contrasting type 1

and type 2, similarly to Dual-System Theory that divides decision-making into two systems, system 1 and 2. Dual-System Theory goes further and more in depth than dual-process theories, studying specifically decision-making through the two-system idea (Frankish, 2010). Kahneman (2011) emphasises that system 1 and 2 in Dual-System Theory are two contradictory decisional systems within the thinking mind of individuals.

3.3.1. System 1

Decision-making controlled by system 1 implicate automatic, fast, impulsive and often subconscious decision-making through individual intuition. Decision-making processes controlled by intuition and impulse, in turn are affected by bias and heuristics from individuals' previous knowledge and life experiences. Decision-making processes led by system 1 are individuals reacting through an immediate response towards environmental stimuli. The responses are quick decisional acts with no or little awareness or active sensible thinking before acting (Kahneman, 2011). System 1 often leads decision-making processes where individuals behaves irrationally in their decisional behaviour. It causes and constructs impulsive reactions and decision-making led by bias and heuristics. Every life experience or previous knowledge of individuals create bias that lead individuals into irrational decision-making based on heuristics. The bias and heuristics leading the decision-making in this case is previous experiences affecting the decision-maker to act in a similar way to a similar previous life experience, sometimes called optimism bias. Optimism bias is when system 1 controls the mind of the decision-maker while performing monotone or recurrent work tasks. This type of bias is evolved though previous experiences of similar situations to the current one. System 1 use this optimistic bias without deeper thought when automatically making a fast decision with little or no conscious thought connected to it (Kahneman, 2011). This is one reason why system 1 is a contributing factor to individuals irrational decision-making behaviour such as impulse consulting dealings with customers that result in unfavourable outcomes. Individual bias and heuristics are affecting system 1 the most, however, there are other factors that has an impact on individuals' system 1 processes. A busy mind, mood sets, time limits, stress, sickness, tiredness or distraction are factors that often guide the mind directly into system 1 reactions (Samson & Voyer, 2012; Samson & Voyer, 2014).

3.3.2. System 2

Decision-making processes led by system 2 are contradicting to the other system by instead being deliberate, mindful, controlled, analytic and therefore also commonly much slower by nature (Strack & Deutsch, 2015). It further differentiates from system 1 by being logical, objective and rational while decision-making. It is often asserted that it is system 2 that gives individuals the ability to manage complex, abstract and hypothetical problem-solving and reasoning. Using system 2, the mind can receive and make use of a larger amount of data in addition to own knowledge or previous experiences (Frankish, 2010). System 1 steers the impulsive decision-making by individuals while system 2 is activated after an impulse decision is made. It is system 2 that steers the decision-making when individuals change their mind in a matter. (Strack & Deutsch, 2015). System 2 is activated when individuals interpret a situation as critical and in need for an analysis, quick or deeper, to manage (Samson & Voyer, 2012; Samson & Voyer, 2014).

3.3.3. Summarizing and the importance of the theory

The two systems are complementary while at the same time contradictory since they have different qualities. They are never used at the same time during individuals decision-making processes. System 1 is the strongest fast reactor of the two and is affecting individuals' decision-making first. System 2 is activated in situations where system 1 is encountering decisional problems and therefore seek system 2 for assistance. System 1 is an inborn human way of thinking whereas system 2 is learned and developed through practice. The Dual-System Theory shows the importance of employees engaging in both decisional processes to make suitable decisions in every situation at work. Both approaches, system 1 and system 2, are important for employees to apply in their everyday decision-making. Quick conclusions can be efficient in circumstances where potential costs or negative consequences are low whereas in unfamiliar situations at high stakes requires system 2 based thinking. It is further important for employees to gain awareness and understanding of in what situations system 1 is affecting them. This, because in a busy work environment where decision-making needs to be done fast it is common to be influenced by system 1 and this can result in inadequate decision-making (Kahneman, 2011).

4. Method

The following section present the research design of the study. First, the research setting, and case company is presented. Following is the methodological choice of an exploratory research. Further, data collection and sampling are presented. Thereafter, the structure of the interviews and the interview guide are described. In the next part the data analysis is presented, ethical considerations and limitations are discussed. Lastly, ethical considerations, potential limitations and criticism of sources are discussed.

4.1. Research setting

The purpose of the research is to gain deeper understanding of individual decision-making processes in a setting where the professional roles are self-leading and have large decisional mandate. To gain knowledge in this, a case study was carried out which gives a deeper understanding of decision-making in the specific settings of the chosen organisation. Ritchie and Lewis (2014) emphasise that a case study is useful when the aim of the research is to gain in-depth understanding of a specific situation in an organisation. This case study has been carried out in a Swedish owned private consultancy company. The company focus lies in consulting other companies by offering competent staffing alternatives in several different business areas. The largest business area the company is consulting other organisations in is HR, other examples are marketing, IT, sales, finance and management.

Due to the limitations regarding generalizability, it is important to justify why the case was chosen for the study (Yin, 2015). There were mainly two reasons for the choice of the specific case company. One reason was that the case company had practiced self-leadership for a period which in turn made it possible for us to gain access to how the practice of self-leadership can be experienced and perceived. Another reason for choosing the case company was the large decisional mandate the employees have, which comes as a result of self-leadership and the flat organisational structure. The large decisional mandate exists because they prioritise and plan their business deals on their own towards a monthly individual goal. These conditions, the large decisional mandate and the organisational structure, are relevant to study in this case to understand what impact a self-leading professional role with large decisional mandate has on decision-making processes. Further, a case study is favourable since self-leadership and decision-making can differentiate because of business-specific and demographic factors.

4.2. Rationale behind the qualitative study

The research design of this study is exploratory because the empirical data has been guiding us into finding a relevant perspective of self-leadership and decision-making, hence the study has changed direction because of new data and insights. A lack of previous research about self-leadership and decision-making was another reason to choose explorative study, which is in accordance with Ritchie and Lewis (2014) who expresses that the exploratory design is applicable where little or no previous research has been done. The explorative design allowed us to stay flexible and adaptable to changes during the collection of empirical data. A qualitative approach was chosen to conduct interviews in order to create a deeper understanding of individuals' perceptions and experiences of how they practice self-leadership, and how they make decisions in different situations within the context of this organisation. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2014) a qualitative method is used to give the respondents room for explaining their own reality.

However, the process started off with a deductive approach because we needed a deeper understanding of what self-leadership is, and how previous research has tackled the concept in relations to decision-making in organisational setting. At first, we chose theories about factors that influence decision-making and rational- and nonrational decision-making to understand how individuals make decisions in different situations. These theories and previous research about decision-making and self-leadership were the starting point for the creation of the interview guide (see Appendix 1). However, the theoretical perspective was changed after coding and analysing the collected data, pointing to the inductive approach. The theories were changed because we identified other characteristics in the respondents' decision-making, such as fast and slow decision-making, which would not make it applicable with the first choice of theories. Instead, the Dual-System Theory was chosen which presents two decisional processes of human decision-making, System 1 and System 2, representing fast and slow decision-making. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted self-leadership throughout all interviews because they work very independently, which made it relevant to include the theoretical framework of self-leadership. Therefore, an abductive approach is applied in this study, which is a combination of deductive and inductive approaches.

4.3. Data Collection

To reach the empirical data required to answer the research question, the data was collected through 14 semi-structured interviews that lasted 45-60 minutes each (see Appendix 2). They

were recorded in accordance with the respondents in order to enable transcription and in turn analysis of the data. The majority of the interviews were conducted one to one since our contact person provided us with respondents, this is further explained in the section about the structure of the interviews. The interviews took place in separate rooms that the respondents had chosen, to reach valuable data by making the respondents experience trust towards us and the study. The focus during the interviews were put on reaching an understanding of the respondents' experiences and perceptions of their own decision-making and practice of self-leadership. The interviews were conducted in Swedish. The interview guide (see Appendix 1) and the interview quotes were translated into English.

4.3.1. Sampling

The initial contact with the case company was established with a recruitment consultant via email with an information letter attached. A meeting was scheduled to inform about the study and to create a common and clear understanding about the purpose and method. During this meeting, we highlighted the importance of including respondents with high freedom and responsibility within their roles to gain understanding of individuals' decision-making while leading themselves. A role with high level of independence and responsibility implies that you have to make more decisions on your own and be responsible for structuring your time and goals to accomplish everything needed. A new information letter was created where the purpose and importance of this study was highlighted and was used by our contact person to find respondents.

The participant selection was a random sample since our contact person provided us with respondents. Hence, the respondents gender, age, time within the company and areas of responsibility are varying, however all of them have independent roles with big decisional mandate. Considering gender, half of the respondents were women and the other half were men. Time within the company was varying from six months to eight years. 15 respondents were included from the beginning and one of them could not participate which means that 14 respondents have participated. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents no further information about their professional roles will be given.

4.3.2. Structure of interviews

In regards of the exploratory research design semi-structured interviews were used with questions following the structure of the interview-guide (see Appendix 1). Semi-structured interviews allowed us to be flexible and adaptable during the interviews in order to let the respondents be in the centre of attention. Svenning (2013) express that the ability to understand and critically reflect upon the respondents' answers increases by using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed for follow up questions on topics that were relevant in every specific interview. The majority of the interviews were conducted one to one with the aim of time efficiency. However, during the first three interviews both of us were present, one quiet and observing while the other one was asking questions. The reason for this was that the fit of the interview guide was controlled. The interview guide was shown to be suitable and therefore the rest of the interviews were held one on one. To increase the external validity, each interview was recorded so that the one who was not present during the interview could listen to the recorded material and transcribe it afterwards. This was done so that both researchers could take part in and analyse the empirical data afterwards.

4.3.3. Interview guide

An interview guide was designed (see Appendix 1) with two main themes and subtopics in line with the theoretical perspective created from start. The introduction phase includes questions related to their professional roles to understand the structure of their working days and grasp what responsibilities and activities are included. During the main phase of the interview guide focus was put on decision-making and self-leadership. This to find characteristic decisions for the professional role and behaviour while decision-making. Furthermore, we asked questions about how they view self-leadership and why they started practice it. The interview guide was designed with open questions to not steer the respondents in any direction, instead let them express their own experiences. The open character of the questions gave us the opportunity to ask supplementary questions. Bryman and Bell (2015) express that it is valuable that the interviewer prior to a semi-structured interview has a general questionnaire within the chosen subject area because it gives room for the respondent to respond openly to the questions.

4.4. Data analysis

When transcribing the interviews, the exact word choices and the formulations expressed by the interviewer and the respondents were transcribed. This was done to enable the analysis and

to highlight important empirical findings with quotes when presenting the results. After this, the interview transcripts were analysed, systematised and labelled. This means that the transcripts have been reviewed several times to distinguish important elements in relation to the purpose of this study. Re-reading the transcripts is part of the analytical process since new themes can evolve during this process, which means that previously excluded text may become relevant as new codes evolve (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Since this is an explorative study it was important to stay close to the empirical data by exploring all analytical possibilities. Further, to let everything that came our path during the coding to be used in the analysis. This was done by reading the transcripts line by line and carefully analyse the data by coding every row.

Thematic analysis was chosen as a method of analysis for this study. It is used to sort the collected data into themes according to commonalities, relationships and differences (Ibid.). The coding was made with departure from the following six themes: Decisional mandate, Bias and heuristics, Self-leadership, Professional role, Consulting practice and Organisational structure. The first three themes were formulated in line with the chosen theoretical framework before we started coding. The theme, Professional role, departed from the introduction phase of the interview since it was important to understand how they make decisions within their roles characterised by independence and responsibility. The two last themes, Consulting practice and Organisational structure, emerged during the coding as they were pervading themes in all interviews. The respondents highlighted the consulting practice and the organisational structure as characteristics creating and shaping roles with high independence in decision-making. It was important to create the two new themes to cover everything that was discussed during the interviews and to highlight important matters in line with the purpose of this study.

Firstly, the transcripts were coded manually by using different colours to systematically code the material with departure from the different themes. Different codes were written down in the right paragraph which described in more detail compared to the themes what we had found. Coding the data like this was done to highlight what aspects permeated every theme. Secondly, we gathered all of the codes from the transcriptions in one document on the computer under which theme they belonged to. Thirdly, we compared the codes and checked which of these belonged together. The codes that were repeated and or touched upon the same theme were put together into new subthemes that were representing patterns in the empirical data. Gathering and separating all the codes like this was done to create an overview of the codes and in turn to better understanding what the empirical data had provided the study. In this phase, we were

consistent with not having the same codes under more than one theme to create a clear presentation of the results and in turn, to stay in line with the purpose of this study.

To illustrate the process of data analysis, two examples of codes could be used belonging to the theme Decisional mandate, such as: Often takes decisions based on experience, and: Rarely takes rational decisions but is more intuitive. These two codes were in turn placed together because they describe the same topic. Afterwards, when several codes had been gathered we created a sub theme named: Quick and intuitive decisions come with experience, where several codes are included and not just these two. Other sub themes that were created as part of Decisional mandate are: One must always consider time to keep up with work, and: Driven by pleasure and impatiens in decision-making.

4.5. Ethical considerations

Throughout the research we have applied universal ethical actions to get informed consent, to stay clear from deception, to ensure confidentiality and to not harm participants (Tracy, 2013). We have, together with the case company, agreed upon full confidentiality of their participation. Information of how we were to confidentially handle their personal- and company data were described already in the information letter. Confidentiality have further been discussed with the respondents before the interviews by explaining how their contribution will be used throughout the study. This, to create a trustworthy collaboration between us and the company members from the beginning of the research and maintain it throughout the process. Ritchie and Lewis (2014) express that it is important to ensure the privacy of the respondents and give the respondents opportunity to access the study. Before we started the interviews, we asked for permission to record to enable transcription and in turn analysis of the empirical data. The respondents were informed that the recordings would be deleted after the research was completed, and that no other than us and the supervisor from the university will have access to it. Further, that they would be given access to the study after it was completed. During the interviews, all respondents were given the opportunity to interrupt. We have protected specific data by excluding the name of the company and the respondents in the transcripts.

4.6. Limitations and criticism of sources

To find in depth-material and understand the meaning of decision-making at work and the practice of self-leadership, individuals' experiences, attitudes and behaviours needed to be

analysed. One limitation that needs to be underlined is that it is hard to make general conclusions from qualitative research, depending on the limited number of units (Svenning, 2013). Instead, focus has been put on data saturation which was attained after approximately ten interviews because the same information was repeated. However, it was of importance to conduct all 14 interviews to be certain of not missing out on relevant data. Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the fact that we did not choose the respondents on our own. Our contact person provided us with respondents that was available considering time limits for the employees. If we would choose the respondents independently it would have been beneficial to choose respondents with more experience within the company to reach a deeper understanding. Further, it could be beneficial to include respondents with the same professional role to ensure that all have the same prerequisites for decision-making and practicing self-leadership. To deal with this issue we discussed with our contact person to include respondents that all had a large decisional mandate.

Another limitation is that we as researchers have been involved throughout the whole process. One such condition is the presence as interviewer, since there is a possibility that it can affect the respondents' perceptions. Svenning (2013) express that some questions can be perceived as deep or sensitive which could make the respondents feel that they do not dare or feel like answering some questions. This study incorporates a focus on human behaviour which can be sensitive information and difficult to grasp, in turn, we could have missed out on important data. Further, the practice of self-leadership is an individual process which is expressed and interpreted in different ways. To deal with the issue of human behaviour and self-leadership we carefully adopted every interview by asking follow-up-questions and specific questions in relation to every respondent. Further limitations are eventual mistranslations in the translation of the quotes that are used in the results. Hence, all translations have been controlled and read several times by both researchers to avoid mistranslations.

5. Results

This section presents the empirical findings per themes and codes identified during the data analysis. The results are presented with quotes from the interviews. The first part is describing different cornerstones that affects and shapes individuals' decision-making processes in the company. These fundamentals are the consulting practice, organisational aspects and self-leadership. The second part encompasses the actual decision-making process, describing how decisions are made.

5.1. Characteristics of the consulting practice

This section describes two characteristics of the consulting practice, the fast-moving environment and the customers impact on employees' everyday decisions. The fast-moving external environment is pressuring the employees to make fast decisions in order to stay in line with the needs of the customer, who is in control of the employees' decision-making.

5.1.1. Fast moving environment

During the interviews, it was noticed that the respondents highlighted the consulting industry as a subject for their working methods, how they manage time and make decision. They emphasised that the industry is fast changing which in turn creates fast changing and event-driven working days. There is a definite need for fast tempo in everything they do in order to still be attractive for customers and stay in business. The high tempo in the industry creates conditions requiring fast decisions in order for the businesses to go fast. As one of our interview partners expressed it *"It is common in the industry that we have to extinguish fires"* (R8). The expression "extinguish fires" is used by the respondent because they must always have a flexible mind-set. They must always be ready for sudden and unforeseen changes, such as changed needs of the clients, which is very common and out their control. The fast-changing environment requires the respondents to think fast and they express that there is not much time for thinking and reflecting before deciding. *"I have to make the recruitment processes as qualitative and fast as possible"* (R10). The respondents highlighted that they have many processes and projects going on at the same time, this in combination with being responsible for delivering an end product with high quality for the customer creates high demands in their work. One respondent expressed *"/.../ We have to move fast in this industry because otherwise the customer could have done the recruitment by themselves"* (R11). It was understood during the interviews that they are dependent on and must adapt their projects and processes to their

customers, which in turn implies on what the respondents highlight as the need for delivering both quality and quantity.

5.1.2. The customer steers the employees' decision-making

The respondents expressed that they must always establish good relationships because there are different actors (customer, candidate and themselves) being a part of the business which means that different needs and wishes must to be taken into consideration in the decision-making. The employees must have this idea and way of thinking in the back off their heads all the time while making decisions, to satisfy the needs of different actors. As one of our interview partners expressed it the consulting industry “*Requires a great human flexibility*” (R8), they must adapt their work and decisions that are made during the recruitment processes to different actors because they are working with humans and they are unpredictable.

Working with people, a lot can happen that makes us unable to continue. The consultant jumps off or the candidate jumps off or, yes. It is so much that can happen when it comes to people. (R8)

Furthermore, the role of the customer was extensively highlighted as central to the core business because the needs of the customer are crucial for the business deal. “*When it comes to doing business, it is all about listening to the customer and have big ears/.../*” (R12). One of our interview partners expressed: “*It is the customer, it is actually really just the customer that, and some internal meetings, and then the customer that controls the daily decisions*” (R7). From the quotes above the respondents express that the customer plays a big role for the business deals and the daily decisions which implies that the customer is central for how decisions are made. When asking in the end of the interview if the respondent wanted to add anything the respondent expressed:

I think that this is connected to the type of business. We live so deeply customer-close the market, so this is, you can't always control what kind of business you work in. /.../ but in our situation, the customer wants this, and it is within that spectrum you get to work and think and steer the decisions from this. So, I think different businesses also require different things. I think it could be like this. (R7)

It was expressed during the interviews that all the roles in this company are characterised by a big focus on sales and customer contact. As one of our respondents said, “*Being a consultant*

is never to be anything but your latest delivery” (R11). Furthermore, everyone described their roles as being social roles that builds on customer relations.

5.2. Organisational elements that affects decision-making

This section lay out organisational and cultural aspects that shapes the respondents everyday work. These aspects are frameworks within their roles and encouragement towards autonomy and feedback.

5.2.1. Encouragement towards autonomy

The respondents expressed that there are well-formulated frameworks for everyone in their roles which makes it clear what is expected. There was a common positive attitude towards the frameworks that exists for each role because they constitute tools that facilitates and support their most common tasks. The recruitment process was highlighted as supportive in what decisions to make since they are based on facts and relevant information about the candidates from the tests they conduct in the recruitment process. It was emphasised that they must put aside the gut feeling and try to be objective, particularly when making decisions during the recruitment process to be open-minded and non-discriminatory. Besides emphasising the clear frameworks that exists for every role they expressed a contentment over having a freedom and independence within these frames. During the interviews, it was highlighted that everyone has an individual budget every month and work on commission, which to some extent controls and puts pressure on them because they must make a certain amount of money. The respondents explain that they work partly on commission connected to an individual budget each month. On the other hand, how they reach this goal is totally up to them, and how to make the right decisions that will lead them in the direction towards their goals is their own responsibility.

I see it like this, the company has hired me to make money within my business area. My mission is to invoice X SEK each month through my dealings, how I do that is my business. It is my own responsibility to prearrange with clients, make the business happen and close the deals. (R2)

When asking the respondents to describe their decisional freedom in their role they claim that they have a high decisional freedom, by being given a lot of room and mandate to make decisions on their own. None of the managers are authoritarian leaders and they experience a big opportunity to affect decisions in the company by pursuing their own initiatives.

You are quickly released in running these big business dealings with your customers. I do not feel that I must go and check with my boss when I might be looking at how a deal could look like, a mission, or what we say it should cost or what should be included in a deal. I feel that I have a mandate to make decisions with my clients or even with colleagues. Yes, I have the mandate to make decisions about it. (R9)

Many of the respondents refer to their decisional freedom as a large frame with clear intentions. Within this frame they are set free to use any kind of tools or strategies they like to reach their intended goals.

I have the freedom in what decisions I make in my own brand. All the candidates I contact strengthen my network, strengthen myself, my own success as well as in how fast I proactively can go. If I do not work enough, I will not succeed in my role and my team or my boss will not be happy with me. So, I have a high degree of influence in my decisions-making in relation to different areas. (R4)

They are expected to drive their business deals forward individually and can do that with no or little advice from their manager or others. They can independently choose their customers, decide for themselves how to reach their individual budget and hence how they manage and plan their time in the most beneficial way for themselves. A recurrent view among the respondents is that they have a unique way of working since they work so independently and free in their roles as well as being able to actualise their own ideas and working strategies so easily.

You almost feel like you are an entrepreneur here as under an umbrella. So, it is extremely much freedom under responsibility and very much like you never get hit on your fingers for doing something wrong. It is rather like quick, wrong, fun and new thinking, compared to an organisation with fifty-five different people or a manager standing and screaming. (R12)

When discussing how much mandate they have in their decision-making the respondents emphasised the corporate culture. The culture in this company is characterised by encouraging co-workers to make decisions on their own and try out ideas. The respondents explained decisional freedom by referring to a flexible and dynamic culture which means that they do not need support from their leaders to make decisions in their everyday work. Further they explain that this way of working (putting a lot of responsibility on the employees and being accountable

for reaching a budget every month) is not for everyone to like and be comfortable in. Employees who do not like that way of working, where you lead yourself freely and in solitary towards your goals, would not enjoy working within the organisation. There is also a common understanding in the company that they are not supposed to handle everything on their own and should not make decisions they do not feel comfortable with. The respondents highlight that it is expected from them to find out the information they need to make decisions that are cost effective and in line with the values of the company, but if they experience that they for some reason cannot make this kind of decision they are expected to ask for help.

5.2.2. Feedback

When asking how they experienced the decisional climate the respondents often highlighted that the culture affect how they make decisions. There was a common understanding that they have an open, encouraging, allowing and including culture because they always want to support, guide and boost each other performances and decisions. One example of how they support each other is by sharing knowledge and competence in scrum meeting every Monday and Friday. Recruiters and consultants have regular scrum meetings together to discuss how the previous week went and what they should focus on upcoming week. They discuss their current state in the recruitment processes and share candidates with each other if they are more relevant for other processes. They also share success- and fail stories during the scrum meetings. If someone made a mistake during the week they share this even if it is scary because that is how they do it at this company, it is a part of their culture. When they share failures with each other they get a pat on their shoulders and other colleagues will learn how to avoid making the same mistake. The respondents refer to a culture where everyone is allowed to ask for help and consolidate with colleagues in everyday business. As one of our interview partners expressed it:

We have such a great team feeling here too so I would probably say that it is in nature to ask about most things here. I ask colleagues before I post ads "Can you proofread? Can you just check that nothing is wrong?". Even if I feel very confident in things so, it is like built into our business. We have a feedback culture, which is to ask and give each other feedback. (R4)

During the interviews, it was clearly stated that they experience a strong sense of feedback culture which according to them is about there being a common acceptance that they should be open for asking and giving feedback every day. They experience that their colleagues always have a willingness to help each other and discuss important matters. Further, the respondents

experience a high level of trust and emphasise being prestige less in the decision-making in a culture that is “allowing” (R1), by admitting their mistakes to each other and learning from them on individual and organisational level. They have a common understanding in the company that there is not a right or wrong way to do things because every action and decision is a valuable experience since it will encourage them to develop.

5.3. Self-leadership

This section first presents the company's aim with self-leadership and the tools they use to reach their aim. It is followed by the respondents' description and experiences of self-leadership which is distinguished by several factors adopted to every individual.

5.3.1. Want to be different within their branch

Positive aspects are highlighted by having a self-leading work structure and environment within the company. It creates the ability for employees to make situational decisions. This is stressed to be a positive effect for the company since every customer business operation and transaction is unique and demands different management. The company wants to be different from others within the consultancy practice. It is a competitive advantage to customize their business collaborations with their customers and towards the market. One aspect explaining the importance of this is that while working with people sudden changes in business cooperatives are not rare. Customers or other collaborators sometimes quickly change their minds in different matters and this demands quick and situational decisions from the company side. Working through a self-leadership makes it possible for the company to be more mobile in their business deals.

Another positive aspect which comes with the practice of self-leadership is a flatter organisational structure. When every employee is a self-leader a formal leadership is not needed to the same extent as it is in a company with more hierarchical levels and traditional type of leadership. However, leaders are still needed but to a lower extent and in a different way. The regional-, team- and operations managers are more coaching and supporting rather than delegating towards the employees. They involve the employees in strategic business decisions and encourage employees to come to them for help if they feel stuck in a situation and need advice.

I think this is an entrepreneurial company. You are given the possibility to manage your own business endeavours and still be a part of something bigger. That was my picture of the company before I started working here and it turned out to be the truth. (R8)

The company claim to be different than others within the consulting business due to their entrepreneurial ways of working. The employees are given the opportunity to develop in their decision-making in another way than in other companies because of their entrepreneurial and independent way of working.

5.3.2. Self-leading education and tools given to the employees within the company

There are different tools and techniques the company uses to sustain the self-leading environment within the company. When new employees are to enter the company, self-leadership is discussed in the very first job interview. This is done to make sure that the new recruits are to fit in to their self-leading work environment with a high decisional freedom. It is important that the company recruits people who have personal and professional qualities that enables them to keep their motivational level high in an autonomous working role. The company further requires all employees to participate in an internally created education with focus on self-leadership. The education is a two-day training with a month's gap in between. The first session is a lecture focusing on stress, work-life-balance, prioritisation and planning of one's individual work. During the one month, in between the employees have been given individual self-leading assignments and tools to work with until next session where these are to be discussed and reflected upon. This is a way for the company to highlight the importance of being able to manage a sustainable self-leadership and decisional behaviour.

The self-leadership course is much about creating awareness of your own stress-levels, how you manage it and prioritise to find a sustainable balance. It is also about giving and receiving feedback from others and creating understanding of what you can affect and not. You are given the information and tools. The rest is up to you. (R7)

The education is described to have given the term "self-leadership" more often used casually among the employees daily while interacting at the office. This education is taken once with the aim to make sure every employee is working according a value-creating self-leadership on a daily basis each employee has an individual meeting with their operations manager. The agenda on these meetings is to give the employee time to explain what has happened the last week and what is about to happen the next. This gives the employee an opportunity to ask for

feedback or advice from their manager. Other than these meetings and the education there is no other formal ways the company highlights the term self-leadership. However, the term self-leadership has become a much-used word in the company informal internal rhetoric.

We are not talking about the specific term “self-leadership” on formal scheduled time. It is there all the time under the surface on our weekly meetings. We are asked if there is something we are struggling with this week or if we feel that we have control over our business deals. So, in that way we are continuously asked how we are managing and that is directly connected to how we are handling our self-leadership. (R5)

The company's meeting structure is described as important for the employees in their work. The meetings are explained not to always be needed some weeks and that this is probably a good sign. They experience their self-leadership to be successful when high autonomy level and less need to ask for consultancy from others within the company.

5.3.3. Employees' view and experiences of self-leadership

The respondents state to be unsure what the specific definition of self-leadership is in accordance to the company. However, they claim to have a clear understanding of what their personal definition of self-leadership is, based on their working experience within the company. It is further stated that every employees' self-leadership is different since every individual is different. It is about several key aspects which are knowing ones' goals, knowing ones' decisional mandate, sustaining a healthy work balance, motivation and continuous development.

Every employees' decisional mandate is big, and it is important to know what you can and cannot affect, which they refer to as the employees' circle of influence. The respondents express that an adequate self-leadership is when they have a clear image of what they can affect, and in turn to use this mandate to shape their own professional roles and business deals successfully. It is further about autonomously managing your business dealings in a way where you create value to the company without having to ask for permission or advice from a manager.

Every employee has a budget goal each month and it is up to themselves to decide how they handle their customer business dealing to reach their goal. Sustaining a healthy work balance in this is largely about and prioritisation and scheduling of your everyday work. The free

entrepreneur-like roles the employees have, demands them to prioritise their work well. They need to see what is most important in every situation they are in and prioritise the most important tasks first-hand. They need to be flexible in their planning of their days since working in a customer-oriented branch can mean sudden change of plans. To plan and prioritise ones' work every day in a sustainable and balanced way is required so that there is not too high or low work burden. Being able to say no to new cooperation when the agenda is full is important to lower the stress levels and to keep the motivation towards ones' work. Having a good self-leadership means to create and keep ones' motivation towards ones' work as well as asking for supervision when experiencing loss of motivation.

The responsibility lies on ourselves in reaching motivation and driving us forward. However, this does not mean that we must manage all by ourselves. If we feel like we don't have any motivation and don't know what to do, we are expected to reflect upon what the cause is. We are then expected to approach a manager or co-worker. We all have a shared responsibility in this. (R8)

To ask for help when needed is important even in an organisation with focus on self-leadership. Asking for supervision when needed is also an important self-leading ability to have. It is important that the employees seek supervision when experiencing the need to develop in their professional role. It is further beneficial for the organisational development that the employees seek advice from others to grow and reach new insights in their work.

5.4. The decision-making process

This section presents the respondents decision-making processes and what aspects that affects their decision-making. First fast decision-making processes are described followed by slow.

5.4.1. Immediate, fast and intuitive decision-making when experience

A recurrent answer the respondents give throughout the interviews of how they usually make decisions is that they make intuitive decisions that personally feels right to them. They refer to following "the gut feeling" when they describe what feels right while decision-making. The organisation is described as a workplace where the employees themselves decide where to put focus and do that in the direction that themselves believes are right. This enables the employees to make intuitive decisions based on their individual triggers and to make decisions using their personality, interests or aims. Because of this individual decisional freedom, the decision-

making is often characterised by their intuition in everyday decisions. It is a common idea by the respondents that intuitive decisions come from previous working experience.

We are working with people and therefore anything can happen. A client might drop out from an agreement or a job-candidate might change their mind all the sudden. There are lots of uncertainties all the time. We need to be able to make quick decisions in these situations and not lose pace. Using your intuitive ability is highly required as much as the hard facts. In the beginning of my career this was hard, now I naturally just make these decisions using my gut. (R11)

I am a fast decision-maker and run on intuition, both at work and in my private life. I have worked within this industry for almost ten years now and with experience comes faster decisions based on just a feeling I get I guess. (R8)

If a situation feels familiar, they recognize and commonly do the same next time. Following ones' intuition is also mentioned at times when the working processes are similar to each other. Another highlighted aspect in why intuition is used while decision-making is that it is required when working with people. One cannot make decisions based on facts alone since the human factors plays an influencing role when understanding the other party while making business or compliance. To create sustainable contact and relationships with clients and candidates requires empathetic understanding of the other party. In these situations, the respondents make decisions based on their intuition.

5.4.2. Spontaneity, impulsiveness and impatience

The respondents' individual decision-making is also described in terms of impulsiveness, spontaneity and impatience. It is stressed that they are more impatient- rather than patient decision-makers and that all facts regarding a choice rarely are being considered when deciding in general. They rather make a fast non-completely thought through decision than no decision at al. They describe a frustrated feeling if there is too little on their agenda. Not having enough business processes in the pipeline at the same time is described as highly frustrating. The reason for the risen frustration at these times are their will to see results to their work. The respondent further stress that fast decisions are usually how they decide regarding everyday work situations, regarding both smaller or bigger business matters. They are fast deciders by nature and work by the idea that if they think or reflect more they might overthink things and that in turn can create unnecessary hassle.

I rather make a quick decision than none. I am raised in the military for many years, so I might get it from there. If you don't make a quick decision - you die. This suits me very well because I think I am not able to think or decide in another way. (R2)

I usually don't have to have 100% facts before deciding. I do not have the interest or time to dig into every little detail before deciding. I want results. In my previous jobs, I have had the tendency in getting leadership roles because of my impatience I guess. But here, we all are like that. (R3)

Deciding by impulse is described as a common decisional behaviour where starting new individual projects fast and without deeper analysis are common. The respondents state that they rather make risky quick decisions that turns out to be unsuccessful than not to try at all. The employees prefer to make mistakes and apologize after than not daring to try new ideas or projects. Bad decisions are described as the ones who are too fast, spontaneous and not enough thought through, however these decisions cannot be eluded. Mistakes are described as more easily fixed by fast decision-makers than by analytic, reflective and more rational deciders. It is stated that it is important to dare to make fast, risky decisions without analysis to reach results.

5.4.3. Slow and challenging decision-making

There are aspects stated to affect the decision-making process by making it slower and longer time-wise. When employees enter new terrain and encounter situations they have not experienced before and are not used to, the decision-making process tend to have a slower quality. It is further described as challenging to make quick decisions when others might be affected by ones' own decision. People who might be affected within the employees' decisional range are current or future clients, colleagues or future recruitment candidates. The reason this affects the employees' decisional behaviour in a way where the decision-making process tends to be slower is because of the emotional impact it has on the decision-maker. To be affected by emotions when making decisions are described as challenging because it lowers the level of logical thinking during a decision-making process.

I would never want to make decisions that creates friction between me and my colleagues. If I choose to work from home the entire day I want to make sure that my colleagues think that is okay. That is not a superfast decision I make, I want to

check with everyone first and reflect how I would react if we were in opposite roles.

(R6)

Another collegial aspect the respondents claim to have a slowing effect on their decision-making processes is internal team projects. Internal projects with several employees in charge is described as an example of both challenging and slower decision-making processes. It is described as challenging to make everyone's opinions through so that all involved are satisfied with the ending result. The project participants often have individual opinions, and this can be challenging they explain. The essence of the challenge is described to lie in the frustration that can occur while slow decision-making processes.

I think our work becomes slow when we collaborate because we are so many who are joining the decision-making process. The whole thing can feel unnecessarily protracted at those times which can be so frustrating. I like to make quick decisions because that is required here to keep up. (R10)

The employees seek advice from each other or a manager regarding decision-making processes they experience as challenging. When seeking advice from others within the company they approach colleagues who they perceive as more experienced within the challenging decisional field. It is common to ask someone who are older than you and have a longer time-period of work experience. When new within the company employees naturally seek more advice than those who have more experience within the company. The respondents explain they experience decisions with an emotional connection to them as challenging which therefore also leads them to seek advice in these matters.

5.4.4. Reflection

The respondents' states that they are not reflecting much regarding how they make decisions or how they lead themselves throughout their everyday choices. The respondents impulsive and spontaneous personalities are further a contributing factor to their fast and unreflective behaviour. However, there are situations where they do stop to reflect. A common explanation to when this occurs is when personal emotions arise regarding a specific work decision. Standing before a decision that will or might have impact on others, such as colleagues, clients or candidates, the respondents stop to reflect. If there is a possibility that negative consequences will affect others because of a specific decision they make they feel the need to reflect first. In

some cases, they experience that they might have decided too quickly and therefore not as thought through as it should have been. In these situations, the respondents reflect upon that specific decision process afterwards, especially if others have been affected by this decision. Below is a quotation presented from a respondent mentioning the use of system 1 and 2 without the interviewer mentioning the concepts during the interview.

I think I use system 1 all the time in my decision-making but much more rarely system 2. Because of this, decisions can be made too quickly sometimes. That is when I must stop, go back and reflect what went wrong. (R11)

Decision-making without reflection can result in failure. Business deals may be closed too fast by the employee without pre-reflection of a decision. The deal might have ended up bigger than it did if the employee had waited with the closing decision a little longer to see the full customer need and potential of the business deal. Decision-making without reflection is further described as when others are affected by that decision, with or without the decision-maker seeing this beforehand. At these times the respondents state they need to spend more time on reflection during a decision-making process. An analytic discussion will be held below to discuss the employees' decision-making and self-leadership as well as what factors are affecting.

6. Discussion

An analytic discussion is held to fulfil the purpose and answer the research question of the study. Factors from the empirical results affecting the employees' experiences of decision-making will be highlighted and discussed, together or in comparison to previous research and theory. Further, a discussion is held to deeper understand the impact the consulting practice, organisational structure, decisional frame and mandate have on the decision-making processes of employees.

6.1. The concept of self-leadership

The conceptual definitions of self-leadership by Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) and Manz, Anderson and Prussia (1998) are in line with the understanding and experiences regarding what self-leadership is within the employees' role in the case company. That is, self-leadership within organisations differ from self-management in terms where self-leading employees connect self-set goals to own motivational influence and performance towards reaching them. A mutual view between the employees and Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) is further that self-leadership include individuals performing through their own values and personality traits. Therefore, every employees' self-leadership is different from the other. The employees are pleased with the concept of self-leading themselves throughout their workdays and to create their own schedules and work days. In agreement with Pircher (2016), they believe that creating their own work routines through a self-leadership, inadequate decision-making can be avoided at a higher level. The cause for this is experienced in line with what Manz (1986) highlights of employees who act through a self-leadership are simultaneously acting through a self-influence towards a self-set goal they personally believe in. It has been proven that employees who act in line with their own beliefs experience a higher well-being which in turn is connected to making less misjudgements while decision-making. Further, Neck and Manz (1996) in agreement with the employees' experiences, state other positive aspects such as higher job-satisfaction, enthusiasm towards ones' work and higher quality in work performance.

6.1.1. To practice self-leadership

The self-regulating process that is described by Manz (1986) to make employees aware of their own self-leadership (see Appendix 3) is difficult to find among behaviours within the company. Every employee's self-leadership through decision-making is different as well as it is affected

by different factors depending on the individual. Finding a pattern like the self-regulating process loop by Manz (1986) cannot be done in this company. This is due to the different expressions of definitions of the concept as well as their own experiences of it. Participation in the self-leadership course did not provide the employees in how self-leadership is best practiced in accordance to previous research. It gave the employees the opportunity to develop an individualized self-leadership that fits just them.

In agreement with Manz (1983) however, it is claimed that working through a highly autonomous and self-leading role might not be suitable for everyone. The company is highly selective in the recruitment process with the aim to recruit employees who gain motivation by working in a self-leading role with a large decisional mandate of ones' work days. It is claimed that employees must have the ability to work in a self-leading role efficiently to enter the company. It might be difficult to reach a full understanding of potential recruits have the self-leading qualities the company is looking for in a job interview. However, as Manz (1983; 1986) claims, every employee can be taught to become a successful self-leader. Employees can develop their self-leadership skills through training. The employees share this estimation where they experience themselves as better self-leaders than before the given training within the company.

There is a mutual experience that the company's formal leadership have a large impact on sustaining a successful self-leadership among them. As Bryant and Kazan (2013) emphasise, formal leadership is crucial when creating a successful and sustainable self-leadership among a workforce. It is agreed that to reach efficient decision-making in autonomous roles, formal leaders within organisations must engage employees in co-creating and implementing individual ideas and goals. Further, it is of importance that the formal management are open in their communication towards the employees and act through a self-leadership to influence the employees to do the same. The employees, along with Pircher (2016), claim to work through a successful and sustainable self-leadership due to them being allowed to make miss-judgements in their decision-making. It is also important that they feel trust and support from other company members in their decision-making. It is mutual experienced that the formal management within the organisation is encouraging and supporting towards the employees in leading themselves rather than delegating work to them. This formal leadership is important to sustain within the company to keep high dedication levels towards their work. Likewise, Bryant and Kazan (2013) stress the importance of formal management giving feedback towards employees as well as

influencing the employees to give feedback towards each other. The employees consent with Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) in the fact that self-leadership could never have existed within the organisation without the encouragement, feedback and support from the formal management.

Having every new employee participating in the self-leadership course has proven to put the term self-leadership within the company rhetoric's. Bryant and Kazan (2013) emphasise this as a major organisational benefit. There are experienced improvements in their own decision-making processes after having participated in the internal self-leadership course. One contributory factor is explained to be the concept of self-leadership being naturally talked about on a daily basis among the employees. Another aspect that is highlighted is the trust they experience from the formal management in making their own decisions. The formal management want to make it clear that the employees does not have to ask them for advice on ideas they believe in. Instead, they are encouraged to commence each individual business idea as value-adding to the company. In line with what Neck and Manz (1996) emphasise, the formal leaders within the company believes the employees will gain job satisfaction and decreased stress levels by working self-leading and autonomously in their decision-making. One important contributor in making the autonomy possible within the employees' roles are the weekly meetings between them and formal managers. The meetings are held to keep a continuous communication between them. It is a well-functioning platform for the employees to seek feedback or advice in experienced decisive difficulties. Bryant & Kazan (2013) together with the formal management within the company believes that the meetings are required in such autonomous roles. Without scheduled meetings, the employees would be working even more autonomously and within an even bigger decisional frame. The management of the company along with Bryant and Kazan (2013) stress that employees having a too large decisional frame can result in the employees started putting their own personal interest before the company's. Kahneman (2011) highlight that a shift of employees' mind-set like that is often unconsciously led and can be explained through research of psychology.

6.1.2. System 1 and 2 while decision-making

Kahneman (2011) stress that system 1 and 2 within the Dual-System Theory are describing two opposed mind-sets used while decision-making. Simplified, system 1 is characterised by faster decisions based on intuition and impulsiveness while system 2 is instead characterised by slower decisions based on logical reasoning and reflection. Kahneman (2011) emphasise that

decision-making through system 1 is common to be unconsciously made by individuals. Heuristics or bias give individuals a fast intuition or feeling of a specific situation where it is common to make decision-making based on previous experiences. However, Kahneman (2011) highlight that individuals can create awareness of ones' own influences from heuristics and bias through training. And, by being aware of what influences ones' system 1, individuals can make more adequate decision-making.

After having participated in the self-leadership course, the employees described to have a higher awareness of their self-leading ability and what is influencing their decision-making process and not. The term self-leadership was explained to start being used within the company rhetoric after completing the course. Strack and Deutsch (2015) stress that using system 2 in the decision-making process is contradicting to intuitive, impulsive decision-making influenced by previous experiences. Decision-making led by system 2 is instead a deliberate and controlled process where the decision-maker is being analytic and logical. This process therefore tends to be slower than system 1. The decisional behaviour within the case company is described as more mindful, logical and analytic when entering situations, they have not experienced before. In unexperienced situations, they do not act by impulse or intuition. Instead, they describe to feel a need to reflect, analyse deeper than usual and sometimes ask a co-worker or a manager for consultation. They describe entering new work situations in line with how Samson and Voyer (2014) define it, when system 2 is activated during the decision-making process. Their description being, individuals using system 2 when interpreting a situation as critical and challenging to manage without a deeper analysis. Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011) in line with Pircher (2016) stress that individuals can lead themselves towards a mind-set where system 2 is more often activated.

6.2. Impact of the consultancy practice and organisational structure

The employees share similar experiences while reflecting upon their decisional behaviour within their professional role. They state that, they mostly are quick in their decision-making and that intuition and impulsiveness is a result of their personality traits but mostly from previous work experience. Further, they state that the consultancy business they are in requires fast decision-making processes in their everyday work. The consulting practice is described to be customer controlled and requires the employees to always be relevant for the customers' needs. In line with Vieira and Proença (2010), the employees express the importance in sustaining good customer relationships as a consultant. Their decision-making processes orbit

around the customer needs and the relationship between themselves and the clients. In line with the description of characteristics of the consultancy practice by Machuca and Costa (2012), the employees experiencing facing requirements in being fast and flexible in their decision-making processes concerning their customer dealings. They describe the main reason for this to be the aspect of the customer being in high control of their business dealings.

Among the employees, it is agreed upon having a large decisional mandate in their professional roles with simultaneously having a close contact and support from the formal management. They describe how they plan and prioritise their workdays and dealings independently with no supervision or guidance from others. Further, they describe their roles as having such high decisional freedom they almost feel like entrepreneurs within their roles. Barney and Busenitz (1997) highlight the impact employees' decisional freedom have on their decision-making. It is stated that entrepreneurs decision-making processes tend to be led by intuition, impulse and little analysis. The decision-making process is therefore often fast in its character. It is stated that employees' decisional behaviour is affected by the level of decisional mandate. Employees usually have a tighter decisional frame to act within since their mandate is limited.

The employee experience of their decisional mandate as being large is something the formal management wants to encourage and sustain. The employees highlight that they do not have a clear job description listing what their responsibilities are. However, it is clear what frame of budget they aim to reach each month. Then, it is up to each employee to form their work dealings in the direction towards the monetary goal budget. The formal leaders encourage them to make their own business dealings and decisions, so they are experiencing themselves as self-leading in every way they can. Barney and Busenitz (1997) and Tversky and Kahneman (2011) highlight that flat organisational entrepreneurial structures where the employees have large decisional mandate, the heuristic of overconfidence is especially important for the employees to have. Overconfidence affect the decision-making process in a way where the decision-maker dare to take risks with little analysis. Overconfidence is stated as efficient for autonomously working consultants to have in complex decision-making processes to force business dealings forward. However, Barney and Busenitz (1997) emphasise that heuristics, such as overconfidence, can be unfavourable in situations since there is a high risk of inadequate decision-making when being overconfident. The employees agree upon them having an organisational structure with an entrepreneurial way of working and that daring to take risks during decision-making is vital in many situations to reach results. They highlight the

uncertainty in working within the consultancy practice since clients can change their minds or cancel business meetings unexpectedly.

6.2.1. The decisional frame - freedom and limitations

Tversky and Kahneman (1981) and Skulimowski (2011) highlight the importance of employees understanding their decisional frames within a professional role. The employees are not mentioning the decisional frame they need to stay within during interviews. They state that fast, intuitive, impulsive and spontaneous decisions are most common within their decisional behaviour and that slower, reflective and analytical decision-making are seldom used in their everyday work. The fast decisions they make are based on previous experiences and that within their decisional mandate they are quick. They do not seek guidance often from colleagues or managers since they themselves know their own work dealings the most.

Skulimowski (2011) stress that a decisional frame can both mean freedom and limitations depending on its context. It is further stressed that experienced large decisional frames with high decisional mandate can be limited by organisational structures, standards or rules that needs to be followed by the decision-maker. The employees experience a decisional frame where both freedom and limitations lie in their own self-leadership. The formal leaders within the company are distinct of their expectations on the employees' decision-making. The employees also find it clear what is expected of them. Skulimowski (2011) further emphasise that innovative ideas and creativity are occurring when employees are unaware of ideas or opinions of others, especially those within the same institution. It is expressed that, as a consultancy company, they are different within their branch from others on the market. The difference lies in their total consultancy offerings towards their customers. They want to be able to give customized consultation to each customer. The employees express that this way of working requires creativity and innovative decision-making to fulfil the needs of each customer. Tversky and Kahneman (1981) and Skulimowski (2011) accentuates that having a large decisional freedom of ones' own work where opinions of others are not required in order to perform are crucial for creative and sustainable decision-making processes.

7. Conclusions

This section presents conclusions drawn from completed study where the purpose is fulfilled, and the research question is answered. The first part presents conclusions regarding the employees' experiences of their decision-making. It also brings forward the employees' experiences of an autonomous, self-leading role as well as their decisional mandate and frame. The last part presents an identified duality of the employees decision-making behaviour due to the organisational structure. Finally, contributions to the field of SHRM are presented.

7.1. The employees' experiences of their decisional frame

The study shows that the employees experience their own decisional mandate as large while at the same time, within a clear decisional frame where individual monthly monetary goals are set by formal management. The autonomous roles have evolved and been shaped as an outcome of the flat organisational structure. Additionally, the employees have a large decisional mandate to operate within as an effect of the organisational structure. The employees are free and self-leading in their decisions, as long as their decision-making is not crossing the set decisional frame (the monetary budget). The employees operate freely within their frame. However, their decision-making and performance must lead towards the budget.

The study further shows that, to be able to work accordingly to a self-leading role in a flat organisational structure, formal leaders must exist and be accessible for the employees. The role of the formal leaders must have a supporting function rather than delegating, which makes them a cornerstone for the practice of self-leadership. Further, formal leaders must have a supportive function to encourage the employees to fully practice and develop self-leadership. Employees operating within their decisional frames, heuristics from previous work experiences are mainly being used. The practice of self-leadership is required when entering unfamiliar situations without previous experience.

The employees experience their most common decision-making as a fast, intuitive and an impulsive behaviour. It is described as not only controlled by their personalities and heuristics, such as work experience, but also being affected by their individual decisional frames. We can identify that the most challenging decision-making processes the employees experience are the ones' where others are involved or potentially affected by a decision. Additionally, the employees experience challenges during unexperienced situations. The formal management

encourage the employees to be self-leaders within their decisional frames, this is affecting the employees' experiences of their decision-making. It creates a feeling of having a large decisional freedom and mandate.

7.2. Duality in the employees' decisional behaviour

A duality can be seen in the employees' decisional behaviours. On one side, they are fast, intuitive, impulsive, impatient and spontaneously led. This behaviour is under influence of system 1 and is the most common prevailing decision-making behaviour. Here, the employees are operating within their own decisional frame where they work alone towards their monetary goals. On the contrary side, the employees decision-making process is led by slower, reflective, analytic and logical reasoning where employees occasionally seek consultation from others. This type of decisional behaviour is under influence of system 2 and used when employees are under the experience of decisive challenges in unexperienced situations.

We can conclude that the duality and switching nature of the employees decision-making processes are due to the organisational structure within the consultancy practice. It is not only individual heuristics that controls decision-making. There is a duality in the structure of what decisional mandate that are being given to the employees. The formal management wants the employees to practice self-leadership in terms of being fully autonomous within their roles, making their own decisions without consultation from others. However, there is a set frame the employees should operate within. The frame is the monetary budget each employee has to reach each month. The budget is reached when the employees have consulted enough customers during a month. The employees are commuting in their decision-making because of this. That is, working autonomously through with a feeling of decisional freedom while simultaneously keeping themselves within their decisional frame to reach their goals.

Furthermore, we can conclude that the employees are commuting between their own individual decision-making and decisions that must be made that are beneficial for the organisation, because they cannot avoid the organisation. Practicing self-leadership means a higher focus on the individual itself, but in this case, it is shown that they cannot avoid that they are in an organisation. Being in an organisation means that there are other people the employees cannot decide over, and decisions of every person affect others, hence employees must stay adaptive to others. An agile and fast changing environment within the consultancy practice also puts pressure on staying adaptive and being fast in decision-making. Being in an organisation and

agile environment could mean that the employees are not as individual in their decision-making as they would prefer because their decisions are affected by the organisation they are in.

7.3. Contribution to existing research and the field of SHRM

This study contributes to the lack of knowledge regarding decision-making and self-leadership of employees in a consultancy role. Previous research does not discuss the impact of organisational structures and its context as a prerequisite for employees receiving higher decisional mandate. Hence, this study fills that research gap with increased knowledge of employees' experiences of their own decision-making within their professional role.

Furthermore, the importance of this study lies in understanding the value and yield of employees experiencing a decisional freedom towards their work and performance. This research provides practitioners within the field of HRM with insights about different decisional behaviours of employees in a consultancy firm. Additionally, how self-leadership can be positively affecting coping with decision-making. These insights could be beneficial when developing adequate decision-making in order to reach set goals. Further, how employees' decision-making and development of self-leadership benefit organisational development in different ways.

8. Limitations and suggestions for proceeding research

Important to have in mind is that this research is conducted in one consultancy company where self-leadership is consciously practiced. Including more companies within the consultancy practice could give the research more nuanced and deeper understanding of self-leadership and decision-making in more general terms. The organisational settings within this case company makes it possible for the employees to successfully practice self-leadership. That could be different in other organisations with different organisational structures. Furthermore, decision-making and self-leadership can be difficult to grasp because they are humane processes that can be difficult to measure. Different situational and environmental factors within the consultancy practice are affecting decision-making which in turn makes it difficult to include all aspects of adequate decision-making and self-leadership.

In order to reach a deeper understanding about employees' experiences of their own decision-making and self-leadership within the consultancy practice, proceeding research needs to be conducted. Proceeding studies could look deeper into professional roles with high decisional mandate and autonomy to further understand how the organisational structure is affecting the decisional mandate, and in turn the decision-making process. The context for this study was the consultancy practice, however, it could be relevant to study other organisations where the professional roles also are characterised by independence and autonomy. This, because it would be interesting to see how different organisational structures could affect decision-making and self-leadership. Such as, if the systems are being used in the same way in an organisation with hierarchies and formal leaders. Further research should investigate the role of self-leadership in different organisational structures to see to what extent it is possible to practice and develop skills within self-leadership in different contexts.

Furthermore, to reach a deeper understanding of decision-making at work a suggestion is to examine the specific outcomes of employees' decision-making processes. This could be done by measuring to what extent employees use different decision-making styles in different situations. A study like this could provide more knowledge about how decisions could be made in the most beneficial way for the individual and organisation.

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Appendix 1 - Interview guide

Introduction part

- Describe your professional role
- Describe a normal work week
- For how long have you been employed in the company?

Main part

Characteristic decisions for the professional role

- What kind of decisions is most common within your role?
- What aspects are important for you while decision-making?
- If you were to disassemble a typically occurring decision, how would the decisional process look like?
- What decisions do you consider are the most important in your role?
- Do you reflect upon your made decisions? Why? Why not?
- When do you reflect?
- Tell me about situations where you make quick decisions.
- Tell me about situations where you make slow decisions.

Decision-making behaviour

- Who are you as a decision-maker? /How do you perceive yourself as a decision-maker?
- When do you make decisions of a spontaneous character?
- When do you make intuitive decisions where your gut-feeling is guiding you?
- When do you make rational decisions?
- When do you seek advice from others before you make a decision?
- When do you avoid making decisions?
- What do you think is a good decision?
- When do you feel satisfied with your decisions?
- What do you consider being a bad decision?
- When do you feel dissatisfied with your decisions?
- Could you describe different situations where you experienced the decision-making as challenging? How do you go about making challenging decisions?

Decision-making climate

- How much space, capacity and decisional freedom do you have in your decision-making?
- What is expected from you in your decision-making?
- Are you encouraged to make your own decisions or to make decisions together as a team?
- How do you experience your colleagues decision-making? /How do you think your colleagues are making decisions?
- When do you experience pressure of time in your decision-making?
- How do you experience the decision-making climate here at the company?

Theme 2 - Self-leadership

- What is the meaning of self-leadership at this company?
- Why did you start talk about self-leadership?
- How do you talk about self-leadership at the company? Formal, informal?
- How do you set up goals for yourself and your own work?
- What is your method for achieving your goals?

Finishing part

- Would you like to add something? Anything else you think is important to highlight that I have not asked about?

Appendix 2 - Illustration of date and duration of the interviews

Interviews	Date	Duration
Respondent 1	20190320	45 min
Respondent 2	20190320	45 min
Respondent 3	20190320	50 min
Respondent 4	20190320	60 min
Respondent 5	20190325	60 min
Respondent 6	20190325	60 min
Respondent 7	20190327	60 min
Respondent 8	20190327	45 min
Respondent 9	20190329	55 min
Respondent 10	20190329	60 min
Respondent 11	20190401	60 min
Respondent 12	20190401	60 min
Respondent 13	20190401	50 min
Respondent 14	20190401	45 min

Figure 1: An illustration developed showing the date and duration of the interviews.

Appendix 3 - Figure of System 1 and System 2

	System 1	System 2
Processes	Fast Automatic Nonconscious or preconscious Low effort, high capacity Heuristic Associative	Slow Controlled Conscious High effort, low capacity Analytic Rule-based
Attitudes	Implicit Cultural stereotypes Slow acquisition and change Fast access	Explicit Personal beliefs Fast acquisition and change Slow access
Content	Actual Concrete Contextualised Domain-specific	Hypothetical Abstract Decontextualised Domain-general
Architecture	A set of systems, modular Parallel	A single system Serial
Evolution	Does not use working memory Evolutionarily old Shared with animals Nonverbal	Uses working memory Evolutionarily recent Unique to humans Language involving
Variation	Serves genetic goals ('short leash' control) Independent of general intelligence Little variation across cultures and individuals Relatively unresponsive to verbal instruction	Serves individual goals ('long-leash' control) Linked to general intelligence Variable across cultures and individuals Responsive to verbal instruction

Figure 2: “Features commonly ascribed to the two systems” adapted from Frankish (2010)

Appendix 4 - Theoretical framework for Self-leadership

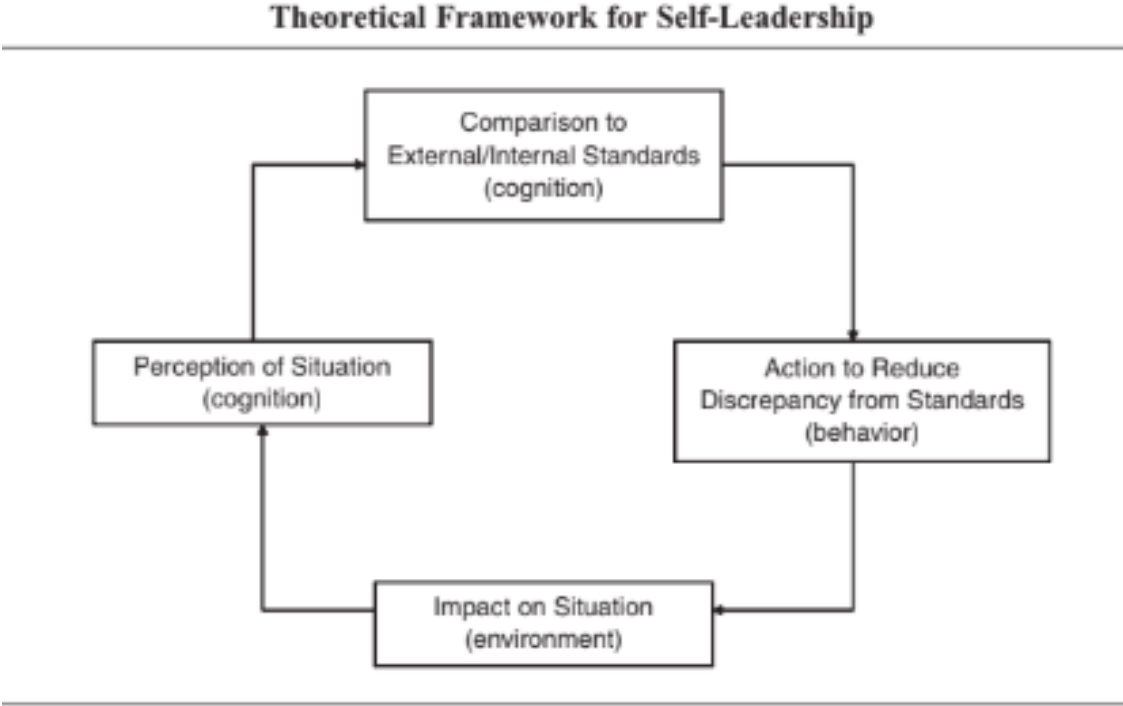


Figure 3: “Theoretical framework for Self-leadership” adapted from Manz (1986)