

THE MOTIVATIONAL LEADER

The Motivational Leader: A Self-Determination Approach

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Abstract

This study proposes and qualitatively examines self-determination theory as a new perspective on leadership. The critical incident technique was used to interview 10 leaders and 17 of their employees from four different organizations on their view on motivation. The study shows that the usage of the self-determination theory results in a theory-based motivational view on leadership. Several manners of fulfilling employees' needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are distinguished; all enacted by leaders and/or recognized by their employees. Furthermore, the study provides insight in how the participants reported the balance between fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Implications of the study and suggestions for further research are presented.

Keywords: leadership; motivation; self-determination theory; critical incident technique

Leadership, Motivation and Self-Determination

Decades of leadership literature with attention for traits, behaviour and other aspects of the leader provide extensive knowledge on how leaders can be viewed. In the early seventies, scholars started conceptualizing leadership from a motivational perspective. Current scholars conceptualize effective leadership in terms of one appointed leader or see leadership as a complex, interactive system (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009), but do not consider motivational theories developed after the sixties to explain leadership. Here is postulated that motivation still lies at the heart of leadership. Therefore, the self-determination theory of motivation (SDT), which states that people are motivated by fulfilling their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985), can bridge two gaps. First, SDT bridges the gap between early and contemporary trends in leadership literature by examining leadership from a motivational perspective while acknowledging the complex, interactive character of leadership. Second, SDT can bridge the gap between current theories about the appointed leader and current theories that conceptualize leadership as a complex, interactive system by looking at leadership from the perspective of the leader and the employee and considering their interaction.

Furthermore, decades of leadership research is characterized by a strong focus on the employees' view on who to follow and why (Hiller, DeChurch, Murase, & Doty, 2011). A gap exists of too little attention for leaders' perspectives on leadership, mutuality between leaders and subordinates, and a leaders' perspectives on themselves (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Hiller et al., 2011). Here is stated that this gap can be bridged by interviewing leaders and their subordinates about leadership and motivation. In sum, these three gaps lead this study to the following research question: How do leaders perceive their motivational efforts and how are these efforts perceived

by their subordinates in terms of the self-determination theory? This question is investigated by interviewing leaders and employees from several organizations. Results and theoretical contributions are discussed within the theoretical framework presented below. The study closes with further research implications.

A Short History of Leadership

Until the seventies, the leadership literature consisted of roughly four trends (traits, behaviour, motivation and transaction) that succeeded each other. For the sake of time and space, only the leading theories from those trends are discussed below. This selection is based on the reviews by Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber (2009), Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, & Johnson (2011) and Hiller et al., (2009). For a more in depth review on leadership theories is referred to Bass & Bass (2008).

In the early 20th century, leadership literature was dominated by trait theories (Bass & Bass, 2008; Hernandez et al., 2011), which build on the idea that good leadership derives from leaders' personal characteristics. Although the evidence found was insufficient (Jenkins, 1947), Kirkpatrick & Locke (1991) argued that traits do matter, even though they are not the sole predictor of leadership. In the early fifties, research concluded that effective leadership is not just determined by traits, but also by situations. Behavioural theories focused on describing leadership behaviour that is effective in various situations (Fleishman, 1953).

While attention for situational factors grew, leadership theorists turned to motivational theories to describe leadership. House (1971) introduced the path-goal theory, rooted in the expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964). According to House (1971), employees are motivated by rewards given by leaders. Leaders lay out the path, taking into account situational factors that employees need to follow to achieve valued outcomes or rewards. Though prominent, path-goal theory was not studied as

intensively as the transformational and transactional leadership theory (Hiller et al., 2009), which is also rooted in the expectancy theory on motivation (Burns, 1978 as stated by Hernandez et al., 2011). Transformational and transactional leadership theory postulates that there are eight dimensions of leadership behaviour. Four dimensions of behaviour are transformational and influence employees. The other four dimensions are transactional and monitor and control employees (Bono & Judge, 2004). Bass, Avolio, & Goodheim, (1987) argue that transformational behaviour the results of transactional behaviour augments. This means that the eight dimensions are complementary to each other and need to be in balance.

Meanwhile, the expectancy theory on motivation was not the only ground from which alternative leadership theories were built. Based on a social exchange perspective, the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) theory arose. LMX theory focuses on the dyad between leader and subordinate (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). LMX theory and path-goal theory marked a diversion from merely looking at the leader to explain leadership towards a focus on the follower and the context (Hernandez et al., 2011), which brings us to the more current developments in leadership literature.

Current Theories

After the seventies, leadership literature developed in two directions. First, strategic leadership emerged. Second, several current theories claim that leadership is a complex, interactive system. Besides attention for the leader as source of leadership, attention was given to followers, peers, supervisors, work context and culture within diverse organizations (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Strategic leadership, with a focus on top management, has intensively been studied in the past 25 years (Hiller et al., 2011). Strategic leadership is rooted in the upper echelons theory that postulates that leader's experiences, values and personality

influences their interpretation of strategic situations, which influences their acting in those situations (Hambrick, 2007). This focus on the leader is advocated by Hogan & Kaiser (2005) and Hambrick (2007) by stating that leaders make a considerable difference in organizations, either positive or negative. Strategic leadership theorists took steps to integrate strategic leadership with leadership theories like transformational leadership (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001), but still a call remains to look beyond the leader to understand leadership processes (Hernandez et al., 2011).

Other current leadership theories look beyond the leader for insight in leadership processes. A growing body of literature pays attention to authentic leadership theory (ALT), which is grounded in transformational theories (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). ALT (and other role model theories like spiritual leadership and ethic leadership) proclaims that authentic followers and authentic leaders are necessary for leadership. ALT focuses on the inspiring role a leader has because he knows himself. The leader inspires employees with a positive morale; this means that authentic leadership can only be defined by the grace of authentic followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Even though highly valuable, the theory tends to focus on the example one leader sets, which is not the only role a leader has.

Several theories even state that contemporary leaderships' locus of causality is distributed. Complexity leadership theory (CLT) states that nowadays leadership should be viewed as a complex, interactive dynamic with adaptive outcomes. CLT claims that there are three leadership roles (administrative, enabling and adaptive) and that "these roles are entangled within and across people and actions" (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007, p. 306). Shared leadership theory (SLT) also considers this dynamic, team build leadership. The objective of SLT is to achieve desired organizational or team outcomes, not by being led but rather through leading each other: resulting in a process

where leadership is not just top down, but distributed. Leadership can therefore emerge in an employee as well as in an appointed leader (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Contemporary theories like CLT and SLT step away from a hierarchical structure and acknowledge that power is with the employees.

Re-Inventing the Motivational Approach

This review clarifies two tendencies in leadership literature. First, current theories seem to walk two paths: one remains on the main road of the leader as one appointed person in a hierarchical structure (strategic theories) and the other states that the locus of leadership is distributed in modern, non hierarchical organizations (CLT and SLT). Current theories that acknowledge that leadership lies with the appointed leader as well as the employees (like ALT) tend to have a narrow focus on the role model aspect of leadership. Between these tendencies are limited theories on how employees perceive leaders and leadership beyond a role model.

Second, motivation lies at the heart of leadership. Many prominent leadership theories of the last decades (path-goal theory, transformational/transactional leadership theory, authentic leader theory) can be traced back to Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation. Other leadership studies closely examine behaviour (Hernandez et al., 2011), a core component of motivation. Leadership knows many definitions that have something to do with the "energization and direction of behaviour" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 3), which is the definition of motivation. However, current leadership theories no longer use a motivational approach. Here it is postulated that current leadership theories can benefit from re-inventing a motivational theory approach.

For a motivational theory to add value to current leadership theories, it has to give right to the (non hierarchical) position of the leader and the employee, has to be applicable on higher and lower organizational level, has to be able to address specific

leadership issues and has to be applicable in many situations (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003). Literature on self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985) offers promising prospects. SDT states that people rely on their competence, relatedness and autonomy in order to perform (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). Here, this theory is adapted to find the manner in which leaders and employees describe, recognize and implement aspects of motivation. Until now, the SDT has not been applied in leadership literature. It is unclear whether leaders in the workplace are committed to these principles and how they make sense of their own motivational efforts.

This study provides a stepping stone for leadership theory to broaden knowledge on leadership and for practice to gain insight in pitfalls and strengths of the motivational leader. In order to do justice to the complexity and explorative character of the study, qualitative research is implemented. In line with Rich & Ginsberg (1999) it is reasoned that qualitative research serves well in describing individual behaviour and experience or the vision that shapes the perspectives that guide behaviour. As for the practice of leadership, practical implications can be drawn on how SDT can contribute in creating a motivational workplace.

Self-Determination Theory

In 1959, White introduced intrinsic motivation, the idea that people take action because they enjoy and are interested in the activity itself, represented by phenomena like curiosity and the ability to learn (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This differs from extrinsic motivation, which is achieved by instrumental, external factors like bonuses (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). In the following years, growing evidence showed that extrinsic motivation is an insufficient tool to motivate people and can even diminish motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999, Deci & Ryan, 2000). From that thought, Deci and Ryan

build on an intrinsic motivation theory: the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Self-determination theory presumes that humans are “inherently motivated to grow and achieve and will fully commit to and even engage in uninteresting tasks when their meaning and value is understood” (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009, p.77). From this, three core psychological needs are deduced. First, *autonomy* refers to the need to act with a sense of volition, choice and self-determination (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). Second, individuals have a basic need for *competence*, the idea that a person can interact with its environment and is of influence of important outcomes (White, 1959; Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). Third, when *relatedness* is high, people experience satisfying and supportive social relations (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). These needs promote autonomous motivation, which means that one acts with a sense of volition, engagement, the experience of choice and this emerges from a sense of the self (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009).

Clearly, intrinsic motivation is a textbook example of autonomous motivation. However, this does not imply that extrinsic motivation is merely a carrot and stick method. Extrinsic motivation can be seen as a continuum in which extrinsic motivation becomes more internalized (Gagné & Deci, 2005). By promoting satisfaction of the three psychological needs, extrinsic motivation becomes increasingly autonomous. This means that people take in values, attitudes and regulatory structures. As a result, behaviour becomes more internally regulated so that external contingencies are no longer needed to promote motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Looking at an extrinsic motivation continuum, we find amotivation on the far left end. Amotivation holds a lack of intentional regulation. On the far right end lies intrinsic motivation. Here, autonomous motivation is inherent to the task and the behaviour is

self-determined. Between those far ends, extrinsic motivation is internalized. Four regulatory styles of internalization are distinguished. First, external regulation concerns controlled motivation when people only take action to serve certain ends (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Second, introjected regulation states that people internalize regulation, but do not fully accept it as their own (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Here, the locus of causality is still external to the subordinate. Third, identified regulation. The locus of causality becomes more personal since people consciously acknowledge the closeness of goals and values of the task to their identity (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Finally, integrated regulation is the fullest type of internalization. The perceived motivation is autonomous and “people have a full sense that the behaviour is an integral part of who they are, that it emanates from their sense of self and is thus self-determined” (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 335). The perceived locus of causality is internal and integrated regulation shares many aspects with intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In sum, SDT distinguishes autonomous vs. controlled motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a perfect example of autonomous motivation. The more one is autonomously motivated, the more one is self-determined. This does not state that every task should be intrinsically motivated, but it does state that needs for autonomy, competence and interpersonal relatedness should be considered as tools to achieve internalization of extrinsic rewards. Internalization aids in motivating people, but SDT does not presume that this derives from one source. So, using SDT in leadership literature gives room to current views that leadership is a complex and interactive process where no appointed leader rules, but also leaves space for leaders that can fulfil the core psychological needs of their employees. Additionally, SDT provides insight in how leaders achieve internalization by appealing to personal values, providing vision, stimulating the search for meaning, excellence and self-expression, helping in setting

goals and ambitions and supporting training and development (Sheldon, Turban, Brown, Barrick, & Judge, 2003). Indeed, SDT provides a unique, motivational view on leadership processes.

Method

Participants

A total of 27 participants from four small Dutch organizations (8 to 25 employees) were selected using convenience and purposive sampling (Marshall, 1996). To ensure rigor, data quality and intellectual quality (Marshall, 1996), participants had to meet three selection criteria. First, participants were highly educated white collar workers with a high amount of independency. This limited differences in perceived motivational efforts due to occupational group characteristics. Second, only leaders and employees who directly worked with each other could participate in the study. This way, the view of both leader and employee was considered. Third, participants had to work in small organizations with no management layers. Thereby differences in perceived motivational efforts due to management responsibility or mandate were limited.

From the eight organizations that were invited, four decided to participate, two could not participate in time and two did not respond. In three out of four organizations management decided to participate. In one organization management discussed it with all members and then decided to join. In two organizations management decided which employees could participate, based on pragmatic arguments like time and location. One organization had all their members interviewed and one leader asked the employees to volunteer and contact the researcher. From the participating organizations, all leaders were interviewed excluding one leader who was personally connected with the researcher. This resulted in 10 interviews with organizational leaders and 17 interviews with their employees (organization A: 2 leaders, 3 employees, organization B: 3 leaders,

5 employees, organization C: 3 leaders, 5 employees and organization D: 2 leaders, 4 employees). The participants worked full-time and were aged between 27 and 53, with a mean age of approximately 39. All leaders were men, two employees were woman. This could be due to the relatively technical background of the organizations: two organizations worked in ICT and two in civil engineering.

Critical Incident Technique

Interviews were conducted using the critical incident technique (CIT). Interviews are very suitable for studies about perceptions and reasons (Healey & Rawlinson, 1993). The CIT specifically is recommended for research on motivation and leadership (Flanagan, 1954). The CIT, originally an observation method, consists of a set of procedures for collecting firsthand accounts about specific, critical events from respondents' experience with the subject of the study (Oakfield, 1976; Flanagan, 1954). An incident is critical when it "occurs in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear . . . and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects." (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327).

Due to its development in the last fifty years, the CIT is highly applicable for qualitative, explorative studies (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundsen, & Maglio, 2005). The definition of the CIT as given by Chell (2004) is used here:

The critical incident technique is a qualitative interview procedure, which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes or issues), identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account cognitive, affective and behavioural elements. (p. 48)

As this definition clarifies, the CIT is applicable because this study aims to gain insight in the perspectives of leaders and employees on motivation.

Procedure

The interview consisted of several phases (Chell, 2004). First, the purpose of the interview was explained briefly. Second, participants were assured that their responses would remain both confidential and anonymous and that, if quoted, participants would receive pseudonyms. To ensure descriptive validity, all of the interviews were audio taped, with the permission of the participants. Third, general background questions were asked to clarify the participant's work context. Fourth, the interview focused on motivation through asking about motivational aspects with questions like "what are your thoughts on motivating your employees?" Then, participants were asked if they recalled any specific incidents that illustrated their motivational perception. Fifth, the interviewer asked probing questions to clarify the incidents, like "take me through the incident step by step, what happened when and by whom?" or "why do you mention this in the light of motivation?" This phase was repeated until approximately four (negative and/or positive) critical incidents were mentioned (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). For the outline of the interview, see Appendix A.

While conducting the interviews, several validity threats were taken into account. Concepts of SDT were not addressed, revered to or steered at by the researcher so that no interpretation bias occurred. The researcher tried to keep an open mind and treated the interview like a conversation (Butterfield et al., 2005; Chell, 2004; Maxwell, 1992), ensuring interpretative validity. Interpretative validity concerns the correct interpretation of what the participant means with his comments (Maxwell, 1992). This means that the respondents must have the freedom to speak in his own knowledge structures (Stenbacka, 2001). Halfway the interviews, another researcher was asked to

read the transcripts to check if the interviewer maintained sufficient rigor. This ensured interview fidelity (Butterfield et al., 2005).

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. The analysis of the interviews started with classifying comments in categories about autonomy, competence or relatedness with Atlas.ti software. Next, subcategories were derived using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). From the first two organizations (13 interviews) comments that resembled each other were divided into groups and then labelled. These were compared with Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press). Categories that were consistent with those of Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) were adapted here. Remaining categories kept their own label. These categories were further defined, adapted and sharpened with the interviews from the last 2 organizations (14 interviews). Then, all interviews were again coded to check whether all subcategories remained solid. The tentativeness of categories is shown by the number of comments that referred to these categories; see the first row in Tables 1-3 (Butterfield et al., 2005; Flanagan, 1954). Subcategories were only accepted if they were mentioned by two or more participants in two or more organizations. Results were cross-checked by informing the respondents of the results of the study by presenting the results. Comments from the participants were taken into account while writing this article, ensuring internal generalizability (Butterfield et al., 2005).

Last, a second coder coded about 25% of the comments. However, Cohen's kappa did not exceed 0,7 (0,65 for autonomy, 0,66 for competence and 0,66 for relatedness). Therefore, the subcategories and their definitions were discussed with the second coder. The researcher and the second coder coded 30% of the data until consensus was reached (Cohen's kappa of 1.00 for all three the needs). The researcher then coded the remaining 70% accordingly.

Results

The results are presented in two ways. First, leaders and their employees discussed motivational efforts in such a manner that the data fitted very well in a SDT framework. It appeared that the basic needs were fulfilled through several means. Subcategories for autonomy, competence and social relatedness emerged. Second, the subcategories emerged in several interviews. Some insight in the balance between autonomy, competence and relatedness is presented.

Autonomy

Autonomous employees are motivated because they can contribute to the organization through initiatives, carrying responsibility and carry a certain amount of freedom to act on their own (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). Data showed that employees not only experience autonomy as motivating, but acknowledge the active role their employer plays to support their autonomous behaviour. Motivational leaders, on their part, think of themselves as facilitating. Facilitating autonomous behaviour was enacted in four different manners, which are presented in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

In three categories of supporting autonomy, creating freedom, encouraging self-initiation and responsibility, leaders play an active role in motivating their employees. The role of leaders in the fourth category, congruency with personal values, wasn't specifically mentioned by the participants.

Creating freedom. Creating freedom means that employees have their own responsibilities, are free to act and say what they want (providing input in, for example,

organizational decisions) and that leaders listen to their employees and enable this freedom as long as it is feasible, which leads to a delicate balance. Like one leader explained: "Value an opinion, respect that, whatever is done with it, give it proper attention. And of course, 'no' can also be an answer, just explain why it's 'no'." This subcategory is in line with Baard's (2002) statement that self-selection for tasks is desirable and that the need for autonomy can be supported by allowing self-selection and optimizing employees' control or influence. Stone, Deci, & Ryan (2009) also state that leaders should provide employees with choice within the organizational structure. The organizational structure is characterized as the organizational boundaries to the freedom of an employee. A leader said that he wanted:

To find out what employees want and how they want it. And that's either possible or not in our organization. If it isn't and if you really want it, well, we'll use our network to see if there's another organization for you where you can reach those goals.

As for the employee, leaders address responsibility to the employee to provide input and employees acknowledge this. In the words of an employee "I can do something about it, there is a responsibility on my side too, you see." Creating freedom comes with a risk. As Gagné & Deci (2005) note, when an organizational structure becomes controlling, it can be demotivating. Employees experience this negatively: "If you started talking about your salary, if there was room for some more, something of which you thought, perhaps, NO! And that was something of which I think, well, it won't hurt just to listen to me." However, some frame is needed, like another employee said: "This organization has its advantages but you miss a certain structure. Of course, you're free to do whatever, but that can also be very hampering . . . if it goes too far." Similar results are

seen in informal mentoring processes (Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, in press). Indeed, creating freedom is a balancing act for leader and employee.

Responsibility. Responsibility is a state of equality between employee and leader, particularly mentioned when talking about solving problems. When experiencing responsibility, employees take the lead in solving issues and leaders trust them with that. It seems to be a result of consequently creating freedom and is described as a state where leader and employee consider each other as equal, employees have full mandate on dealing with problems and leaders are merely a back-up. This was described by a leader as “you feel you can trust him, and the trust I feel, is the same trust the customer feels . . . and with him, it’s easy, you can discuss: this there, that way, should we add here, let’s add there.” Another leader explained how he created responsibility with an employee:

When she has issues, I simply advice her to do X, but tell her to take care of it on her own . . . and always ask her, can I mean anything to you in this issue? Just concrete, supporting sentences. And if I don’t understand . . . I ask if she can explain it to me.

With regard to responsibility, employees often mentioned that they felt they could act at own discretion: “It isn’t his responsibility what the solution looks like . . . that’s Pete’s, Emma’s and my job” or “you work more or less as an entrepreneur, you’ve got full responsibility, or at least the substantive responsibility to deal with customers”. Furthermore, employees who felt responsibility saw leaders as a backup in case of emergency: “If the problem was just with that costumer, I could have handled it on my own but when other clients are endangered, I can’t decide on my own, all that’s left is to call (leader), then you’ve got your backup.” Literature on SDT does not mention responsibility. However, participants distinguish an equal, trust-based state from having

freedom or being able to undertake initiative. Therefore responsibility is discriminated as a subcategory.

Encouraging self-initiation. Encouraging self-initiation was perceived by leaders as important in motivating employees. As an example, one leader told his reaction to an employee who wanted to start his own soup kitchen:

I said, well, that is a pretty ambitious idea . . . we'll pay you half a day a week to work on this idea . . . and what's in it for us? Well, the most important thing is that the guy feels like he can develop himself and he'll probably get's that TSJAKKAA feeling because he handles this which makes him feel better the other 4 days he works for us.

Other examples were providing chances for ambitious employees, facilitating employees in finding their ambitions and goals, supporting out of the box thinking and providing practical support (time, resources) to undertake initiatives.

Employees also mentioned the chances they had to undertake as highly motivating. One employee stated that he was motivated because he could "mention ideas of which direction I think we should be heading, and I can underpin those ideas and it motivates me that they agree, and that they facilitate in realizing those ideas." Moreover, both employees and leaders mentioned that the absence of self-initiation was killing for motivation. As an employee mentioned:

I'll be looking for another job if this continues . . . I wrote a document to give this project some more perspective, but that just lays there and lays there, they don't do anything with it . . . and then I feel like, what am I doing here?

Moreover, encouraging self initiation was also found by Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) in a protégé–mentor relationship. Both in the protégé–mentor relationship as in the leader–employee relationship encouraging self-initiation is seen as

highly motivating. This is also in line with Stone, Deci, & Ryan's (2009) statement that motivation is created through asking open questions and inviting in problem solving. Strikingly, one leader told how an employee reacted after he let him solve a complicated IT problem in a new, by the employee invented manner: "He (the employee) said, 'you're the first who doesn't just criticizes my work and has three reservations in advance but just says hey, I feel that you can contribute in what we're doing, so go ahead'."

Congruency with personal values. Leaders and employees both experience congruency with personal values. Leaders often reported a vision on how to work with each other, and wanted to explain this to their employees. Comments like "not because they *have* to, but . . . we've talked about that a lot, that everybody adopts this: that it is useful to exchange knowledge" or "what is an inspiring meeting for you? What is inspiring to you? I would love to achieve that you could talk about that" show a non-controlling way of transferring a vision to the employees. This resembles Kaiser & Hogan's (2005) statement that good leaders are inspiring, visionary man. Employees however do not mention their leaders' role when talking about personal values. They mention their own choices: "I wanted to do something that was more socially relevant" or their own values "for me, it's about doing what's right, I want things to be fair" or their connection with the organization "I'm proud to work for this company, proud of all the work we're doing together." This might seem as a contrast between employee and leader, but it is not. The vision of the leader often concerns the way he treats employees. For example, a leader might say a personal value is to create openness with other people. A leader would try to achieve this by creating openness in the workplace. If he succeeds, employees would report openness as a motivational factor in their work. The personal value of the leader (in this example, creating openness) is seen as a motivational aspect (not necessary personal value) by the employee. So, the values

reported by the leader are acknowledged by the employee as motivational aspects of their job, not necessary as personal value. As one leader explained:

Self-actualization, self-development doesn't cost me any money, that's just somewhere and you just have to tickle it . . . and if I can get that out of them, if we can find that together, that's just great and that makes them happier, makes me happier!

Indeed, his personal value was to stimulate development and initiation with his employees. One of his employees reported: "You can come up with ideas, shall we do this, shall we do that", a typical example of an employee who experienced encouraging of self-initiation, which was in line with the personal value of his leader, who wanted people to develop themselves.

Competence

When feeling competent, employees are motivated because they feel that they can contribute to the organization, have influence on their own actions and are able to do their tasks without feeling overwhelmed by the demands of their work (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The results in Table 2 show that employees look to leaders for a certain degree of challenge and development in their work. Leaders feel compelled to coach and direct their employees (in particular junior employees) to stimulate their development. Seven ways of fulfilling the need for competence are distinguished in Table 2.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Providing direction. Providing direction is about leaders who pro-actively tell their employees what to do and how with respect to competence enhancing behaviour. Several leaders also stated that providing direction was sometimes necessary to prevent

the employee for doing something that might hurt himself or the organization. This can be done in a coaching manner where the leader asks open questions, evaluates regularly and advises. One leader summarized this as “give them independence, responsibility and coach them in what they do, like a sounding board.” There is also a more guiding manner. Several incidents were about employees who wanted to develop in a certain direction, but leaders pushed them in a different one. These incidents seem to have several stages. First, employees are pushed: “So I told him, I really think you should be heading towards project management right now, don’t undertake on your own already . . . and he reluctantly agreed.” Then, employees grow in their new role “it turned out I liked it even more than the work I did before” and finally, a positive review “of course we’d monitored him, but it was so evident . . . he was so glad we pushed him.” Especially leaders who weren’t afraid of confronting their employees with the (wrong) direction they were heading, report guiding employees as a rocky but satisfying road. The employees that worked with them acknowledge that and are grateful. This seems to contradict the idea of supporting autonomy, but growth and development seemed to outweigh the issue of being pushed. Participants also mentioned Baard’s (2002) advice that guiding is about determining reasonable ambitions together.

Stimulating continuous development. In a mentor–protégé relationship (Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, in press), a focus on development is a key concern. Also, Baard (2002) acknowledges that the need for competence can be supported by providing optimal challenges. Results show that leaders want development for employees to keep them challenged, motivated and to increase their value for clients. They do this by giving feedback and stimulating development (e.g. by providing courses and looking for new occupational challenges for the employee). Like one leader stated: “It’s because the employee should experience growth, development and feels good. And

also, when he develops his market value grows so that we can easily match him with our clients." All employees were motivated by opportunities to develop themselves, and they especially appreciated (negative and positive) feedback from their leaders and the support leaders gave in searching for new challenges. An employee explained: "When you get feedback you realize . . . that it shapes you, you learn from it."

Sharing knowledge. Participants were motivated by working in an environment where they had people to discuss their work issues with. Employees felt challenged and free to admit faults or, like an employee noted, ask advice: "My colleagues are very capable and competent, they're people you can rely on." Leaders evoked sharing of knowledge for example by organizing meetings with employees, inviting experts on relevant areas to give presentations and openly discuss occupational challenges with their employees. One leader explained that "sharing knowledge is an important one for us, for us (the leaders) is it important to facilitate and motivate them in doing that, or they do it by themselves, and that's our philosophy: keep sharing knowledge." This is underpinned by Stone, Deci, & Ryan (2009), who mention sharing knowledge as a mean to enhance competence.

Fit between tasks, organization and competence. Participants repeatedly mentioned that they felt motivated because they felt like they were good at their job and contributed to the organization. Leaders monitor this fit, and indicated that they felt responsible for it because contributes to the organization, as one leader explained: "In the people we hire, you can see the potential . . . we hire them because they have possibilities . . . we know how important it is that everyone has his own subject in our organization." Employee comments like "it's nice to work on complex project" or "in-depth technical issues, that's what I personally like to handle" clarify that the requirement of substantive expertise was considered motivating. As Deci & Ryan (2000)

note, feeling competent is motivating because of the contribution people make in an organization. This emerges in this subcategory, like an employee said: “A company that doesn’t fit you, that would be demotivating!”

Confirming and praising competence. Confirming and praising competence is an effective way of stimulating employees. Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) found this in protégé–mentor relationships and Stone, Deci, & Ryan (2009) recommend providing sincere, positive feedback. Leaders often did this by complimenting their employees after a job well done. When employees developed themselves positively, competence was confirmed by giving them bigger challenges or raising their salary, like a leader said: “He did well this year, really picked it up and . . .that came back in his salary . . . what he proposed as his salary was even lower than what we proposed.” Like Stone, Deci, & Ryan (2009) state, a fair wage confirms competence. Employees mostly cared about the acknowledgement, like one employee said: “They don’t look at your title; they really look at what you can do, at what your capacity and potential is.”

Learning on the job. Learning on the job is a practical but risky way of enhancing competence. Employees are thrown in the deep end and learn by trial and error. This can be risky because leaders mentioned turning to learning on the job as a time-saving method, while providing more direction was actually needed. Like one leader explained: “We let him swim too much . . . this was partly due to a lack of time.” However, learning on the job can also be effective and stimulating, an employee stated that “the first year I was just searching, trying to get a hold . . . but you notice that you’re growing, you’re rolling into it and I love it now.” Indeed, the great advantage of learning on the job is that employees gain experience within the context of their work. Learning on the job seems to be most effective in combination with some coaching, like an employee said: “They let me take the part even though I’d never done it before, they put

me in that position, but with a bit of coaching . . . he'd step down . . . and back me up."

This coaching is namely to prevent that the employee becomes overwhelmed by challenges and tasks. One leader explained this by describing how he let his employees first do operational tasks. Then, when employees "grow because of the knowledge and experience they gain", the leaders hears that they start to interfere with more abstract aspects of a project ("such an employee will adapt a more steering role, you can see that in the reports"), he lets his employees join small projects. If they master small projects, he lets them take on other roles and larger projects. This resembles familiarizing practices from organizational mentors (Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, in press).

Competent behaviour to emulate. Competent behaviour to emulate is defined by Janssen, Van Vuuren & De Jong (in press) as admiration from the protégé to the developer because of his skills or expertise. Leaders, as became clear, did not talk about themselves as role models. No leader made such an indication; they mostly stated that they needed to improve their leadership. However, employees did expect certain exemplary behaviour from their leaders, like one employee said: "I expect my leader to take on a certain role, that can be in many ways, either he works hard or he listens, is very sharp . . . or generates sufficient assignments so that everybody has work" and took an example from their leaders:

Now that I'm developing towards the role he has I work with him more . . . and it's so amazing, he's gone for a few months and needs to test something next week, and without knowing the context really well, he just finds the sore spot: 'He, what about this or that?' And then I'm like, yeah.

Relatedness

Motivation through relatedness is described in terms of "the need to be connected to others" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 337). Results show that relatedness is

about solidarity, being valued and having a good time with each other. Furthermore, results show that relatedness is achieved by having a non-hierarchical organizational structure. The need for relatedness is fulfilled in four ways, as shown Table 3.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Caring. Employees experience personal interest (“I like it that they care about me personally”) and creating a safe environment (“He called those people and said ‘that’s not how you treat my men’”) as warm and motivating. Leaders perceive this as normal and decent, even though they admit that there is a commercial value of taking care of people. Like one leader mentioned: “(An employee) had some serious marital issues so I told him: take the rest of the week off and fix it . . . that’s just how you do that . . . and I also see the commercial value . . . but I’m always sincerely interested!” Furthermore, caring was also about prioritizing personnel. Employees experience a lack of caring when their leaders didn’t seem to have time for them or didn’t take their (pressure related) issues into consideration. Leaders described this as a priority problem, like one leader explained how he solved a crisis his employee created: “At that moment, I have a different focus, and that’s result, and that’s more important to me than the social aspects.” When talking about crises or problems created by employees, leaders stated that they could have prevented the problem by prioritizing their personnel more. Therefore leaders don’t tend to blame their employees overly for mistakes, but also look at themselves: “It’s just, it’s my pitfall . . . I’m working alone upstairs, got a lot to do, and then, o yeah, there are also people that need some guidance.” Caring is also seen in mentor–protégé relationships. Both here as in Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press)

study, elements of making employees feel safe, worrying about what happens to the employee and taking care of them are central to caring.

Solidarity. When talking about the need to feel related, participants often stated that they like to work because they simply had a good time with the people they worked with. Both leaders and employees stated that their colleagues made a nice working environment. Feelings of unity, mutual support and sharing common interests motivated participants to work in their organizations and with their leaders. The importance of a flat, non-hierarchical organizational structure was often mentioned as contributing to solidarity, like the description of an organizational meeting by an employee: "It's one big unorganized meeting where we have an agenda, but nobody cares about that . . . and we just talk with each other, how's your car, how's the new phone . . . how's the cat, the wife, kids and so on." Simply put, leaders and employees alike stated that solidarity was about feeling connected, which is at the heart of relatedness (Gagné & Deci, 2005). In the words of an employee: "(Organization), to me, is working with people, that's all there is."

Openness. Openness is about transparent, easy to reach leaders by which employees can speak freely. Most leaders perceive this is highly relevant. As one leader explained:

We're just very open; we (two leaders) can sit with an employee and have a discussion with each other, just to show that it's transparent. It's not about two leaders who are unanimous or something, but just about open conversations where it's just not that relevant what we think.

Again, an equivalent, non-hierarchical manner of associating with each other was seen as crucial. This underpins Beard's (2002) advice to share information whenever feasible to support the need for relatedness.

Self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is described by Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) as a reciprocal relationship in which both actors share personally relevant information. Participants in this study specifically addressed feeling motivated because they could discuss personal issues with each other and because they experienced mutual loyalty and personal interest between leader and employee. These relationships are described as warm and family-like by leaders and employees. A leader explained how he developed relationships with his employees:

I try to make it as horizontal as possible, even though an employee might never experience it as fully horizontal. . . . Just by being human . . . by acting no differently than I would when I'm having a good conversation with a good friend.

Again, a non-hierarchical structure is seen as instrumental in developing meaningful relationships. By some leaders, self-disclosure wasn't acknowledged as part of the leader-employee relationship. Like one leader said: "Those issues had something to do with him personally, with who he is. So we said, let's see what we can do with an external coach so that he isn't obliged to share that with us." Their employees mentioned nothing about self-disclosure at work. These employees merely noticed that they sometimes felt a professional distance. Both leaders and employees that did not report self-disclosure did not mention that they needed or wanted more self-disclosure. The question is whether self-disclosure is just for a certain type of leader and employee or if the participants that reported nothing on self-disclosure simply didn't know what they are missing. Nonetheless, it is in stark contrast with the description of this employee's relationship with his leader (from another organization):

Motivation for me is someone you can talk to, with whom you feel connected so you can talk about the things in life that are important to you and that he's open to that, listens to you and gives you space, that's motivation to me.

Balancing Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness

The results above show how leaders and employees make sense of motivation. The following section provides three important notions on the emergence of the categories. First, literature on SDT states that all three needs have to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). As shown in Appendix B, that statement is underpinned by this data. Every participant linked motivation to fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. This means that all three needs emerge over all organizations with leaders and employees. Relatedness (122 comments) emerges a bit less clearly than autonomy (152 comments) and competence (169 comments), but all categories consist of a sufficient body of comments.

The comments on subcategory level clarify that leaders and employees think alike about motivation. All subcategories but one (competent behaviour to emulate) are mentioned by several leaders and employees. Furthermore, subcategories that emerge most clearly with leaders also emerge most clearly with employees. This also applies to the subcategories that emerge less, like learning on the job and self-disclosure. That leaders and employees share a vision on motivation was apparent in the organizations. In the interviews at least one or more leaders from each organization told a critical incident that was also recalled by the employee to whom the incident concerned. This implies that leaders are aware of the way their employees are motivated and that employees recognize their leaders' ways of motivating them.

Last, the separate ways to stimulate autonomy, competence and relatedness are often combined. No incident referred to merely one subcategory, but mostly consisted of a combination of two to three ways of motivating the employee. For example, the following comment of an employee clarifies how he experienced creating freedom and

openness simultaneously: "I came with some ideas, he (his leader) said 'who am I to stop you in your ideas?' . . . and that gave me the feeling that they have an open attitude, that they're really open to use your creativity." This is an interesting phenomenon, but the exact interplay between the subcategories is beyond the scope of this study.

Discussion

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to leadership literature in four manners. It bridges the gap between early and current leadership theories and bridges the gap in current leadership theories. Third, it provides us with a balanced view on leadership from the perspective of the leader and the employee. Last, it adds to our understanding of SDT by presenting subcategories through which employees feel motivated.

The results show that the gap between early and current leadership theories is bridged by using SDT. Early theories put motivation at the heart of leadership through using the expectancy theory of motivation and focusing on behaviour. Current leadership theories drifted from this motivational perspective to a more complex view. Here, SDT proved to be an alternative motivation theory for Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation from which current leadership can successfully be examined.

Second, the gap between strategic leadership theories that focus on one leader and leadership theories which perceive leadership as a dynamic, interactive system is bridged by SDT. SDT, as applied here, considers the perspective of the leader and employee and acknowledges both parties in describing leadership. However, SDT can also be easily expanded to other loci of motivation. SDT does not presume that there is one leader who controls motivation but presumes that motivation can be intrinsic and is supported by fulfilling needs. Therefore, SDT can fit with contemporary insights of leadership literature that leadership processes can be regulated by one actor (strategic

leadership theories) but can also be regulated by many actors (CLT and SLT) or derives from a role-model function (ALT).

Third, the qualitative approach of this study allows leaders and employees of the same organization to voice their view on leadership and motivation. Leaders and employees address the same subcategories, with the exception of 'competent behaviour to emulate'. This finding underpins that a balanced view on the motivational efforts of leaders and the perception of employees is achieved.

Last and most notably, insight in self-determination processes as perceived by leaders and employees is given through the subcategories described above. The emergence of the subcategories adds to our understanding of the way the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are fulfilled by leaders and perceived by employees. Also, this study strengthens the findings of Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press). The studies witness similar ways by which leaders and mentors fulfil motivational needs. Within autonomy, leaders and mentors motivate by creating freedom, encouraging self-initiation and having a congruency with personal values. Responsibility was not seen in mentor – protégé relationships. This could be due to differences in organizational structures. Participants stressed that the small, non hierarchical organization is accountable for experiencing responsibility. This was not a selection criterion for participants in the Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) study.

As for fulfilling competence, leaders and mentors used confirming and praising of competence and stimulating continuous development. Also, employees and protégées admired their leaders' and mentors' competent behaviour. Further, learning on the job resembles creating an environment to practice. Both subcategories are about learning by doing. However, a mentor creates the conditions that allow the protégé to practice,

while leaders tend to throw employees in the water and let them swim. Sharing knowledge and problem solving also look alike, helping each other to perform better is central to both. But, employees and leaders discussed this in broader terms than protégées; they consider sharing every kind of job experience as stimulating. Providing direction and a fit between tasks, organization and competence were not discriminated by protégées. These categories are also the only competence subcategories that are mentioned more often by leaders than by employees. Leaders indicated that they provided direction to prevent employees from doing something that could hurt themselves or the organization, and stated that they consider themselves responsible for a good fit because it influences the well-being of the organization. This could imply that their responsibility for the organization prompts them to give attention to a fit and providing direction in the relationship with their employee. Therefore, employees experience a fit and providing direction in their relation with their leader, which explains the differences in the accounts of protégées and employees.

Relatedness was fulfilled by leaders and mentors through self-disclosure and caring. Openness wasn't mentioned by protégées. A possible reason is that protégées perceived openness as a precondition for developing a mentor – protégé relationship, and did not report it as a part of that relationship. Solidarity was neither mentioned by protégées. An explanation for this difference is that protégées were questioned about their own, personal mentor while employees in this study defined their leader as a leader of the whole organization. Because of this broader view, participants also described motivation in terms of feeling unity, mutual support and enjoying each other's company within the organization.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

This study is a first call to introduce the SDT in leadership literature. As with all firsts, this study experiences several limitations. First, three out of four participating organization had only a number of employees questioned. Perhaps when all employees were questioned, a different light was shed on the subcategories. Also, the findings of this study are based on a relatively small number of leaders ($n = 10$). Because of this small number, the data barely reaches the redundancy level and the reciprocal character of the study is weakened. Furthermore, the participants were members of highly specialized organizations operating in a niche market, which limits these results to this context. Further research could indicate whether these results also count for other contexts, larger organizations and different leadership structures.

Second, this study focuses very specifically on the relation between leader and employee. Many leadership theories indicate that there are many more sources of leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009) and thus far, the SDT does not imply that a leader is the only source that can fulfil the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Other possible sources can be colleagues, type of work that is closely related to personal values or even the physical workplace context (for example, can sharing knowledge or solidarity be promoted by interior design). However, these are not attended in this study. Therefore, the relation between the source of leadership and motivation deserves more attention in future research.

Third, the interplay between the three needs for fulfilling motivation was beyond the scope of this study. Literature indicates interplay between fulfilling the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Stone, Deci, & Ryan, 2009). It remains unclear how this interplay exactly emerges. This raises questions about what opportunities or problems arise when leaders tend to nurture one need more than the other, or when

employees experience one need much more than the need for the other two. Further research is needed to fully understand this interplay.

Research on the emergence of the subcategories is also needed. Future research could indicate whether different relations in the workplace experience different ways of experiencing and fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. In addition, future research is needed to look which categories found by Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong (in press) and in this study emerge in any kind of work relation.

Last, these provided directions are not an attempt to control further research. Future researchers are, naturally, advised to do what they see fit.

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Table 1

Results of Content Analysis for Leaders' Autonomy Supportive Behaviour, as Perceived by Leaders and Employees

Subcategory	Definition	Sample comment leader	Sample comment employee
Creating freedom (60 comments)	Leaders provide employees with a frame in which they feel that they can do and say what they want without being controlled	"For me, I want to enable my employee in the pursuit of his ambitions as long as those fit within the framework of the company"	"This afternoon I'm probably home early, and that's nice, but that also means that if a customer calls with a problem and asks if you can fix it this evening, than that's also the way it works"
Responsibility (37 comments)	Leaders consider/are considered by employees as equal, and merely provide backup when needed	"What's really important is that he owned the process, if someone really owns something, and really feels responsible, he can do everything"	"I don't need my boss calling me every day [...] I just feel that he trusts me in that I'll call him when he needs to know out of a professional perspective"
Encouraging self-initiation (36 comments)	Leaders encourage employees to decide and act on their own and to engage in new actions and initiatives	"We haven't got set objectives in the sense of we have to reach this or that. No, it's exactly the other way around: if an employee wants something, we adapt that as our organizational objective"	"One of the partners made a terrific statement, he said 'I am not going to tell you what your ambitions are' [...] and that was a beautiful comment to me"

Congruency with personal values <i>(19 comments)</i>	Leaders and employees both find their work in line with their own interests	“When somebody is here just for the money we say, well, then there is no connection and no commitment [...] and then you just don’t belong here”	“In this society there a only a few people willing to help one another, and if you want to change that, you’ll have to pick a job in which you feel you are doing something about that”
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Table 2

Results of Content Analysis for Leaders' Competence Supportive Behaviour, as Perceived by Leaders and Employees

Subcategory	Definition	Sample comment leader	Sample comment employee
Providing direction (35 comments)	Leaders guide employees by coaching and stimulating them to develop in a certain direction, helping them to see possibilities and remove barricades	"Afterwards he admitted that it was good that we held that mirror in front of him, cause he made different choices [...], he felt he was going through a huge development"	"I walk to [the leader] and say 'what should I do with this, I have got no idea what to do' so I explain him the story and from that he tells 'you can handle it this way, or break the news that way'"
Stimulating continuous development (34 comments)	Leaders encourage employees to improve particular qualities or skills	"The development of people, [...] developing our employees is just so terribly important to us"	"So when you say 'I would like to do a course' than they won't decline that, there's a lot of room for development here and that's important to me"
Sharing knowledge (31 comments)	Leaders and employees (and employees among each other) discuss their job and help each other in order to learn from each other	"Recently, I sat down with an employee [...] and talked about [...] new developments, what we could or couldn't do with those. That's really just sparring, brainstorming"	"That conversation made me aware of what I was doing, en above all motivated me to keep going [...] because he gave me an example of how he handled this"

Fit between tasks, organization and competence (29 comments)	Employee's competence fit with his tasks, those tasks fit within the organization; leaders monitor this fit	"The advantage is that our clients are really in want of good people, and we've got really good people"	"If I can do stuff like this, I don't want to be in another organization,[...] the organization appeals to me, the assignments we've got appeal to me"
Conforming and praising competence (18 comments)	Leaders give employees the believe that they are able to perform their job	"I told him 'you did a great job, you've influenced the MT, that's a great gift for a 25 year-old'. You see, I like giving compliments. I think it helps"	"It's stimulating [...] it gives you a nice feeling to hear that there are positive things, that you know you're doing a good job [...] it's good to hear that out loud"
Learning on the job (15 comments)	Leaders let employees figure out on their own how to do their job, employees learn by trial and error	'She became part of a change-project, and she learned a lot in that project, especially just from being in the field"	"It was a good thing that I could go to the costumers from the second day on, I wanted to know how they worked"
Competent behaviour to emulate (7 comments)	Leaders are admired by their employees because of their great knowledge, skills or routine	[no leader considered himself as a motivational example]	"Those are the good things [...] that you also get to hear the positive feedback, and I think I should do the same [...] give my colleagues credit for customer's positive feedback"

Table 3

Results of Content Analysis for Leaders' Relatedness Supportive Behaviour, as Perceived by Leaders and Employees

Subcategory	Definition	Sample comment leader	Sample comment employee
Caring (40 comments)	Leaders worry about what happens to their employees. Employees experience a safe and supportive environment	"They really feel like they have to work hard, and I don't want that, I want them to have a good time"	"You feel supported, you can tell him how you feel and if anything would go wrong, he would back you up"
Solidarity (34 comments)	Within the organization members feel unity, mutual support, share common interest(s) and enjoy each other's company	"I'm not fond of a employer-employee relationship, I prefer the idea that we're in this together"	"It's just the feeling, everybody gets along. When we meet we have a good time"
Openness (29 comments)	Leaders are (seen as) accessible, transparent and open to employees	"I prefer maximal transparency and openness, I don't like secrets"	"And they listen to you [...] yeah that you can talk about that is nice"
Self-disclosure (19 comments)	Leaders and employees (both) share personally relevant information	"He told about his parents, and how he was raised, and what that has done to him [...] and that helps to better understand him"	"At home, I had some serious stuff to deal with, and all three of them (<i>the leaders</i>) are interested, ask how I am doing"

Appendix A

Outline for an interview with a leader. Roughly based on Chell (2004).

Purpose of remark	Outline
Introduction of the interview	<p>First, I will explain a bit about this study and this interview technique. Currently, I am studying corporate communication and am writing my master thesis on motivation in a work environment. This means that I am interested in how leaders think about motivating their employees. Since you are a leader, I am very interested in your story.</p> <p>As you know, I am recording our conversation so I don't have to write the entire time. This interview is confidential, besides you, me and my supervisor no-one will hear the tapes or read the transcripts. Your remarks cannot be traced back to you. If you make a remark that I want to quote in my report, you will get a pseudonym, your company name isn't mentioned, people you mentioned will receive a pseudonym, the situation you portrayed is changed, as are any locations you mention. If you make comments that you do not want to see in the final report in any way, you can notify that to me any time. Therefore, please feel free to say anything you like. Like me, you can look at this as a casual conversation, not some official interview.</p>
Introducing the CIT	<p>For this interview I am using a specific interview method, called the critical incident technique. This technique is based on the idea that specific events give useful information about daily processes. (<i>In case clarification is needed</i>: if I wanted to tell you about the environment at my university, I would tell you about how I went to college and the teacher knew me by name. By telling that example, I gave you a certain image of my university). These incidents can be big and obvious, for example organizational downsizing, but they can also seem small and unobtrusive, part of the daily routine. Its effects can be long term or short term. The most important part is that you connect these incidents to your motivational efforts.</p> <p>By the end of the interview, I would like to have one or two incidents of which you say: these are core examples on how I successfully motivated my employees, and one or two incidents of which you think that you could have done a better job in motivating your employees. Is this a clear to you or should explain a bit more?</p>
Clarifying context	<p>First of all, tell me something about your job, we'll return to those critical incidents later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you worked here? • What do you think of your job/How do you perceive your job? • Could you summarize your career path for me?
Focus on motivation	<p>A part of your job is to direct your colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For how long have you been in this position? • What is the challenge in that part of your task? • What are your thoughts about motivating your employees? <p>This is interesting, thank you. It give a nice overall image, and now I would like to go to specific critical examples which I mentioned earlier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of a specific example in which you succeeded in positively motivating your employees? • Could you also think of a specific example in which you did not succeeded in motivating your employees?
Probing for critical incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you tell me a bit more about this event? (In case of the line: which events pop out for you?) <p>Clarify the incident by using following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you mention this event? • Could you be a little bit more specific on what happened there? • Take me through it step by step, what happened when and by whom? • What were the circumstances that led to this situation? • What was so useful/not useful in your/his/her behaviour? • Tell me exactly what the person did? • Why was this important to you in light of motivating?
Controlling the interview	<p>(This is only of use when the respondent deviates from the subject)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All right, that is interesting, but how does that relate to motivating your employees for you? • Is this important to you in the context of your job? • What influence does this have on the motivational efforts of your employees

and yourself?

Concluding the
interview & taking
care of ethical
issues

I think I've heard quite interesting things that I could use for my study.

- Do you have anything to add?
- Any remarks or things you find important?
- Are there questions of some kind that I should have mentioned?

Thank you so much for joining me in this conversation. (As you know, I will talk to some of your colleagues about this subject and your organization will get a review from me with analyses of your motivational climate/I will use this for my research and send you a copy of the results). I will treat this information with care and I couldn't do this research without you, thank you.

Appendix B

Number of comments from participants describing the SDT subcategories.

#	Organization	Autonomy (152 comments)				Competence (169 comments)					Relatedness (122 comments)				Total		
		Creating Freedom	Responsibility	Encouraging self initiation	Congruency with personal values	Providing direction	Stimulating continuous development	Sharing knowledge	Fit	Confirming and praising competence	Learning on the job	Competent behaviour to emulate	Caring	Solidarity	Openness	Self disclosure	
L1	A	5	2	2	0	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	7	1	1	1	28
L2	A	1	4	0	2	2	2	1	4	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	25
L3	B	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	4	1	0	17
L4	B	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	20
L5	B	4	2	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	17
L6	C	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	15
L7	C	2	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	16
L8	C	6	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	24
L9	D	0	2	3	2	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	2	20
L10	D	3	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	21
Total leaders		26	17	15	12	20	17	13	15	9	7	0	20	11	11	10	203
E1	A	3	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	16
E2	A	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	15

E3	A	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	12
E4	B	2	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	14
E5	B	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	11
E6	B	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	10
E7	B	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	1	2	14
E8	B	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	14
E9	C	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	2	1	13
E10	C	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	17
E11	C	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	14
E12	C	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	13
E13	C	3	2	2	1	2	0	3	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	18
E14	D	3	3	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	15
E15	D	2	1	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	12
E16	D	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	22
E17	D	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	10
Total employees		34	20	21	7	15	17	18	14	9	8	7	20	23	18	9	240
Sum total		60	37	36	19	35	34	31	29	18	15	7	40	34	29	19	443

