Leadership Characteristics in Self-Managing Teams

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ABSTRACT,
While the modern healthcare environment cries for flexible working, organizations might not yet be ready to switch to self-managing teams. Part of the reason is a lack of understanding about what leadership in a self-managing team should be. To get a better view of leadership in self-managing teams, leadership characteristics and the situations in which they are needed need to be reviewed. Employees from one healthcare organization were interviewed in semi-structured interviews in a qualitative research design to shed light on their preferred leader characteristics and which situations they encounter. Results indicate that certain characteristics, based on Big Five Model typology, fit better with certain situations and vice versa. Limitations are a limited amount of respondents, however, this amount can be reasonably assumed to be sufficient. Practical implications are that, in order to be effective, self-managing team leaders need to make a distinction between different types of situations, know which characteristics fit to these different situations, and act accordingly. This knowledge can bring value to leaders of self-managing teams, not only in the setting of this case study but in organizations across sectors, by providing them with handlebars on how to deal with certain situations, and which parts of their personality to show or hide in these situations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The health care environment is changing; patients demand higher quality care and a care which is both more diverse and more flexible(Smets, 2014). In other words, an increasing focus on the wishes of patients is needed. Self-managing teams are a manner to deal with this higher complexity, as these decentralized units have the ability to react to a change in their environment, in this case the needs and wishes of patients(Nel & Pienaar, 2006). Furthermore, self-managing teams have a positive influence on effectiveness and productivity, increasing the quality of the work(Ledford & Spreitzer, 1996). This might be explained by the fact that self-managing teams are comprised of ground-level employees. They are closest to the work and know the most about it(Nel & Pienaar, 2006). This normally underutilized knowledge can only be fully exploited when employees are given more freedom in organizing their own jobs, which is one of the main qualities of self-managing teams: 'Self-managing teams are groups of interdependent individuals that can self-regulate their behavior on relatively whole tasks '(Cohen & Ledford,1994,p.1). When dissecting this statement, one can identify three main requirements for self-managing teams; they have to be comprised of interdependent individuals, people that rely on each other, they must be able to self-regulate their behavior, meaning they have to be able to organize themselves without external intervention and they have to work on relatively whole tasks.

While one might expect self-managing teams to lead themselves, research has indicated that, to be fully effective, external leadership is essential to the success of self-managing teams (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). However, this role differs from more traditional leadership roles (Manz & Sims, 1987). In traditional leadership, one main assumption can be identified: a leader is someone who does something in order to influence someone else directly. Furthermore, a traditional leader has (almost) full power and is normally the one to initiate action. So, in a traditional setting, leadership is the process of intentionally influencing other people in order to guide their activities and relationships in a group or organizational context(George & Hinkes, 2016). In contrast, Manz & Sims (1987) propose a different role for leaders of self-managing teams: they should mostly by concerned with creating the context in which employees could perform these roles themselves. Rapp et al.(2015) found in their research that team coaches influence team empowerment while external leaders do not. This might be the case because of external leaders clinging to a traditional leadership role, while team coaches exhibit those leadership characteristics that have a positive effect in self-managing teams. A team coach is "an outsider who guides or facilitates the team but is not involved in executing its work"(Rapp et al., 2015, p. 5), meaning the coach merely has an advising, guiding function whereas an external leader is more defined by hierarchical settings.

As has been discussed, leadership in self-managing teams is different when compared to leadership in a more traditional sense. Research indicates that team coaches might be a more successful concept in dealing with self-managing teams, which might be due to the leadership characteristics these coaches have as opposed to more traditional leadership characteristics shown by external first-line managers(Rapp et al.,2015). Rapp et al. (2015) state that their research, at least to their knowledge, was the first to examine how different behaviours and characteristics emanating from coaches and external leaders influence the performance of self-managing teams, while proposing that further research could delve into the different sources of influence these two types of leaders exhibit. One source of influence could be the characteristics these leaders portray. Therefore, research into which leadership characteristics are best employed in managing self-managing teams could be helpful.

No set of characteristics is effective across a varied range of situations; therefore, other deciding factors in the effectiveness of leaders need to be taken into account. So-called situational variables play a large role in the effectiveness of leadership. These situational variables determine the context in which a leader operates, and this context determines what characteristics a leader should portray in order to be effective. One theory which examines these situational variables is Situational Leadership Theory (Yukl, 2010)(Northouse, 2013).

Situational Leadership Theory proposes that the maturity of the employee, meaning the level of ability and confidence of an employee, is an important situational variable (Yukl,2010). What can be gathered from this information is the importance of holding into account these situational variables when reviewing the 'best' leadership characteristics for self-managing teams, since Situational Leadership theory suggests that these, to a large extent, determine the effectiveness of leaders and the usefulness of what characteristics a leader portrays.

Based on this, the following research question can be defined:

Which leadership characteristics in which situations are necessary for self-managing teams in the healthcare sector?

The scientific contribution of this study will lie in the increasing of knowledge on an abstract and more concrete level of leadership in self-managing teams, and more specifically the characteristics of these leaders, a topic which, as was stated by Rapp et al. (2015) in their paper, scarcely researched, and thus could benefit from this contribution. A more practical contribution will lie in a better understanding of self-managing teams in a healthcare context, enabling the managers/coaches of these teams to portray themselves in a way that supports their team. This is especially necessary since self-managing teams are becoming more prevalent in the healthcare sector, and thus managers in the healthcare sector need a better understanding of this concept to be able to deal with these self-managing teams.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To be able to answer the question; Which leadership characteristics in which situations are necessary for self-managing teams in the healthcare sector?, first an understanding of the main concepts has to be established. In this case, it is important to know what is meant when talking about Leadership, characteristics and self-managing teams.

Many definitions of leadership exist. One main thread in these definitions can be identified: Leadership is a process of influencing others, guiding their activities and relationships (Yukl, 2010). Most often, leadership is defined in terms of what leaders exhibit: characteristics, behaviour, style or communication patterns. In this paper, the concept of leadership characteristics will be used to examine the usefulness of leadership in self-managing teams.

Since the beginning of research in leadership have characteristics played a large role. In 1948, Stogdill did research about the correlation between personality and leadership (Trait Theories, n.d.). This early research was classified under the heading 'trait theory'. In this paper, traits and characteristics will be treated as synonyms. Indeed, the dictionary tells us that a trait is a 'a distinguishing quality or characteristic'. Examples of such traits or characteristics are integrity, confidence and temperament. In his research, Stogdill found that there is no basis to support the statement that, to be a successful leader, a person must possess a particular set of characteristics. He states

that the importance of a certain trait depends on the circumstances the leader is confronted with, and thus the characteristics a leader needs change with the circumstances(Yukl,2010).

One of the main models integrating personality is the Big Five Model. One way psychologists think about personality is with regards to five main traits. These traits are Extroversion, Adjustment, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Inquisitiveness (Noe et al., 2016).

1. Extroversion	Sociable, gregarious, assertive, talkative, expressive
2. Adjustment	Emotionally stable, nondepressed, secure, content
3. Agreeableness	Courteous, trusting, good-natured, tolerant, cooperative,
4. Conscientiousness	Dependable, organized, persevering, thorough, achievem
5. Inquisitiveness	Curious, imaginative, artistically sensitive, broad-minded

table 1: Big Five Model (Noe et al., 2016, p.184)

They can be described as follows: Extroversion: Extroversion is most often talked about in terms of socialness, talkativeness and assertiveness. Extrovert persons are more likely to talk and take the lead in group situations. Adjustment: often called Emotional Stability or Neuroticism. People who score relatively high on neuroticism generally are more moody than others and are relatively more prone to stress. On the other hand, people who are emotionally stable are often thought of as calm. They experience less negative emotions such as anxiety, and are less prone to stress. Agreeableness: people who are describes as agreeable are often perceived to be warm, empathetic and considerate. Conscientiousness: this dimension deals with to what extent people are organized, thorough and persevering. People who score relatively high on this dimension are sometimes perceived to be perfectionists or workaholics, while people who score low are more laid-back. Inquisitiveness: often called Openness. This deals with a person's curiosity, his imaginativeness and his broad-mindedness. The more a person is described with these adjectives, the more Open this person is (Noe et al., 2016), (Northouse,2013) (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

Findings by Bentz and Bray & Howard support the notion that certain personality characteristics are related to leadership effectiveness. In their research, they found certain characteristics which have this positive effect. Examples of these are level of activity or assertiveness, a dimension of extroversion, emotional stability or adjustment and responsibility (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan, 1994).

The characteristics of a leader are not the only variables deciding the effectiveness of a leader. For example, House et al. (1975) argue that personal characteristics and the environmental demands and pressures these employees have to face play a large role in the effectiveness of leadership.

The situational leadership approach proposes that, for a leader to find the right style of leadership, he should take into account the situational circumstances. The theory holds that, for different situations, leaders should exhibit different characteristics(Northouse,2013). According to the theory, leaders should be concerned with the competence and commitment of an employee in the given situation (Northouse, 2013), (Yukl,2010). Employees with low competence and commitment are deemed to be low-maturity employees, while those employees that are both skilled and committed have a high-maturity (Yukl,2010). The situational variables of an employee's competence and commitment should decide whether a leader exhibits task-oriented behaviour, relations-oriented behaviour or both. Along the progression of an employee from low-maturity to high-maturity, for example through training, increasing competence, and receiving extra responsibilities, increasing commitment, a leader should decrease the amount of task-oriented behaviour. At first, a leader should be concerned with defining roles, clarifying standards and procedures, and monitoring progress on objectives, which is task-oriented behavior, but this attention should gradually decline. When a subordinates competence grows, a leader should exhibit more relations-oriented behavior, through supporting the employee and providing praise and incentives. When an employee has reached high-maturity, both relations- and task-oriented behaviour should be low, because now an employee has the ability to do his work without much direction and monitoring and also has the commitment and confidence to do so (Marques&Dhiman,2017), (Northouse,2013), (Yukl,2010).

The contingency theory of leadership also seeks to fit the preferred characteristics of a leader with the situation a leader finds himself in, or the context within which a leader acts. The theory poses that, for a leader to be effective, the leadership style should be matched to the situation. Contingency theory suggests that there are three situational variables any leader has to deal with. These variables are an important factor in deciding which leadership style (and thus, which leadership characteristics) are to be employed. The situation a leader faces depends on the situational variables in place. These three variables are leader-member relations, task structure and position power. Leader-member relations tell us to what degree employees like their leader, trust him and get along with him. Position power is about the amount of authority a leader has. To what degree can a leader punish his employees, or reward them? The degree to which tasks are clear and well-defined is spelled out in the variable task structure. Based on the standings of these three variables the most preferred style of a leader can be described. The styles are based on relationship-oriented on one hand and task-oriented characteristics on the other hand (Northouse,2013).

Leader–Member Relations	Good				Poor			
Task Structure	High Structure		Low Structure		High Structure		Low Structure	
Position Power	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Preferred Leadership Style	Low LPCs Middle LPCs				High LPCs			Low LPCs

Table 2: Contingency Theory (Northouse,2013)

According to Cummings et. Al. (2009), leaders of healthcare organizations should distinguish between relationally focused leadership and task-focused leadership. Their findings suggest that a more relationally-focused style of leadership has a positive effect on the work environment in the nursing workforce as well as provides a stimulant to the productivity and effectiveness of the employees, whereas a more task-focused style negatively affects the employees' performance.

Self-managing teams are empowered teams. Empowering teams is the process of giving a team more responsibilities, more

specifically the responsibilities normally undertaken by a manager (Rapp et al., 2015). These teams have the autonomy to make their own decisions whereas these decisions would traditionally have been made by managers. Furthermore, these teams are often instated with the goal of completing a whole task. According to Alper, Tjosvold and Law (1998), self-managing teams need to develop cooperative interdependence, aiding to a discussion of opposing views which in turn promotes confidence and improves performance. So, in working together, the team members need to be dependent on each other and on the team as a whole, as this leads to (more) effective performance. Thus, creating interdependence and promoting team confidence should be a focal point for first-line managers in managing empowered teams. One might assume trust between members is an important factor towards building interdependence. According to Langfred (2004), too much trust in a self-managing team can hurt its performance. This effect mainly holds in teams where the monitoring of other team members is minimal. This might prove that, for self-managing teams to be successful, some of the focus should lie on monitoring the work of team members.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Context

The research was conducted at a Dutch health care organization named Livio. The company has approximately 2500 employees, divided over 60-80 teams, and is located in the area of the Dutch city Enschede. The organization mainly provides care at a patients home or at a nursing home. Other tasks are the loaning of nursing assets and the providing of dietary advice. The organization has recently started working with self-managing teams. Due to this, Livio fulfilled the required demands for this study, namely working in the health care sector and having implemented self-managing teams.

3.2 Research Design

Research Design is a catch-all term, describing the what, where, when, how and how much questions regarding the collecting and analyzing of data in a research study. This overall research design can be split into several parts, but should always deal with at least the procedures and techniques which will be used in order to collect data, which population/sample will be studied and why and how data will be analyzed (Kothari, 2004).

No one research design is applicable to all types of research. Therefore, a distinction between types of research needs to be made. In explorative research, the focus lies on the discovery of new ideas and new insights (Kothari, 2004). On the other hand, descriptive research is concerned with describing the items that are being observed (Kothari, 2004).

In this study, the focus lies on explorative research. Since research about leadership characteristics in self-managing teams is scarce, new ideas and insights about this might be gathered, therefore making this an explorative research.

Explorative research and descriptive research both have different requirements with regards to research design. In table 3, these differences are shown.

Research Design	*Type of study*	
	Exploratory of Formulative	*Descriptive/Diagnostic*
Overall design	Flexible design (design must provide opportunity for considering different aspects of the problem)	Rigid design (design must make enough provision for protection against bias and must maximise reliability)
(i) Sampling design	Non-probability sampling design (purposive or judgement sampling)	Probability sampling design (random sampling)
(ii) Statistical design	No pre-planned design for analysis	Pre-planned design for analysis
(iii) Observational design	Unstructured instruments for collection of data	Structured or well thought out instruments for collection of data
(iv) Operational design	No fixed decisions about the operational procedures	Advanced decisions about operational procedures.

Table 3: Research Design (Kothari, 2004)

Qualitative research often digs deeper than quantitative research: “Qualitative researchers recognize that some informants are 'richer' than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher” (Marshall, 1996, p.2).

This is a cross-sectional study, since data was collected from a population at one point in time (Dooley, 2001). It is a case study, because the research focused on the dynamics of leadership in self-managing teams in one setting (Eisenhardt,1989), in this case the Dutch healthcare provider Livio.

3.3 Sample

As can be taken from table 3, the way to go with regards to sampling in exploratory research design is non-probability sampling. A core characteristic of this type of sampling is that, instead of randomly selecting units to be observed as is the case in probabilistic sampling, the samples are based on the judgment of the researcher (Non Probability Sampling, 2012).

In choosing the observable units, judgment sampling was going to be used. This means that, to the best extent of the researcher(s), those people that are best able to answer the questions and provide meaningful information to the research will be chosen (Marshall,1996). Criteria to base these choices on were: Experience in the company, age, level of education, Gender and previous work experience. Since the aim of the study is to provide new insights on the subject, it would make the most sense to have a sample that is as diverse as possible, since different demographic groups might provide different insights which could be useful. To ensure this diversity, people on both sides of every spectrum were to be chosen. However, due to the scarcity of options, convenience sampling was used, meaning to select the most accessible subjects (Marshall, 1996). In table 4, the selected sample is presented.

#	Function	Team	Sort of team	Date	duration
1	Verpleegkundige	Team A	Home care	May 23	45 min
2	Verzorgende IG/ EVV	Team B	intramural	May 29	46 min
3	Verpleegkundige	Team C	Home care	May 31	58 min
4	IG/EVV	Team D	intramural	June 7	48 min
5	verpleegkundige	Team D	intramural	June 7	40 min
6	verpleegkundige	Team E	Home care	June 9	35 min

Table 4: Sample

In qualitative research, the right sample size often only becomes obvious along the progression of the data collection stage. This right sample size becomes apparent when the point of data saturation is reached (Marshall, 1996). Data saturation occurs when researchers will not get any more information regarding their questions by sampling more data; in other words, conducting extra interviews will not lead to new information (Data Saturation, 2013). The aim for this study was to reach this point of data saturation. However, limited time and interviewing made this impossible, having to settle for a state which is not but clearly resembles data saturation. This is shown by respondents giving a very limited amount of new information along the progression of the number of interviews.

3.4 Data Collection

With regards to the qualitative study, the most important question is how the data will be gathered. Most common in qualitative studies is to gather data by having an interview or a focus group (Gill et al., 2008).

A key question in whether to use individual interviews or focus groups is the goal of the objective; to find preferences of interviewees or to explore a concept they might know more about (Azzara, 2010). Since this research aims to both know the preferences, which is best done in interviews, with regards to leadership in self-managing teams as well as explore new insights, which is best done in focus groups, about the subject, it is best to do both individual interviews and focus groups (Azzara, 2010). However, due to constraints, only individual interviews were undertaken.

Interviews can be divided in three main types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill et al., 2008). This research would benefit by having semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews do allow for variation; a set of key questions is predetermined but may be varied on based by the answers given by the interviewees. Since self-managing teams and leadership both have a significant amount of literature devoted to them, we cannot say there is little to no knowledge about these subjects. Therefore, unstructured interviews are not the way to go. However, leadership in self-managing teams is a less studied subject, and the aim of the study is to provide new insights about this subject. Therefore, semi-structured interviews are the best fit: providing guidance to the interviewees based on the predetermined questions while also providing enough flexibility to explore new insights on the concept (Gill et al. 2008).

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions, in order to give the interviewees the chance to elaborate on their answers. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A.

3.5 Operationalization

The main variables in the research question that are to be measured are Leadership Characteristics and situations Therefore, during the interviews the focus should be on these two variables. Operationalizing these variables means to put them in measurable factors (Shuttleworth, n.d.).

The concepts and criteria of Leadership Characteristics, as have been defined in chapter 2 (Noe,2016) can be viewed in table 5.

	Concept	Criteria
Extroversion	Extroversion is most often talked about in terms of socialness, talkativeness and assertiveness. Extrovert persons are more likely to talk and take the lead in group situations.	Sociable, gregarious, assertive, talkative, spontaneity, active
Adjustment	often called Emotional Stability or Neuroticism. People who score relatively high on neuroticism generally are more moody than others and are relatively more prone to stress. On the other hand, people who are emotionally stable are often thought of as calm. They experience less negative emotions such as anxiety, and are less prone to stress.	Stable, secure, content, patient, calm
Agreeableness	people who are describes as agreeable are often perceived to be warm, empathetic and considerate. this dimension deals with to what extent people are organized, thorough and persevering.	Courteous, flexible, trusting, nice, friendly, cooperative, forgiving, tolerant
Conscientiousness	this dimension deals with to what extent people are organized,	Dependable, thorough, organized, hard-working,

	thorough and persevering. People who score relatively high on this dimension are sometimes perceived to be perfectionists or workaholics, while people who score low are more laid-back.	demanding
Inquisitiveness	often called Openness. This deals with a person's curiosity, his imaginativeness and his broad-mindedness. The more a person is described with these adjectives, the more Open this person is	Imaginative, open-minded, curious, artistic

Table 5: Big Five Model operationalization (Noe et al, 2016) (Northouse, 2013) (Barrick & Mount, 1991)

With regards to situations, the theories of situational leadership and contingency theory, as have been defined in chapter 2, can be used to operationalize the abstract concept of 'situations'. In table 2, the three operational variables for 'situations', along with a way to order them. Again, interviewees can be asked to give their opinion about these variables and on this the measurement can be based.

However, this approach would have the disadvantage of possibly differing scales in interviewees; for example, one interviewee saying they find something very important while another says it is only moderately important does not mean they do not both find it equally important. One way to tackle this problem is by always asking for clarification with regards to this categorization.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent (Golafshani, 2003). This is the case when, during an interview, the answers of a respondent regarding a certain concept all point in the same direction instead of being wildly varying. Validity deals with the 'trueness of one's findings: are the results a fair representation of reality (Merriam, 1995)? Instruments (taken from Merriam, 1995, p.4/6) to ensure the validity and reliability of interviews which are relevant to this study are:

1. Triangulation, using multiple sources of data. For example, not only the data collected during the interviews may be taken into account when forging conclusions, but also secondary data obtained during the literature review or secondary data from other interviews. If all these sources give the same evidence, the researcher can be confident that the research is valid and reliable.
2. Peer/colleague examination, ask different peers to comment on the findings. If these comments all support the truthfulness of the research, the researcher can be confident about the validity of his/her research. Also, these peers can check whether the results the researcher finds are consistent with the data that is collected to ensure the reliability of the research.

3.7 Data Analysis

The analyzing of qualitative data is subjected to bias because of the innate tendency inherent to all human beings to selectively pick the data which they deem to be the most sensible or interesting (LeCompte, 2000). Qualitative data is more complex than quantitative data; it cannot be transformed to countable data, ripe for mathematical analysis. Instead, researchers must impose a structure on this data themselves. In this study, the five step plan of analyzing data as proposed by LeCompte (2000) will be used. These five steps consist of:

1. Tidying up, meaning to make a 'clean' set of data.
2. Finding items, meaning the most useful information found during the collecting of data.
3. Creating stable sets of items, meaning to group and classify the items that have been found in step 2. These groups are also called taxonomies.
4. Finding patterns, meaning to find the links between the different taxonomies found in step 3.
5. Making structures, meaning to assemble the patterns found in step 4 into a meaningful structure from which conclusions can be drawn.

External Appendix A contains the ultimate result of the data obtained during the interviews, of which transcripts can be found in External Appendix B, analyzed as proposed by LeCompte (2000). First the set of data was cleaned up by transcribing the raw data, the recordings of the interviews. Then the most useful information, or the items, of each interview were identified, in this case those quotes that present useful information. Then these quotes were grouped in taxonomies based on both literature and research goal. These taxonomies were Competence, Commitment, Task Structure, Leader-Member Relations, Position Power, Traits & Characteristics, Leader Role and Self-Managing Teams. Then, in step 4, the links between the different taxonomies were identified, again based on both literature and research goal. Then, the different taxonomies that linked together were grouped. These groups were: Situational Leadership, which included Competence & Commitment, Contingency Theory, which included Task Structure, Leader-Member Relations & Position Power and Leadership Characteristics, which included Traits & Characteristics & Leader Role. Self-Managing Teams was deemed to be a 'pattern' of and on its own. Then these patterns were all grouped in one structure, named Leadership in Self-Managing Teams.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Self-Managing Teams

Respondents deemed self-managing teams to be teams where the team members are allowed to make decisions, even important ones, themselves, without being dependent on a manager. They see self-managing teams as working independently, instead only co-depending on each other. This is evidenced by the following quotes from interview respondents.

"*a self-managing team is, where you may make certain decisions, important decisions, yourselves, also leading the team yourselves"* (Team member 6)

"a self-managing team is a team that is not dependent on a manager, and can make a policy itself, an own vision which can be exercised" (Team member 5)

"teams which, for the most part, can work independently"(Coach 1)

"we have to arrange everything ourselves, for example when someone is sick you have to arrange substitution" (Team member 3)

4.2 Trait Theory

With regards to Leadership Characteristics, respondents suggest the following: A coach, as the leaders of self-managing teams in Livio are called, should have faith in the employees, and should let them do their thing. As was said by respondents*:*

" I would just throw the money on the table and tell them to figure it out", (Team Member 2)

" a coach guides you, but does indeed let you free", (Team Member 5)

" Dare to trust, dare to let them free". (Coach 1)

A coach should be able to cooperate with employees as equals.

"so you have a sort of equality" (Coach 2)

A coach should be patient

"I think a coach should be patient" (Team Member 1)

neutral, nice and spontaneous

"spontaneous, I think that is also important", (Team Member 1)

but should also know when to step in when things go wrong and be determined and firm when doing so.

"but I think sometimes she should say 'this is how we're going to do it' (Team Member 6)

"Determined, and firm also sometimes" (Team Member 4)

A coach should be sociable, a so-called people person.

"so it should be someone, a people person, there should be contact, an easy click with people" (Team Member 5)

A coach should be able to always remain calm.

"engage in a normal conversation, someone who can tell someone the truth in a calm manner" (Team Member 5)

"the most important thing is, that you can tell someone in a calm way, give them feedback in a calm way" (Coach 1)

Also a coach should be secure and knowledgeable, mainly about various policies.

"and with that I mainly mean to know what is required (Team Member 3)

Moreover, a coach may be demanding

"yes, demanding, yes. I do not mind that" (Team Member 1)

and should always be clear in communication

*"they (*the teams) *want to see clearly the dot on the horizon"* (Coach 1)

should be responsible in his/her tasks

"I would at least try to respond to emails" (Team Member 1)

and should be communicative

"a piece, a little bit communication, maybe" (Team Member 3)

When reviewing what respondents said when asked about the ideal personality and characteristics for the leader of a self-managing team based on the Big Five Model of personality traits (Noe et al., 2016), a couple of main threads can be discovered.

Respondents said a coach should be spontaneous, sociable and communicative. In the big five model, these are traits that are grouped under extroversion. Respondents said that patience, calmness and secureness are important qualities to have as a coach. In the big five model, people who possess these traits are identified as being emotionally stable. Niceness, trusting your employees and being able to cooperate with them as equals were also mentioned to be important factors in the personality of a coach, and these are all factors which point to an ideal coach being agreeable. Furthermore, employees should be able to expect coaches to perform their tasks, even simple things like answering emails, should be able to depend on the coach when they run into problems they cannot solve themselves and should be able to expect a coach to be knowledgeable about different policies the team members have to follow. Also, coaches may be demanding in order to keep the employees from slacking off. These are all qualities that point to a coach having to be conscientious. So, at least according to the respondents, a coach should be extrovert, emotionally stable or adjusted, agreeable and conscientious.

4.3 Situational Leadership

Employees seem to be competent with regards to their normal, healthcare tasks. Respondents said that expertise has increased with regards to the quality of healthcare in the teams. Problem-solving ability in healthcare situations is also more than sufficient, with respondents remarking that the assistance of the coach is mostly unnecessary. However, when asked about the self-managing team tasks, in Livio called Team Tasks, the teams seem to be less competent. Teams often run into trouble regarding these Team Tasks, often needing the coaches help, and even then, it was remarked that it does not run smoothly. However, teams that were farther along the implementation of self-managing teams, and thus have more experience with these Team Tasks, seem to run into problems less often, having more competence. The following quotes support these statements:

"the expertise has increased" (Team Member 1)

"Yes, Yes. We do not need the coach for that" (Team Member 2) (when asked about solving healthcare related-problems)

"yes, but we are trying to solve that now" (Team Member 4) (when asked about running into problems with Team Tasks)

"that does not run smoothly, no" (Coach 2) (when asked about Team Task performance)

"no, I do not think so, I think it operates fine" (Team Member 6) (when asked about Team Task performance)

"with the team we solve a lot of those (Team Task-related) *problems, yes"* (team member 1)

Not only are employees fairly competent, they also seem to be committed, both to the healthcare job as well as the introduction of self-managing teams. Respondents remarked that, in the teams, collaboration is optimal, and team spirit is great. Also, expectations that employee satisfaction will increase due to the introduction of self-managing teams has been articulated. Furthermore, employees said they love their jobs, and always look forward to a day of work. However, not all respondents are as enthusiastic about the concept of self-managing teams. One respondent remarked that the Team Tasks might give way to tension and frustration, while another said the team is bothered by having to do certain things that come with being a self-managing team, in this case giving negative feedback to other team members. However, these complaints are scarce.

"collaboration is optimal" (Team Member 2)

"what I really expect is that employee satisfaction will increase" (Coach 1)

"the team spirit is great" (Team Member 1)

*"yes, I think that (*increasing team spirit) *is due to* (self-managing teams)*"* (Team Member 1)

"yes very positive, I really like to, outside of healthcare, the organizational tasks", (Team Member 6)

*"it (*self-managing teams) *can work great"*, (Team Member 3)

"I think it is great, I really like it"(when referring to self-managing teams) (Team Member 4)

"Now you'll have to do everything yourself, that might cause frustration" (Team Member 2)

"Having to plan yourself, I think that might cause a bit of tension"(Team Member 2)

"that's what really bothered us, having to give negative feedback to each other". (Team Member 3)

What can be gathered from this, is that, while the employees are competent enough to carry out their healthcare tasks and solve the problems that arise there, achieving the Team Tasks proves to be more difficult, and problems arising there are not as easily solved. However, certain teams seem to not have as much trouble with the Team Tasks. This difference might be explained by these teams being in different situations; the teams that had less trouble with the Team Tasks were further along the implementation of Self-Managing teams than the teams that did have trouble with these tasks. Therefore, a distinction between two situations has to be made: teams that are in the beginning phase of becoming self-managing and teams that are further along the process. Furthermore, employees are highly committed to their job and to the concept of self-managing teams, and there seem to be no discrepancies between beginning phase teams and more experienced teams in this regard.

4.4 Contingency Theory

According to the respondents, tasks are unstructured and are prone to change. This goes for the normal everyday healthcare tasks as well as the Team Tasks, signifying that these are unclear and ill-defined.

"every day is different, encounters with the clients are always different", (Team Member 4)

*every day is different", (*Team Member 2)

"no day is the same, it changes every day". (Team Member 3)

"I had to do a bit of absenteeism, and I did not know what that was, and I still don't", (Team Member 3)

Leader member relations are good. Respondents remarked that their coach is 'there' for them and that they show their concern with the team.

"she really shows she is there for us as a team", (Team Member 6)

*" (*coaches are)*more humanistic* (Team Member 5)

"she is always concerned with the team". (Team Member 3)

"we have a good relationship with the coach". (Team Member 2)

The team coaches do not have a lot of authority, something that is to be expected in the concept of self-managing teams but which is confirmed by the respondents. Most of the responsibility lies with the team members, and they are allowed to do their thing. However, when things go wrong, or when teams want to do things they should not do, the coach still has authority, stepping in when the situation calls for it. Still, responsibility and authority mostly lie with the team, and not its coach.

"*we have more responsibilities",* (Team Member 1)

"they let us do our thing", (Team Member 5)

"I really let them free" (Coach 1)

*"there is no threshold (*in interaction with the coach)". Team Member 2

"*in that sense, the coach will always be ultimately responsible",*(Team Member 2)

"in that case, she steps in" (Team Member 3)

"then she reigns us in". (Team Member 3)

5. DISCUSSION

What can be gathered from the results, is that the respondents to the interviews, in describing what self-managing teams are and what the concept of self-managing means to them, gave answers that correlate with the definition of self-managing teams as given by Cohen & Ledford (1994). They posed that 'Self-managing teams are groups of interdependent individuals that can self-regulate their behavior on relatively whole tasks '(Cohen & Ledford,1994,p.1). The members of the team are interdependent on each other in the sense that they have to keep everything going together, and to be able to keep everything going, they are interdependent on each other. For example when someone is sick, the team itself has to take care of substitution. They are self-regulating in the sense that they are self-organizing; the Team Tasks are distributed among the members by those members themselves, and the teams are, for the most part, working independently. Also, the teams are working on whole tasks; they perform the whole care for their clients, and they undertake all the Team Tasks themselves, although this depends on how far along in the transition the team is. So, with regards to what self-managing teams are, this research seems to confirm what was already established by Cohen & Ledford (1994).

5.1 Trait Theory

In their paper, Hogan, Curphy & Hogan (1994), found that certain characteristics improve the effectiveness of a leader. They found that surgency or extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness all have a positive relation with the effectiveness of a leader. Research by Bentz, that was noted by Hogan, Curphy & Hogan (1994), also found that extraversion, emotional stability and conscientiousness were positively related to leader effectiveness. So, according to literature, a leader should be extrovert, conscientious and emotionally stable.

While this might be true for traditional settings in which leaders have a more proactive role compared with self-managing teams, this might not be true for leadership in self-managing teams. Druskat & Wheeler(2003) found that, to be effective, the leader of a self-managing team should relate with the team, scout for information in the organization, the team and from specialists, and make sure the team stays informed about both organizational and team needs, persuade the team to conform to these needs, and empower the teams by delegating authority and responsibility. In order to relate to the teams, Druskat & Wheeler suggested that a leader should show to be fair and dependable, and should be sensitive and kind towards team members. By scouting for organizational needs, a leader improves his knowledge about organizational and legal policies, which should then be communicated to the team. In scouting for

team needs, a leader needs to communicate with his team members, being sensitive about their well-being and showing interest in what the team needs. Also, by scouting for information from specialists, bringing other views to the team, a leader shows to be inquisitive. Persuading a team to conform to organizational needs can be done by being communicative about what this conformity can bring to the team. Finally, empowering a team can only be done when a leader is cooperative with the team and trusts the team members in doing their job. From these 4 spear points on being an effective leader of a self-managing team, a couple of traits and characteristics can be identified which a leader needs to possess. A leader should be fair, sensitive, kind, friendly, cooperative and trusty which all point to leader needing to be agreeable. Dependability and being knowledgeable both point to a leader needing to be conscientious. Being communicative and showing interest in others (being sociable) all point to a leader needing to be extrovert. Furthermore, being inquisitive, seeking out new views on how to do things, points to a leader needing to be 'open'.

What can be taken from this is that coaches should be, according to respondents as well as literature, both literature on traditional leadership and leadership of self-managing teams, extrovert, agreeable and conscientious, as these are the three big five aspects which came forward in all three views. Less consensus exists about emotional stability, which was not mentioned by Druskat & Wheeler (2003). However, this might be due to them focusing not on characteristics per se but on actions and behaviors which originate from these characteristics, and not so much due to the actual unimportance of this personality aspect. Furthermore, Openness or Inquisitiveness was only mentioned by Druskat & Wheeler in their research in leadership in self-managing teams, which might mean this is a prerequisite for effective leadership in self-managing teams.

5.2 Situational Leadership

Situational leadership deals with the employee context a leader has to deal with. It states that the level of commitment and competence of employees decide what type of characteristics a leader should portray (Yukl,2010)(Northouse, 2013). In this case study, it was found that employees are highly competent when it comes to their healthcare tasks. They do not very often run into problems, and when they do they can solve those problems themselves without need for external intervention. This expertise has even increased with the introduction of self-managing teams. However, when it comes to those tasks that specifically have to do with self-management, this competence is lower, with respondents remarking that teams cannot perform these tasks spotless and do often run into problems. However, this insufficient competence seems to mostly affect teams that have only recently started with self-managing teams, whereas teams that have more experience are more able to complete the self-managing tasks.

Therefore, with regards to competence, a distinction has to be made between teams that are in the beginning phase and teams that are further along the implementation of self-managing teams.

When it comes to commitment, it can be stated that employees are committed both to their healthcare tasks, the teams they work in as well as the concept of self-management.

Situational leadership states that, when employees are highly committed and highly competent, management should largely let employees be, since they do not need interference in the form of direction and monitoring. Since the more experienced teams are more highly competent and highly committed, coaches should let these teams do their jobs and not interfere with their performance. For the teams that are just beginning with self-managing teams, and do not yet have the competence to do this sufficiently, coaches should have a more task-oriented behavior, defining roles, clarifying standards and procedures, and monitoring progress, in order to make sure these self-management tasks are completed to satisfaction and do not hold the team back (Yukl, 2010).

5.3 Contingency Theory

Not unlike situational leadership, contingency theory also matches a leaders' situation with his preferred characteristics. In contingency theory, these variables are task structure, position power and leader-member relations.

Regarding task structure, it can be said that healthcare employees have largely unstructured jobs, stating that every day is different, and no day is the same. According to respondents, the team leaders, the coaches, have weak power, which is to be expected in self-managing teams. Leader-member relations seem to be good, with respondents stating the coaches seem to care about and be concerned with the teams and employing humanistic leadership styles improving the relations between coach and team.

In cases were leader-member relations are good, tasks are largely unstructured, both the everyday healthcare tasks and the self-management Team Tasks, and, as is to be expected in a self-management context, team leaders have weak power, leaders should be focused on relationship oriented behavior, concerned with relationship building (Northouse, 2013).

5.4 Implications

5.4.1 Case Study

As was discussed, respondents would like the leader of a self-managing team to be Agreeable, Extrovert, Conscientious and Emotionally Stable, Personality factors which, supported to literature, improve the effectiveness of a leader, both in 'traditional' settings as well as in self-managing teams (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan,1994). A further factor which was identified to be important in self-managing teams was Inquisitiveness (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). What can be learned from Contingency Theory, is that in the case of Livio, where tasks are unstructured, the authority of leaders is weak and leader-member relations are good, literature suggests that the coaches should focus on building relations (Northouse, 2013). In more experienced teams, Livio employees are highly committed and highly competent, both in healthcare tasks as well as self-managing tasks. For these teams, leaders are suggested to mostly let them be and give them the freedom to do their jobs, at most focusing on building relations with the team. With regards to teams that are still in the beginning phase, teams which are not yet sufficiently competent with regards to the self-managing tasks, leaders should be task-oriented, making sure that task performance is up to standard (Yukl, 2010) (Northouse, 2013).

From this, a distinction in situations becomes clear: teams that are still in the beginning phase on the path to becoming self-managing on one hand and teams that are farther along the process on the other hand, and thus, a discrepancy between what managers need to be in the more experienced teams versus what they need to be in teams that have just started becoming self-managing exists. In these experienced, highly competent teams coaches should mostly let the teams do their job, being trusting and cooperative towards the team. In these situations, relation building seems to largely be the coaches only objective with regards to the teams. According to Druskat & Wheeler

(2003), for a leader to be able to build relations with self-managing team members, he/she should show to be dependable, and should act kindly and sensitive towards the team. Furthermore, socialness is a prerequisite in building relations. So, in highly competent teams, coaches should focus on being Agreeable (kind, sensitive), Extrovert (sociable, talkative) and Conscientious (dependable). In less-experienced teams, coaches should be more task oriented. Team members should be able to depend on a coach's expertise, while a coach should be thorough with and demanding of the team in order to make sure performance is up to standard. Furthermore, when things get stuck and hard-to-solve problems arise, coaches should actively seek out solutions, being inquisitive towards new views. So, in less experienced teams, coaches should be Conscientious (dependable, thorough, demanding) and Inquisitive. Eventually, when a team's members have developed a high competence in dealing with their self-management tasks, coaches should adopt the characteristics they would exhibit in the more experienced teams (Yukl, 2010) (Northouse, 2013) (Marques & Dhiman, 2017).

Less-experienced teams	More-experienced teams
Coaches should be task focused, in order to make sure teams perform their self-managing tasks on a sufficient enough level. Furthermore, when things get stuck and hard-to-solve problems arise, coaches should actively seek out solutions, being inquisitive towards new views. To do this, coaches should be: Conscientious (Dependable, thorough, demanding) and Inquisitive.	Coaches should mostly let the competent teams be, trusting their competence in the self-managing and healthcare tasks and only focusing on building relations with these teams. To do this, coaches should be: Agreeable (kind, sensitive), Extrovert (sociable, talkative) and Conscientious (dependable).

Table 6: Leadership in different situations

What can be gathered from this, is that leaders of self-managing teams should always be aware of the situation they find themselves in, and adapt the characteristics they display to this situation. Different situations call for different leadership characteristics, and coaches who fail to recognize this will more often than not be detrimental to the success of the team.

5.4.2 Generalizations

Based on the findings related to the Livio case study and literature devoted to the subjects, a model about leadership characteristics in self-managing teams can be developed, which can be found in Appendix B. Since research about bringing Situational Leadership and Contingency Theory into one theory/model could not be found, those situations where a fit between these two theories could not be defined are left open to interpretation. However, for those situations that do have a fit (which are Highlighted in the Appendix), the preferred characteristics for the leader of a self-managing team can be identified and are presented in the model.

Note that, in using the model, a distinction might have to be made between different situations. In the case of Livio, these differences existed between less-experienced and more-experienced teams, especially with regards to self-managing tasks, and while it might be reasonable to assume the same distinction will occur in other organizations, especially organizations going through a transition phase towards self-managing teams, discrepancies between other situations might exist and should be accounted for in using the model. In those cases where a fit between Situational Leadership and Contingency Theory does not exist, the model does not present a clear cut answer, and in these highly ambiguous situations interpretation is needed.

As discussed before, The current healthcare climate is changing. Clients demand healthcare that is more flexible and of a higher quality, as well as shorter waiting times (Almekinders, 2006). In choosing self-managing teams as a construct to deal with this changing environment, healthcare organizations should be aware of the type of person they appoint as leaders of these teams, while leaders themselves should be aware of how they portray themselves in order to make the teams effective. This is not only the case for healthcare organizations; Leadership Characteristics are an important concept for every organization which has self-managing teams. In the transition towards self-managing teams, leaders should always be aware of the situation they find themselves in, and act accordingly, especially when transitioning happens quickly and situations replace each other rapidly. When this happens, leaders cannot be caught off-guard, because this would negatively affect the performance of the team. Not only should leaders be aware of the situation, they should also be aware of how they behave, which characteristics or traits they display, in these situations, always making sure there is a fit between the situation and the characteristics.

5.5 Limitations

There are some limitations to the strength of the findings in this study.

First, only a limited amount of respondents were procured, and important views regarding the different subjects might have been missed. However, the point of data saturation can be reasonably assumed to have almost been reached, and thus the amount of extra data that could have been procured is very limited and might not even be meaningful. Second, the study is done at one organization only, therefore lacking a variety which might only be attained when having respondents from different sample groups. On the other hand, this case study design does generally provide a researcher with richer, more in depth information and is great for exploring new ideas (Bennet, 2004), such as Leadership in Self-managing teams. Also, research was done at only one point in time, and because of this cross-sectional design, only a snapshot view of based on this time can be offered. Finally, it should be noted that, even after clarification, small discrepancies between what a respondent means and what the researcher interpreted might exist, which could slightly hurt the validity of the study due to conceptualization issues.

Further study should focus on bringing sense to those situations where Situational Leadership and Contingency Theory do not present a clear fit. When this is done, quantitative research based on the model provided in this study is necessary to further prove the validity of this model. Furthermore, new research into the leadership characteristics in self-managing teams could focus on bringing in different views from different organizations in the healthcare or organizations in other sectors that are working with self-managing teams.

6. CONCLUSION

In this study, the preferred characteristics for the leader of a self-managing team, depending on which situation this leader finds him/herself in, were studied in order to be able to answer the question: Which leadership characteristics in which situations are necessary for self-managing teams in the

healthcare sector? In the case of Livio, theory suggests that, in healthcare related situations where team members where highly skilled, leaders should exhibit characteristics commonly referred to as kind and sensitive, frequently referred to as Agreeable, sociable, a factor of Extroversion, and dependable, part of what is deemed Conscientiousness. In self-management situations, where employees were less skilled and ran into trouble more often, leaders are advised to be dependable, thorough and demanding, all factors of Conscientiousness, and Inquisitive.

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9. APPENDIX

9.1 Appendix A- interview protocol

zou u uzelf willen introduceren?
(iets vertellen over uw werkervaring in de zorg, bij Livio)
(welke opleiding heeft u gedaan)
wat is in uw beleving een zelfsturend team (professioneel organiseren) en wat is het volgens Livio?
waarom denkt u dat deze manier van werken is geïntroduceerd(eigen mening, wat werd vanuit de organisatie gezegd)?
werkervaring zelfsturende teams
hoe staat u tegenover het gebruik van zelfsturende teams?
(zaken die goed gaan, eventuele verbeterpunten)
wat is nodig om het gebruik van professioneel organiseren tot een succes te maken?
Hoe ziet de ondersteuning van het professioneel organiseren vanuit de organisatie eruit?
support van P&O?
verwachtingen en ervaringen
waar is hulp nodig?
welke aspecten zijn er veranderd met het overgaan naar professioneel organiseren/zelfsturende teams?
(relatie/betrokkenheid manager/team)
(impact op team/manager)
(manier van werken/tijd voor cliëntenzorg/werkdruk)
(veranderende rol)
hoe ging de manager om met de verandering?
hoe is de samenstelling van de teams veranderd?
Welke eigenschappen zou een manager van een zelfsturend team volgens u moeten hebben?
(een lijst met big five gerelateerde eigenschappen bijhouden om eventueel vervolg vragen over te stellen)
Wat is uw mening over de coach/manager?
Als u voor een dag de manager was, wat zou u veranderen?
Welke werkzaamheden zijn veranderd door de invoering van zelf-sturende teams?
Welke rol speelt de coach/manager in deze werkzaamheden?
Op welke gebieden heeft u ondersteuning nodig van de coach/manager? Waarom?
Op welke gebieden heeft het team als geheel ondersteuning nodig? waarom?
Hoe verschilt het gedrag van de manager in verschillende situaties?
Hoe zou u deze verschillen verklaren?
Hoe verschillen uw taken van dag tot dag en van client tot client?
wat is uw rol binnen het team?
Hoe ziet de verdere taakverdeling in uw team eruit?
wat zijn de rollen van uw collega's? (hoe taken verdeeld, hoe worden teamtaken uitgevoerd)
Hoe zijn de onderlinge relaties in het team?
Hoe gaat u buiten het werk met uw collega's om?
Met wat voor gevoel gaat u s'ochtends naar uw werk?
Wat zijn uw verwachtingen voor de toekomst met betrekking tot de manager/coach?

9.2 Appendix B – leadership in self-managing teams model

High Competence																Low Competence															
High Commitment								Low Commitment								High Commitment								Weak Commitment							
Good Leader Member Relations				Poor Leader Member Relations				Good Leader Member Relations				Poor Leader Member Relations				Good Leader Member Relations				Poor Leader Member Relations				Good Leader Member Relations				Poor Leader Member Relations			
High task Struc-ture		Low Task Struc-ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-Ture		High Task Struc-Ture		Low Task Struc-ture	
STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK
Focused on Building Relations: Agreeable (kind, sensitive) Extrovert (sociable) Conscientious (dependable)								Focused on Building Relations: Agreeable (kind, sensitive) Extrovert (sociable) Conscientious (dependable)								Task-focused: Conscientious (dependable, thorough, demanding) Inquisitive				Task-focused: Conscientious (dependable, thorough, demanding) Inquisitive				Task and relations focused: Agreeable (kind, sensitive) Extrovert (sociable) Conscientious (dependable, thorough, demanding) Inquisitive									