Leading and trusting from a distance

A qualitative study of leadership during remote work and its implications on trust

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Abstract

Through a qualitative study, this thesis aimed to investigate leader behavior and its effects on trust due to a transition from face-to-face to a remote work setting. The study was based on a sample of 12 individuals, out of which four having leader positions and the rest being employees in the selected organization SVT. Transformational Leadership theory was used to understand and analyze the interviewees' perceptions of leader behavior today, compared to before remote work. The Integrative Model of Trust was used to support, enrich and elaborate on how leaders' adaption to the transition affected the level of trust the employees had towards their leader. The findings from the single-case study showed that leader behavior did change in relation with increased remote work. Additionally, one factor of trust had increased, one had decreased and one was perceived to not have changed. This study helps increase the understanding of the ways today's leaders have adapted their leadership behavior as a result of remote work. By seeing how leadership change has affected trust, and specifically what components of trust, the reader can learn from the identified current mistakes the single-case study leaders' made, thus avoiding missing out on the benefits from an increased Transformational Leadership. By reading the study, today's leaders in remote work can both improve their leadership and increase their employees' trust towards them, to further take their own and their organizations development to a higher level.

Key-Words: Trust, Virtual Teams, Remote Work, Transformational Leadership, Digital Transformation

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Definitions

Table 1. Definitions

Concept	Definition
Trustor	The believing entity (Xiu and Liu, 2005).
Trustee	The entity that acts or intends to act beneficially towards the believing entity (Xiu and Liu, 2005).

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background:

The concept of remote work was introduced to the workplace in the 1960s (Nilles, 1975), in conjunction with the first telecommunication network being available in peoples homes. The possibility for remote work was an outcome of several changes in the workplace at the time such as as a measure to solve the many hours of employees' transportation to their work (Olson, 1983). Later, remote work gained popularity since it was implemented as a strategy to overcome regional talent acquisition challenges (Soroui, 2020). Also, it became an opportunity to outsource and contract work (Cappelli and Keller, 2003).

In a pre-COVID work setting, knowledge workers were the most likely to engage in remote work. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, there was an observed migration of labor such as teaching, tourism and medicine to remote work (Dingel and Neiman, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, people and organizations were forced to adapt and adjust. To protect people from infection, many organizations fully moved to working remotely (Holmberg and Petrelius, 2020). Instantly, leaders were in a situation where new challenges and opportunities were at hand.

Literature has concluded some leadership skills and behaviors that have become more vital in a remote work setting. According to Pinzaru and Zbuchea (2020), some of these are adaptability, flexibility and resilience of business. At the same time, the concept of trust has gained attention in relation to virtual teams research. Many researchers agreed that trust was a vital component in teams and organizations, particularly for virtual teams working remotely (Feitosa, Salas 2021). Thus, transitioning to a virtual work setting demanded an additional level of trust to maintain a healthy and effective team and organization.

1.2 Previous research, Research gap and Research question:

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, remote work significantly increased, leading to an upswing in research on the subject. Much of the research conducted post-COVID has focused on how remote work has affected work-life-balance, mental-health issues and employee wellbeing (Pirzadeh and Lingard, 2021), while much of the research conducted pre-COVID tended to focus on communication and the advanced information technology (AIT) allowing remote work to take place (Avolio et al. 2014; Mehtab et al. 2017).

Collaboration and trust-building were two focus areas in the research on virtual teams (Gibson and Cohen, 2003; Huang, Kahai, Jestice, 2010). Although remote work and virtual leadership has been on the academic radar for a long time, most managers did not develop a holistic view on what virtual leadership entailed (Holmberg and Petrelius, 2020). According

to Feitosa and Salas (2020) trust mattered particularly in virtual-teams. However, recent studies, with some presented in the literature review, have focused on establishing trust in virtual teams even though current teams already had an established level of trust. Hence, there was a lack of research regarding maintaining trust in teams that have worked together before a transition to remote work.

Therefore, this study was interested in mapping out the perceived effects that an abrupt transition to remote working has had on leader behavior and how it has affected employees' perceived trust for their leader. The research question for this study thus became;

> *How have leaders adapted their behavior to remote settings and what are the implications for perceived trust among the employees towards their leader?*

1.3 Purpose and Aim:

The purpose of this study was to investigate leadership behavior and its effects on trust due to a transition from face-to-face to a remote work setting. That was done by collecting empirical data from teams in an organization that otherwise worked in an office, but has moved to work remotely. The aim was to see what the change had done to leader behavior and its implications on employees' trust for their leaders. The study further aimed to add value for the leaders and managers, aiding them in shaping their future leadership behaviors in a way that would enable them to increase their perceived trustworthiness.

1.4 Delimitations:

The authors chose to limit the study to Stockholm, Sweden. The study was also limited to one organization, making it a single case study, which will be motivated in section 4.5.

One important delimitation included focusing on the employees' trust for their leader. Hence, neither looking at leaders' trust for their employees, nor the trust both parties had for each other. That was done because the aim of the study was to add value for the leaders and managers, aiding them in shaping their future leadership behaviors in a way that would enable them to increase their perceived trustworthiness.

Lastly, the study chose to focus on a population that usually was not working remotely, implying excluding organizations and individuals that previously had experience working remotely. That was done due to the author's aim of identifying changes between before and after remote work.

2. Literature Review

This section reviewed previous literature, presenting the current state of knowledge in the subject of this research; leadership during remote work and trust. Relevance, value and sufficiency was taken into consideration when conducting the literature search (Saunders et al. 2019). The authors specified the search protocol before the literature review began.

Pre-Planned Strategy	
Databases	Google Scholar, SSE Library, Scopus
Main Theoretical Fields	Leadership, Leader behaviors, Trust, Remote work
Literature	Academic Articles, Theses (MCs & BCs), Books & Meta studies
Search Words	Trust, Virtual teams, Remote work, Transformational Leadership, Digital transformation, Integrative Model of Trust
Criteria for Article Selection	Search words have been made with the compromise of keywords mentioned in the abstract, definitions and other related terms within the studied area.

2.1 A need for adaption of leadership due to remote-work:

The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 forced many offices to close due to regulations and laws. People worked remotely, had meetings online and were hindered from physical interactions. In the spring of 2020, Holmberg and Petrelius conducted a study based on 34 interviews with managers, showing that managerial struggles from facing new challenges created a need for leadership adaptation. Some of the challenges included employees feeling bored, unengaged and having to attend meetings from morning to dawn. Holmberg and Petrelius' (2020) study indicated that worker engagement and innovation was hard for managers to implement, and that building and sustaining trust became increasingly difficult.

Kraut, (1990), presented a similar result as Holmberg and Petrelius' (2020) and claimed that decisions-making, lobbying and meaningful discussions often took place in informal communication settings. As a result, leaders had to find other ways of practicing leadership when these occasions were taken away. A study done in 2021 by Lee, Yeunjae et al. also claimed that communication and trust were central factors during COVID-19. Further, Sobel Lojeski and Reilly (2020) concluded that as we moved closer towards remote-work, with

communication becoming harder to master, new leadership skills and practices with a focus on collective leadership, needed to be developed.

2.2 Virtual teams and virtual leadership:

Schmidt (2004) argued in his article that the future of leadership was virtual. Mehtab et al. (2017) additionally stated that virtual work settings were revolutionizing the workplace by providing a high level of flexibility and responsiveness. Nonetheless, they also presented one important challenge virtual leaders faced, which was the difficulty of controlling every team member's activities due to different geographical locations. This increased leaders considering the delegation principle and handing managerial functions down the hierarchy. Mehtab et al. (2017) described that remote leaders needed to be more specific when conveying goals, purposes and when motivating and empowering employees to sustain great efforts.

Although the hitherto presented studies on remote work were conducted before the pandemic, the essence remained the same as the context did not change. Nonetheless, the pandemic brought with it new implications of remote work such as enforced lock-down, health issues, fear and overall societal insecurity affecting people and workers, leading to differences in studies on remote work before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. The authors have therefore included both post-pandemic articles and pre-pandemic articles.

Solberg et al. (2020) did an exploratory study on how remote work affected leadership styles and employee motivation. Results showed that leadership style had changed during the transition to remote work, making it increasingly important for leaders to be human-centric; caring and being more nurturing of their employees. Leaders also improved their own communication by clearly defining their targets, and then breaking them down into smaller increments to make it less overwhelming for employees. Kerrissey and Edmondson (2020) examined what great leadership was during a global pandemic by looking at different leaders and came to similar conclusions; that leaders should communicate with transparency and engage in constant updating, making sure all employees were onboard.

2.3 Trust in virtual teams:

In a post pandemic environment, Solberg et. al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study with both leaders and employees. Results showed that leaders transitioning to remote work had become more empathic, realizing that they needed to provide their employees with an increased amount of responsibility to ensure trust at a higher degree.

Similarly, Holmberg and Petrelius (2020) concluded in their study that ensuring trust for their employees had emerged as a key leadership skill due to the transition to remote work. However, that assurance of trust had, seen from a technological viewpoint, been harder to maintain and establish as the growing presence of electronically mediated teamwork (Breuer

et al. 2016) had resulted in virtual teams often failing to meet their envisioned potential (Greenberg et al. 2007). Although it had been established that trust existed in virtual teams, face-to-face encounters were still considered irreplaceable for both building trust and repairing shattered trust (Nohria and Eccles, 1992).

Several studies supported that communication was a vital factor for trust in virtual teams (Kaufmann and Carmi, 2017; Greenberg et al. 2007). Kaufmann and Carmi (2017) claimed that it was vital for leaders to use the most suitable communication channels for certain purposes, and to encourage team members doing the same to increase trust. Another important factor ensuring trust was the frequency of communication. As face-to-face encounters were limited for virtual teams, they needed to be replaced with an increased amount of digital communication.

2.4 Transformational Leadership and The Integrative Model of Trust:

A major part of research focused on Transformational Leadership and its effects on trust. One study concluded that Transformational Leadership had both direct and indirect correlations with followers' trust for their leaders and that transformational leader behavior enhanced followers' trust for their leaders (Jung and Avolio, 2000). Another study performed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) studied leader behavior with Transformational Leadership to understand their effects on followers' trust in leaders. Their results indicated that the behavioral effects of transformational leaders were indirect rather than direct, meaning that they were mediated by followers' trust in their leaders; further implying change in trust as a measure of change in Transformational Leadership.

Furthermore, Transformational Leadership and trust have been studied in both the context of organizational change and the state of non-change. However, the results of both streams of studies, although different, showed to be similar; that transformation was directly and indirectly linked to the level of trust followers had for their leaders.

In 2002, Dirks and Ferrin published a meta-study on trust in leaders over the past four decades. Their study reviewed previous literature that had been examining trust in relation to Transformational Leadership, and not in relation to any other leadership theory, strongly indicating to the authors that Transformational Leadership and trust were often used together in research. Furthermore, there has been additional research examining the relationship between Transformational Leadership and trust (Bass, 1985; Bass, et al. 1994; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Lleo et al. 2022; Podsakoff et al. 1996). An interesting result that Lleo et al. (2022) concluded from their study of shaping trust in schools was that integrity and benevolence were key factors in determining trust, and that the perceived ability of teachers was not effective in generating trust. Additionally, research done by Jarvenpaa et al. (1998) proved that the perceived benevolence of team members had a stronger effect over time.

3. Theory

3.1 Theoretical Framework:

There were numerous models and theories aiming to explain leadership styles, behaviors and characteristics. One of the most prominent theories on leadership was the universally recognized Transformational Leadership theory (Bernard M. Bass, 1999). The Transformational Leadership theory had been used in both qualitative and quantitative research to study leader behaviors. It was a theory with a set of generalizations of what leaders that worked with transforming their employees tended to do (Northouse, P, 2015). Transformational Leadership was often used to study leadership within a wide variety of industries such as military, healthcare and educational environments (ibid). Transformational Leadership was chosen because the approach was considered the most suitable leadership style when nurturing followers during organizational change, which the transition to remote work was (Sharma and Krishnan, 2012). Additionally, its profound connection to trust, shown in the literature review, increased the reason for choosing the theory. The theory also demonstrates specific leaders' behaviors, which the authors aimed to study.

This study additionally utilized a model of trust developed by Schoorman, Davis and Mayer in 1995. The model presented three factors of perceived trustworthiness, and a dimension of propensity of risk. The three models had been adopted and applied to much research on trust. It had further been used in research on trust within teams, trust from customers and trust between employer and employee. As the model was still frequently used, it indicated its non-outdated relevance. The Schoorman et al. 1995 framework was still extensively used in research on virtual teams, additionally making it a suitable model for this study.

As displayed in the literature review, the Transformational Leadership theory was very compatible with the Integrative Model of Trust (Dirks et al. in 2002), which further motivated the author's choice of the theoretical framework.

3.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership was originally developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Since then, it has been refined by many researchers. Kouzes and Posner (2002) and Bennis and Nanus (2007) were researchers that had contributed substantially to the Transformational Leadership perspective. In 1985 Bass developed his model on Transformational Leadership by refining and expanding Burns (1978)'s work on Transformational Leadership and House (1976)'s work on charismatic leadership. Bass identified 4 factors of Transformational Leadership; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

3.2.1 Idealized influence

The emotional component of leadership, idealized influence, illustrated leaders ability to act as role models to their followers. These leaders usually possessed high moral standards and could be counted on to do the right thing. They were respected by their followers and their followers often put a lot of trust in their leader. These leaders provided their followers with a clear vision and sense of mission, in addition to their willingness to take risks.

3.2.2 Inspirational motivation

The second factor described leaders' behavior such as communicating high expectations, inspiring the followers and motivating the followers to become committed to the shared vision in the organization. These leaders focused on group members' efforts to achieve more than they would in their self interest and more than they might have thought they could do. Inspirational motivation enhanced team spirit through pep-talks, encouraging words and clear communication, which were typical leader behaviors of this factor. These leaders were also motivating and demonstrating commitment to goals.

3.2.3 Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation included leaders that encouraged creativity and innovation in their followers. They also encouraged their followers to challenge their ways of thinking and their ways of operating. Challenges were also set on an organizational level, where operational strategies were questioned to improve the organization and engage it in problem solving.

3.2.4 Individualized consideration

This factor represented leaders who created a supportive environment in which they listened to their followers to identify their needs. These leaders engaged in coaching and acted as advisors assisting the followers to achieve goals. They used delegation of assignments to help followers grow through challenges, and interactions with followers were encouraged. The leaders were further aware of individualized concerns and went beyond their way of meeting them.

3.3 An Integrative Model of Trust

Schoorman, Davis and Mayer developed an Integrative Model of Trust where they considered the characteristics of the trustor, the trustee and the role of risk. The creators of the model developed the model through a review of factors that lead to trust, and three characteristics of the trustee appeared; ability, benevolence and integrity. Together, they explain a major portion of trustworthiness. Each contributed to a unique perceptual perspective from which to consider the trustee, while the set provided a solid and parsimonious foundation for the empirical study of trust for another party (Schoorman et al. 1995). If ability, benevolence, and

integrity were all perceived to be high, the trustee would be deemed quite trustworthy. However, trustworthiness should be thought of as a continuum, rather than the trustee being either trustworthy or not trustworthy. As each of the three factors could vary along a continuum, the authors have used the model to determine trust as a continuum in each of the three factors.

3.3.1 Ability

Ability referred to the leader having a set of skills, competencies and characteristics that enabled them to have influence in a certain domain. The domain was specific to the area which they work in since a trustee could be highly competent in some area that was not related to where the trustee was supposed to have influence. However, ability was also related to the trustees knowledge about the overall organization and only the technical knowledge of a specific work task, signifying a leader's intelligence to behave business-like and having competence to manage and operate the business.

3.3.2 Benevolence

Benevolence was the degree to which a trustee was believed to want to do good for the trustor aside from egocentric motives. Benevolence indicated that the trustee had some kind of attachment to the trustor, that the trustee wanted to help the trustor and was willing to do more than required, without an extrinsic reward. Benevolence was the perception of the trustee wanting to help the trustor (Schoorman et al. 1995). Benevolence was shown in the social interactions between trustor and trustee, for example by showing interest, behaving equally all the time and showing consideration and sensitivity to one's personal and emotional needs and feelings.

3.3.3 Integrity

The relationship between integrity and trust involved the trustor's perception that the trustee adhered to a set of principles that the trustor found acceptable (Schoorman et al. 1995). Integrity was also created through credible communication, with the trustee being perceived as fair, reliable, consistent, honest and predictable. Thus, integrity displayed honesty and morality in daily functions, where leaders who were authentic, reliable and kept promises displayed a high level of integrity.

3.4 Theory discussion and application

The Transformational Leadership theory has been used to identify leaders' adaption to the transition to remote work, and the trust model has been used to map the employees level of perceived trust towards their leaders. The trust model served as an explanatory model for the

implications of employees perceived trust towards their leaders in relation to the sudden transition to remote work. Combined, the theory and model served as a framework to determine remote working's effect on leader behavior and its effects on employees' perceived trust for their leaders. Together they supported the authors' mission to answer the research question.

3.5 Theory Criticism

The authors were aware that there were some limitations with the chosen theoretical framework and acknowledged deficiencies with the respective theories. The first critique involved both the theory and model being created a relatively long time ago, as they stemmed from 1985 and 1995 respectively. The authors knew that several new theories and models have been developed on the subject of leader behavior and trust. However, as aforementioned, both theory and model were still in use in modern research, without signs of being outdated. Their prolonged relevance indicated to the authors that they were valid to use and base research on. Additionally, in relation to remote work, the theory and model have not been proven to answer how they combined, along with the technological changes, affected remote work (Macías, 2018), making it valuable to examine.

4. Method

4.1 Research Philosophy

This study has been developed in a subjectivist ontology, implying that the authors assumed that social reality was made from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (Lewis et al. 2019). The authors were interested in the different narratives and perceptions of the interview subjects, which aided them to account for different social realities, thus answering the research question. The subjectivist ontology laid the foundation for the research question and the aim of the study; researching how leader behavior during remote work affected employees' trust for their leaders. The authors have hence been using sensemaking to the extent of understanding the interview subjects' portrayals of the social reality and their individual experiences.

The epistemological standpoint of this study related to both the ontological standpoint, but also the data collection method which was qualitative. As opinions of the interview subjects were considered acceptable knowledge (Lewis et al. 2019), and spoken words and visuals were considered good-quality data, it became suitable to collect data through a qualitative research design.

4.2 Research Design

This study was developed in the interpretivist research paradigm as the focus of the research was how the interview subjects perceived the world around them. With regards to the research question and the aim of the study, the paradigm aligned well as the authors researched how the interviewees perceived their leaders' behavior and what it implied for their trust towards them. According to Bryman et al. (2019), the interpretivist approach was suitable to understand how and why things occur in a social setting, which was important in the study of human behavior. Through usage of sensemaking and the chosen theoretical framework, the authors aimed to draw conclusions based on the investigated interview sample, and their perception of their reality. Thus, not to reach a fact-based, definitive answer. The purpose involved exploring what had happened to leadership behavior due to a remote-work setting, and its implications on employees' trust for their leader. That required an interpretation of both what and how the empirical data was communicated to the authors, which related to the epistemological standpoint.

4.3 Abductive Research

The authors chose to conduct their research in an abductive way, meaning that the empirical data and theory was collected and developed in parallel. In a deductive approach, the identified themes examined were linked to existing theory, while in an inductive approach,

themes were derived from the data and examined, without imposing a framework of themes based on existing theory (Saunders et al. 2019). To solely rely on one of the approaches would have increased the risk of two defaults; the first, related to the deductive approach, was becoming focused on specific parts of the data rather than analyzing the whole data in an undiscriminating way. The other one, related to the inductive approach, was risking reaching false conclusions even with accurate observations. Thus, by adopting an abductive approach, the authors decreased the risk of the defaults connected to the two approaches. Furthermore, it allowed them to create an analysis with theory-derived themes, while retaining the opportunity to modify them as they further explored the data. As the abductive approach allowed the authors to go back and forth in the process of conducting this study, it became suitable.

4.4 Interview design/data collection method

In qualitative research, meanings were derived from words and images, and not from numbers (Lewis et al. 2019). As images and words have both multiple meanings and unclear meanings, it was necessary to explore and clarify these with the interview subjects. The trustworthiness of qualitative research was often questioned as the concept of validity and reliability could not be addressed in the same way as in naturalistic work (Shenton, 2004). Guba (1981) developed four criterias that qualitative researchers must consider to ensure trustworthiness which were; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Those criterias were considered by the authors through using multiple data sources (both leaders and employees), member-checking authors' work, and having one theory supported by one model in order to gain a more complete understanding. By doing so, the authors could ensure that the research findings were rich, comprehensive and well-developed. In regards to the member-checking, data, interpretations, and conclusions were shared between the two authors. That further allowed them to clarify their intentions, correct errors, and provide additional information if necessary.

The authors have further conducted semi-structured interviews with open-end questions that were followed with necessary follow-up questions to ensure a full picture portrayed. As the subjectivist ontology and interpretive paradigm implied interpreting what people were saying as their own perceptions and not as "truths", the follow-up questions were necessary for the authors to gain a broader understanding of the interviewees.

4.5 Interview Sample

The authors interviewed 12 people from the organization SVT (Sveriges Television). The assessment was made that no further interviews had to be conducted after those 12 due to achieved empirical saturation. Out of the 12, four were leaders, with two employees from every leader's team. This arrangement, providing intel from several leaders, and more than one follower, helped decrease possible biases. The gender distribution was 75% female

leaders and 25% male leaders. That was assessed as acceptable considering the domination of female leaders at SVT, being at 57% (SVT, 2021). To capture the whole picture of leaders' behavior within the firm, all leaders were from various parts of the organization, with the common factor being that all have been working remotely during the pandemic. Among the eight employees, 50% were male and 50% were female.

One drawback in this sample was that the respective leaders had chosen which of their employees to participate in the study, which caused a certain level of bias since the leaders probably chose employees they thought would speak in their favor.

The authors constructed two interview guides with questions based on the chosen theoretical framework (see appendix). There was one interview guide for leaders and one for employees. All interviews were held digitally via Microsoft Teams, took approximately 45 minutes each, and were transcribed shortly after conduction.

The authors chose a single-case study to limit the number of variables that by nature differed between organizations and could affect the responses of the interview subjects. Those included corporate policies, cultural norms, and company structure. Yin (2009) defined case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Thus, the single case-study research design allowed for deeper analysis and understanding of the explored subject. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledged limitations with the interview sample involving participants who all were roughly the same age and had the same ethnicity. Studying a more diverse sample might have suggested a more accurate result as it would account for more perspectives, combating biases, group thinking, and other factors influencing the result (Alpi and Evans, 2019).

Name	Gender	Role	Number of employees in the team	Interview time	Length of relationship with leader (years)
Marie	Female	Leader	22	51:34	-
Philippa	Female	Marie's Employee	22	41:51	15

Emelie	Female	Marie's Employee	22	40:40	9
Anna	Female	Leader	5	46:18	-
Vendela	Female	Anna's Employee	5	44:16	12
John	Male	Anna's Employee	5	45:57	6
Karin	Female	Leader	5	58:32	-
Adam	Male	Karin's Employee	5	52:44	8
Joel	Male	Karin's Employe	5	47:28	3
Krister	Male	Leader	12	47:35	-
Martin	Male	Krister's Employee	12	51:38	13
Sofia	Female	Krister's Employee	12	42:12	5

4.6 Process and analysis of the empirics

On the basis of the chosen theoretical framework, the empirical material was analyzed thematically where the author identified patterns such as repetition in answers and similarities, aiming to create plausible and coherent thematic mapping and explanation (Clarke, et al. 2015). The authors followed steps involving transcribing the interviews, identifying initial list of codes, searching for recurring themes, reviewing them, defining and naming the themes, and lastly producing the report (Jason and Glenwick 2015). The authors then compared the categories with existing theory accordingly with the abductive research design (Lewis et al. 2019). The labels of the themes were developed using the interviewees words (in vivo) accordingly with the subjectivist ontology.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

As Mohd Arifin, S. R. (2018) stated in her article, it was important to protect the human subject through appropriate ethical principles in all research, but especially in qualitative

research due to the in depth nature of the study process. The ethical principles that the authors considered was firstly consent; all interview subjects were asked if they consented to participate in the study. By explaining to the interviewees what this study was about and the aim of it, the authors aimed to reach an informed consent (Lewis et al. 2019). Additionally, each interview began with the authors asking the interviewees if the interview could be audio-recorded. The authors also described that they would all be completely anonymous in the study, increasing the probability of openness and honesty. Anonymity was the second ethical consideration; all names and roles within the organization have been anonymized. Although a single case study, the organization was deliberately chosen due to its big size with enough divisions not to make the reader able to draw conclusions on who the specific respondent was, which too was communicated to the interview subjects. A last ethical consideration taken by the authors was that no sensitive data in accordance with GDPR was dealt with during the interviews. Hence, no data revealing information such as racial or ethnic origin, political opinions and religious or philosophical beliefs was used in the study (European Commision, 2018).

5. Empirics

The authors have, from the conducted interviews, coded the collected data in a thematic way. The recurring and repetitive themes are presented below.

5.1 Leaders Availability

The common perception was that the leaders' availability had not changed significantly since they always had been very available. Only a slight change occurred regarding availability. Marie said *"I have always been available and very reachable. However, I am present more around my computer now compared to before, so people can call on teams in the evening."*. John said about his boss that *"In the chat she has always been available, even before {the pandemic}. But I think she has felt during remote work and the pandemic that she is supposed to be more available. So when I reach out to her she is always fast."*. Adam was of a slightly different opinion where he perceived that his bosses availability had definitely increased during remote-work. When asked if he thought availability had increased he answered; *"Yes I think so, it is like this, before you could not just call someone on the phone and people were often busy in other meetings or such, but now it is so easy to just call or write on teams and get a quick answer."*.

5.2 Change in communication

Marie described that people had a greater need to talk since they were more isolated working from home, which led her to implement a standing monday-meeting discussing anything and everything, not only work related. Marie also expressed that remote working had led to difficulties in reading people's emotions and how people were doing. She said *"And that has led me to increase the number of scheduled individual meetings because I believe that if I talk to a person often and long enough, I will notice if that person feels bad about something."*. Vendela confirmed that she and her boss Anna in fact had more communication, saying *"Mine and Annas contact has increased in the form of more reconciliation meetings, from every third week to every week. The communication within the whole group has also increased to make sure we are doing the right things. However, sometimes I feel that the increased frequency of individual communication is at the expense of team clarity, despite the increased group communication. It has been hard to know exactly what the other employees are doing unless asking privately.``*

Another change regarding communication that had taken place due to the transition to remote working was the perception of more structured meetings and communication. Krister expressed that *"I think the communication has become more structured since we have our reconciliation meetings more often and more planned and scheduled."*. Karin also said that *"I have always been a clear boss, but all this planning for meetings, steering the meetings to be*

efficient and making sure everyone knows what is expected from them is something I have gotten better at during remote working.".

5.3 Leaders communicating expectations

A recurring theme was leaders' communication of expectations on their employees after switching to remote work. Karin expressed that *"I think I am pretty clear as a manager and I was clear before as well. However, preparing meetings properly and creating agendas and materials in invitations have become more important to ensure everyone knows what is expected of them.".* This implied the need of a clearer communication, which also was a fact the leaders agreed upon. Karin continued by saying *"You need to clearly steer the meetings in a different way so that people know what they are expected to contribute to in the meeting. You would probably need to do it anyway, but its importance has become clearer in these times."*

Additionally, the leaders described their increased effort to challenge and motivate their employees to make them more committed to the shared vision, and staying engaged. Anna expressed *"I give the employees assignments that they may not have thought from the beginning that they would get or manage, and that I also encourage them with assignments that they were initially unsure of if they could manage, making them go a little outside their comfort zone.".* Krister continued by saying *"Before, you did your job and it was standard, it kind of was expected from you. You sure could verbally encourage the team to become and produce their best, but it didn't matter for most. Now, you can clearly see the team appreciating the positive feedback and encouragement to still perform and be their best.".*

However, some employees expressed a slight difference in the amount of workload that they received from their leaders. During remote work some employees seem to have gotten more work than others, Joel expressed *"Remote work has put additional pressure on our leader which has affected her increased effort to motivate all of us in the team. However, I can see a clear difference in how we {team members} are treated in forms of for example how much workload we get. Some of us have got super much to do while some have been more excluded from the process, I absolutely see that as a difference from when we were at the office."*

5.4 Working with and towards goals

Another theme from the interviews was clear goal-setting that everyone was well aware of to get them reached. Anna's perception of their work with goals during remote-work went as follows; *"Having clear goals is something I have become much better at during the pandemic. We have looked more at our mission.* And when the authors asked about making sure everyone was aware of the goals, Krister said *"We still have some work to do but we HAVE had the discussion much more often than we did before. ".*

Marie described that the importance of working with goals had not gotten more important, but that she had gotten better at it as she had been putting more effort into it; *"I would say that there is no difference in the importance of having goals, it has been equally important. Although I have tried to be more clear that people are aware of the big goal and mission of the whole organization and that everyone knows what to do in order to achieve that by giving everyone smaller individual goals."*. Adam was also of the same opinion; *"It has always been extremely important, but I do not think there has been the same level of focus on it as it is now, I feel that we have very clear goals now coming from all the way up from the strategic mission of SVT, and I experience that as new."*.

5.5 Motivation

As most of the employees worked for their respective leader for a long time, they had already developed the self-confidence to be self-propelled. However remote-work seemed to have an impact on how leaders worked to motivate their employees. Anna said *"I had to think more about giving feedback, sending a comment here and there and always reminding them that they were doing a good job and that what they were doing was important and appreciated."*.

Adam was of the perception that his leader was motivating him *"I think she is good at telling me when she thinks I have done something well, and she is good at creating a"we-feeling"*. Marie said *"The need to motivate and make work more fun and challenging has increased, since the employees probably think it is more boring to sit at home alone and work so they need more stimulance."*.

5.6 Focus on individual needs and the emotional aspects

All leaders expressed that their employees and themselves were not in need of more support or coaching during the remote work compared to before. The employee Joel described it as *"I do not feel that I need the extra support… I am used to being involved in stuff, getting scolded everywhere and getting everyone angry. I am so used to taking care of myself, and especially when there is a crisis."* From a leader's perspective, Anna mentioned that *"everyone already has fairly defined tasks or areas of responsibility from before….I have great confidence that they do what they are supposed to {without additional emotional support} and that they do it in a great way."*.

However, that contradicted what the leaders later expressed in the interviews as all of them expressed that they had implemented more emotional support, been more empathetic and had asked more often about their employees well-being. Karin expressed that *"Showing warmth and kindness, that is something I have worked a lot with. I believe it has led to much greater collaborations. We are more responsive to how we can support each other"*. When speaking of what Joel's boss had done for him during remote work, Joel said *"We care for each other*

more now. I have received flowers from Karin when I did something good, which I have never gotten before, and we cherish each other more.".

Marie described similar behaviors, *"It is included in my remote-leadership role to be extra meticulous and cautious and talk more about people's well-being and how they really are feeling. So now I hear more about their {the employees} divorces, grieves or tangles, since I deliberately ask.".*

5.7 Thinking outside the box

The transition to remote-work forced leaders to not only think outside the box, but also to encourage their employees to do the same. When talking about creativity, Karin said that they had focused a lot on problem-solving, saying *"So there was a lot of problem solving especially in the beginning but also now, having to find new ways, and seeing positively on the future.".* Philippa spoke about creativity and being encouraged to do things differently, saying *"Absolutely, she encourages me. Now working from home we have to be even better at it so often in our individual discussions she pushes me a bit to think outside the box. She is especially encouraging about creativity when I get a bit stuck on things.".*

Most of the leaders expressed that they were actively trying to challenge their employees, both for their personal growth and for the purpose of developing competencies that the organization needed. Krister said *"I think I challenge my employees, at least I hope I do. I try giving them projects that maybe they did not think they would get or be able to handle, making them go a bit outside their comfort zone. And I think this has increased from when we were at the office, it has been turned up.".* Martin described that the roles in his group had slightly changed since they moved to remote-work. He had gotten more responsibility instead of being the "co-pilot". In this change he experienced that his leader pushed him extra to develop in the role and manage the tasks *"She boosts me to accomplish more than I thought I would in my co-pilot role, now being sort of a devil's lawyer.".*

5.8 Risk-Taking

The sudden transition to remote work caused leaders to take more risks as no one could be sure of the outcomes. Anna's perception of risk was that *"I think it has actually increased. Because no one has actually experienced this before so we do not know how things are going to work out so we have tested more things and I am trying to have the mantra within the group that "we try this and if it does not work we try something else", we need to be prepared that things might not work out the way we expect.".*

Sofias perception of the subject risk was the following; *"During this whole pandemic and remote-work nothing has been the same, there has been no templates, and I think we have been really good at trying new things, and that in itself is taking risks. My boss has not always known what or how it is going to turn out, but we have done it because we have to. We have also faced situations where we have had to act fast, without informing exactly everyone in the team"*.

6. Analysis

Based on the presented empirics, the authors conducted an analysis, aiming to reach an answer to the research question.

6.1 Accepted Unpredictability and Risk

Based on the empirics, leaders became perceived as more willing to take risks, as the uncertain environment made it a necessity. In accordance with Transformational Leadership theory, increased risk taking was a leader's behavior pointing towards increased idealized influence. The empirical data showed that the employees had been understanding and accepting of leaders taking risks, thus counting more on them to make the right decision and take the right actions. The increased idealized influence behaviors was an outcome of actions taken by the leaders, such as more uncalculated risks, that in normal cases would be seen as negative. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made it a necessary evil, thus making the employees accept it. Even though leaders took more risks, employees did not perceive a change in the leaders ability and competence. As the employees did not consider the risks as something negative, leaders' perceived ability did not change and neither did the employees trust for the leaders, seen from the view of the Integrative Model of Trust.

Interestingly, despite the employees' acceptance of leaders taking more risk, they still perceived the leaders as less consistent and especially less predictable. A discrepancy was found between what was perceived by the employees and what they communicated in the interview. The employees understood that the leaders had to take risks, however they seemed to not be fully onboard regarding why they had to, implying that more communication from the leader seemed to have been necessary.

Some employees even perceived that the leaders became less fair, as some got more workload than others. At first glance, the authors thought it would have a negative effect on the leaders' level of integrity, further implying leaders having decreased moral standards, leading to decreased idealized influence. However, the empirical data suggested the opposite. The need for a stronger sense of vision has seen to become more important during remote work. As the leaders became better at providing their employees with that, they gained additional respect and acted as role models for the employees, which served as an explanatory factor to why it led to increased idealized influence instead of the authors' prediction of it decreasing.

One factor to consider was that all interviewed employees already had a well established relationship with their respective leader (see table in section 4.5), indicating an already established level of trust. The interview subjects often brought up that fact during the interviews when motivating certain behaviors as unchanged, indicating that the established relationship and level of trust connected to the leader's ability and knowledge was stable during the transition to remote work. However, the well established relationships between the

leaders and their employees varied from 3 years to 15, which became evident in the empirics as the employees with longer relationships with their leaders perceived them as more fair than the employees who did not share the same duration of acquaintance. In the valuation of leaders' level of fairness, it implied leaders being perceived less fair by employees with whom they shared shorter relationships, compared to those employees with whom they shared longer relationships.

6.2 Communication of Expected Goals

Leaders were clearer on communicating their expectations of their employees, and implemented better structure during meetings to make sure everyone was on board. This was because of an increased importance in clear goal-setting and structure. Nonetheless, having these behaviors increased implied an increased perceived urgency of working with goals and structure, an urgency which the leaders have acted upon when transitioning to remote work. This would, according to the Transformational Leadership theory, indicate an increased behavior in inspirational motivation. The motivation in regards to the shared vision has also been enhanced during remote work as the leaders used encouraging words, cheering, feedback and other measures such as acts of appreciation to reward good work. This change in leader behavior was due to leaders' identification of new needs created from their employees during the transition to remote work. In turn, that affected employees' trust towards their leaders due to leaders' increased benevolence.

One aspect the authors found interesting was how the leaders themselves expressed that they received more responsibility and expectations from their top management as the organization was structured as a hierarchy. That left room for exploring and further questioning whether the benevolence expressed by the leaders indeed could be considered as benevolence or if their actions to challenge their employees came from a place where the measurements taken were necessary as a chain reaction from the increased expectations from top management.

Another interesting factor considered integrity, regarding leaders' honesty and morality in daily functions. Although the leaders' communication and availability increased, the transition to remote work implied a decrease in transparency of the daily work amongst the team members. The empirical data suggested that the leaders did not change their amount of information they shared with the employees. Instead, they continued business as usual and only shared the information they thought was relevant for each employee. Therefore, not all team members had the same access to what was going on. The authors could detect how the leaders' passive tendency to keep the whole team equally informed led to an decreased employee perception of their leaders predictability and honesty, which in turn decreased the perception of their leaders' morals. Seen from the Integrative Model of Trust, that implied a decreased integrity amongst the leaders.

6.3 Caring Considerations

The empirical data suggested that leaders increased their focus on their employees' individual needs. All interview subjects agreed on the leaders being extra attentive to the employees feelings, emotions and overall well being. As all leaders expressed empathy becoming progressively important, they implemented more support although employees did not express a need for it. Leaders therefore seemed to have identified a subconscious need within their employees since all employees appreciated the efforts of their leaders. Through increased effort and time to create a supportive environment by for example sending flowers, asking about how the employees were feeling and working harder to identify their needs, the leaders showed indications of increased individualized consideration according to Transformational Leadership theory.

Solberg et. al. (2020) concluded in their research that leaders must ensure trust to maintain employees motivation to perform their duties. The empirical data supported the researchers' claim, revealing that leaders seemed to have become more available after the transition to remote work, although the employees had perceived them as very available before too. The leaders seemed to have increased their awareness of the need to be available which through the lens of Transformational Leadership also pointed to increased individualized consideration. Interestingly, although both employees and leaders expressed a small change in leaders' actual availability, the effort from the leaders to be extra available seemed to have an exponentially appreciated effect on the employees. The increased transformational behavior also led to a heightened level of trust in the form of benevolence, as the leaders already were sufficiently available before remote work, and now did more than what was required.

The empirical findings also indicated certain things regarding employees' perceived trust for their leader. An increased level of displayed empathy, support and individualized consideration could through the Integrative Model of Trust further be interpreted as a higher level of benevolence. When leaders showed that they cared and listened to their employees' needs, the employees perceived the leaders wanting to do good for them. As benevolence is the emotional factor of trust, the empirical data pointed to a correlation between perceived individualized consideration and perceived benevolence. The transition to remote work has hence led to an increased focus on emotions and well being, indicating greater transformational leader behavior.

The empirical data also displayed that certain structural changes along with transitioning to remote work actually facilitated the increased availability. By communicating via forums that were always on their computers, it became easier for leaders to remain available at all times which implied increased individualized consideration. An interesting fact was that the leaders did not express any changes in their leadership, and neither did the employees. The transition to remote work hence facilitated transformational behaviors for leaders, indirectly increasing the perceived level of trust in the form of benevolence.

6.4 Innovational Creativity

The leader's increased communication took forms which included more creativity and innovation. The way the leaders challenged the organizations' way of doing things and engaged in problem solving was done in a way beyond what was required from them. Leaders acting without egocentric motives showed increased benevolence according to the Integrative Model of Trust. Those altruistic actions were not only taken by leaders, but also encouraged by them, setting an example for their employees. This indicated, according to the Transformational Leadership theory, an increased intellectual stimulation. The emperics supported that encouraging creativity amongst employees was done through leaders challenging them in various ways such as the way they did their daily work and their way of thinking. From the lens of the Integrative Model of Trust, the same empirics again showed greater benevolence as leaders were perceived as more cooperative and willing to help, not only through being increasingly available but also through changing their social interactions towards the employees.

However, one interesting fact related to the decreased trust factor integrity, which showed that different levels of change in social interaction were taken on by the leaders, dependent on the duration of relationship towards different employees. The authors found that although social interaction increased for all employees in terms of showing interest and sensitivity to them, the leaders showed unequal amounts to each and one of them. That made the leaders become perceived as less fair, and as the communication sometimes did not feel as credible, it decreased the leaders integrity. When asking the leaders if they treated their employees the same by giving them equal tasks and challenges, most responded yes. However, after speaking with the rest of the team, the answers varied, which indicated leaders being dishonest, further supporting the decreased integrity.

The dishonesty could be seen from two perspectives, one being intentional dishonesty, and the other one being unintentional dishonesty. Given the leaders having an intended dishonesty when answering the question, it would directly imply decreased integrity. However, by supposing an unintentional leader dishonesty, it would indirectly imply a decreased integrity as the leaders may not have been aware of their unfairness. That may have further been caused by different variables, one possibly being lack of self-awareness.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Answer to research question

The authors investigated leadership behavior and its effects on trust due to the transition from face-to-face to a remote work setting. The research question guiding the study has been; *How have leaders adapted their behavior to remote settings and what are the implications for perceived trust among the employees towards their leader?*. The findings were the following.

The analysis concluded that along the transition to remote work, leader behavior had transitioned towards being increasingly transformational. That was highly supported by the qualitative empirical data, suggesting a perceived increase in all 4 factors of the Transformational Leadership theory. Emotional consideration and communication were the two main drivers of the change in leader behavior. As for how those leader behaviors affected employees' perceived trust for their leader, the Integrative Model of Trust led the authors' analysis to result in a significant increase in benevolence, a significant decrease in integrity and no change in ability. The empirical data suggested that a leader's ability had remained unchanged as the leader's skills that enabled influence did not change due to remote work. In addition, their intelligence to behave business-like was still on the same level as before transitioning to remote work. As aforementioned, no conclusion could be drawn regarding the total perceived trust for the leader since trust was judged as a continuum of all three factors. However, the empirical data supported a change in the trust factors, and these changes represented the effects a transition to remote work implied on employees' trust for their leaders.

7.2 Discussion

This study showed that integrity and benevolence were key in determining the leader's level of trust received by the trustor. It also showed that the perceived ability of the leader was not effective in generating additional trust. This conclusion, showed to be similar to the study done in 2022 regarding trustworthiness in shaping trust and affective commitment in schools, (Lleo et al. 2022), which further supported the reliability of the author's conclusion. With the nature of this study done as a single case, the authors did acknowledge that firm specific factors such as culture and normalized ways of operating might have affected the findings, especially as SVT was not heavily reliant on the perceived ability considering it already had been established. Nonetheless, the authors' findings added a valuable note to the Integrative Model of Trust, which lacked identification of what factors weigh the most in which sectors and factors. Ability in this single case study showed to be irrelevant to the change in perceived trust towards the leader. However, as the three factors were not found to be equally important, each factor's importance might differ depending on sector and firm.

The findings of this study were further supported by previous research that showed leaders becoming more empathetic and human-centered rather than performance-centered (Solberg et al. 2020). As presented in the literature review, empathy emerged as a key leadership skill during the transition to remote work.

In alignment with Mehtab et al. (2017)'s study presented in the literature review, the authors also found that leaders had increased their focus on conveying clear goals and making sure everyone was on board. However, what differed in the author's findings was that the interview subject's perception of working with goals had not become more important, as it always had been equally important. Instead, the transition to remote work had served as a starting point for focusing more on clear goals. As this fact indirectly increased the leaders' Transformational Leadership, it added valuable information to the theory. The current theory states that all changes in leadership behavior are deliberately done by the leader. However, this study showed an example of the opposite, which implied and suggested that an increased Transformational Leadership also could be a result of a force majeure, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, to further understand the theory, one must understand the external environment and its possible effects. The findings of this study also indicated that the frequency of communication within the teams have increased significantly as an outcome of the transition to remote work. This too was supported by previous research as face-to-face encounters were strictly limited for virtual teams, which was incremental for trust creation and conservation, thus forcing an increase in digital communication (Kaufmann and Carmi, 2014).

7.3 Contribution and practical implications

Based on the chosen and presented methodological standpoint, this study did not aim to conclude a generalized holistic result, rather a visualization of certain individuals perceptions of leader behavior and trust during remote work. One of the main learnings from this thesis included, in support of previous research, that trust had changed when becoming a virtual team. This learning may be used by leaders and organizations as a heads-up that trust is something they need to acknowledge and work with differently as they are working remotely. This also included teams with an already established level of trust. As Kerrissey and Edmondson (2020) encouraged leaders to engage in constant updating, the authors became of the same opinion. However, with the additional findings of a decreased integrity, partly due to employees' decreased perception of their leaders' morals, the authors were also keen on constantly updating the whole team equally to avoid information asymmetry, misunderstandings, inefficiencies and avoid risking decreased integrity.

7.4 Future Research

The execution of this study has led to valuable conclusions about leadership behavior and trust during remote work. However, along with the study, the authors identified related

studies that would be of interest to management and organizational research. As this study focused on interview subjects with an already established level of trust, it would be valuable to execute the same study with interview subjects that are newly employed with no trust towards their leader. Another study that would be valuable to conduct is a longitudinal study of leadership behavior and trust during remote work. Since research suggests that the factor benevolence becomes increasingly palpable over time, a longitudinal study would reveal that and hence give valuable results (Jarvenpaa et al. 1998). Yet another focus that the authors identified would be valuable to study is different dimensions of trust, studying not just trust from employee to leader but also leader to employee. This was a subject that was recurrently brought up in the interviews; the leader expressed that they trusted their employees and the employees expressed that their leader trusted them. This would therefore be a suitable subject for further research.

7.5 Conclusion

Given the challenges that have occurred due to remote work, the authors have examined how leader behavior had been affected and what the implications have been for employees' trust for their leaders. The result was that leaders indeed changed their way of leading, adopting a more caring and empathetic approach towards their employees showing increased benevolens, while at the same time also displaying a decrease in their integrity. Hence, leaders' way of adapting their leadership to remote work was not optimal enough to increase their trust perceived by their employees. By reading this research paper, the reader will partake in future actions to avoid a decrease in integrity. Thus, the valuable findings from this paper aimed to aid todays and future managers and leaders in adapting to the environmental changes, which seemingly followed a digitized path with increased remote-work.

8. Appendix

8.1 Interview guide (English)

<u>Questions to employees:</u>

<u>Initial questions:</u>
What do you work with? What's your role?
Who is your leader?
How often do you communicate?
<u>Overall questions about remote work:</u>
Can you tell us about your experience of the transition to remote work?
How would you describe that your boss has adapted to remote work?
Is there something you feel you've missed during remote work?

<u>Theoretically specific question:</u>

Ability:
How do you perceive your leader's knowledge in your specific field of work? What knowledge is important within your field?
Could you tell us about how your leader makes sure you as a group achieves goals and manages challenges?
How would you describe XXX as a leader? - can you mention some pros and cons with XXX? What do you mean with xyz?

Benevolence:
What support have you gotten from your leader when working from home?
What do you think your colleagues would answer to that question?
Do you perceive that your leader has done more than necessary in his/her role to help you?

Integrity:
Do you feel that you and your colleagues get treated the same way?
Would you say that your leader is predictable? (Behavior) Consistent?
Would you say that XXX often does unexpected things?
Would you say that your leader is open and honest with youP Does he/she involve you in processes? Does he/she share information with you?
How would you describe your leaders risk-taking? Does he/she take a lot of risks? Now vs. before?

Idealized influence:

Do you look up to your leader?

Do you feel like your leader inspires you to do things? More or less than before?

Do you perceive that your leader works towards clear goals and communicates that goal with you?

Inspirational motivation:

How would you say that your leader works to motivate you? Has it changed?

How would you say that your leader speaks of the future? Positive or negative? Different than before?

Intellectual stimulation:

Would you say that your leader encourages you to find new solutions and be creative? More or less than before?

Do you feel like your leader is challenging you in your work? How?

Individualized consideration:

Have you felt that you needed more support/help/coaching since you've moved to remote work? Have you gotten the help you needed?

How often do you and your leader communicate? Has it increased or decreased since remote work?

Questions to leaders:

Initial questions:

What do you work with? What is your role?

How many employees do you have in your team?

Overall questions about remote work:

Feel free to tell us about your biggest challenges you have encountered as a leader during remote work.

Tell us a little about how you experience your role as a leader now compared to before working remotely.

Have you actively changed your leadership behavior to adapt to working remotely? If so, how and why?

Theoretically Specific questions:

Idealized influence:

Has it become easier or more difficult to influence your employees to take their own initiative now during remote work?

How do you work to influence your employees today compared to when you worked in the office?

How do you make sure that all employees are aware of the common goals and work towards them today compared to when you worked in the office?

Has your tendency to take risks changed during remote work compared to before working remote?

Inspirational motivation:

How do you motivate your employees now during remote work compared to before?

Do you think it is more important to work with motivation now during remote work compared to before?

How do you communicate the goals for your employees during remote work compared to before? In what way do you make it clear to yourself and the employees?

How do you usually express yourself regarding the future? (positive / negative)

Intellectual stimulation:

In what way have you, during remote work, encouraged employees to find alternative ways to perform the same tasks?

Do you think that creativity has become more important now during remote work? If so, how do you work with it?

How do you challenge your employees in their everyday lives?

In what way do you stimulate your employees now when at a distance to each other compared to when you were in the office?

Individualized consideration:

Do you believe that your employees need more support and coaching now during remote work compared to before?

How much direct communication (talk or email) do you have now with your employees compared to before?

How do you identify the needs of your employees? Is the identification process today different from when you were in the office?

Ability:

Do you feel that you can help your employees with their work in the same way, and to the same extent today, compared to before working remotely?

How has your ability to influence your employees changed when comparing today from when you were in the office?

Integrity:

Would you say that you have clearly stated values that you work with? Have these changed during remote work?

Would you say that you have become more or less predictable / consistent during remote work?

Benevolence:

Have you worked more with showing empathy and consideration for the employees personal problems during remote work?

Can you describe your relationship with your employees?

8.2 Interview guide (Swedish)

Frågor till medarbetare:

Inledande frågor:

Vad arbetar du med? Vad är din roll?

Vem är din chef?

Hur ofta kommunicerar ni, om vad och hur?

Övergripande frågor om distansarbete:

Kan du berätta för oss om din upplevelse av ändringen till distansarbete?

Hur skulle du beskriva att din chef har anpassat sig till distansarbete?

Är det något du saknat under distansarbete?

Teori Specifika frågor:

Ability*:*

Hur upplever du din teamleaders kunskap inom ert specifika arbetsområde? Vad för kunskaper är viktiga inom ert specifika arbetsområde?

Kan du berätta om hur din chef ser till att ni som grupp uppnår mål och klarar av utmaningar?

Hur skulle du beskriva XXX som ledare? - kan du ta upp några för och nackdelar med XXX?

Vad menar du med xyz?

Benevolence*:*

Vilket stöd har du fått av din ledare nu när du jobbar hemifrån?

Vad tror du att dina kollegor skulle svara på den frågan?

Upplever du att din ledare har gjort mer än vad som krävts från hens roll för att hjälpa dig?

Integrity*:*

Anser du att du och dina kollegor blir behandlade på samma sätt?

Skulle du säga att din ledare är förutsägbar? (beteende) konsekvent?

Skulle du säga att *ledarens namn* ofta gör oväntade saker?

Skulle du säga att din chef är öppen och ärlig med dig? Involverar hon dig i processes? Delar hon information med dig?

Hur skulle du beskriva din ledare risktagande? Tar hon mycket risker?

Idealized influence:

Ser du upp till din chef?

Känner du att din chef inspirerar dig till att göra saker? Mer eller mindre än förut?

Anser du att din chef arbetar tydligt mot ett mål och kommunicerar det målet till dig?

Inspirational motivation:

Hur skulle du säga att din chef jobbar med att motivera dig? har det ändrats?

Hur skulle du säga att din chef pratar om framtiden? positivt eller negativt? Annorlunda än förut?

Intellectual stimulation:

Skulle du säga att din ledare uppmuntrar dig till att hitta nya lösningar och vara kreativ? Mer eller mindre än förut?

Känner du att din chef utmanar dig i ditt arbete? Hur?

Individualized consideration:

Har du känt att du behövt mer stöd/hjälp/coachning sedan ni flyttade till distansarbete? Har du fått den hjälpen du behövt?

Hur ofta har du och din chef direkt kontakt? Har det ökat eller minskat sedan distansarbete?

Frågor till chefer:

Inledande frågor:

Vad är din roll?

Hur många anställda har du under dig?

Övergripande frågor om distansarbete:

Berätta gärna om vad dina största utmaningar har varit som chef under distansarbete.

Berätta lite om hur du upplever din roll som chef nu jämfört med innan distansarbete.

Har du aktivt ändrat saker i ditt ledarskap för att anpassa till distansarbete? Hur? Varför?

Teori Specifika frågor:

Idealized influence:

Har det blivit lättare eller svårare att influera dina medarbetare till att ta eget initiativ nu under distansarbete? Hur arbetar du med att influera dina medarbetare idag jämfört med när ni jobbade på kontoret?

På vilket sätt ser du till att alla medarbetare är medvetna om de gemensamma målen och jobbar mot de nu jämfört med när ni jobbade på kontoret?

Har din benägenhet för att ta risker ändrats under distansarbete jämfört med innan?

Inspirational motivation:
Hur motiverar du dina medarbetare nu under distansarbete jämfört med innan? - Anser du att det är viktigare att arbeta med motivation nu under distansarbete än innan?
Hur kommunicerar du målen för dina medarbetare under distansarbete jämfört med innan? På vilket sätt tydliggör du den för dig själv och andra?
Hur uttrycker du dig oftast gällande framtiden? (positivt/negativt)

Intellectual stimulation:
På vilket sätt har du under distansarbetet uppmuntrat medarbetarna att hitta alternativa sätt att utföra samma arbetsuppgifter på?
Anser du att kreativitet har blivit viktigare nu under distansarbete? Hur arbetar du med det?
Hur utmanar du dina medarbetare i deras vardag? På vilket sätt stimulerar du medarbetarna under distans jämfört med på kontoret?

Individualized consideration:
Anser du att dina medarbetare behöver mer stöd och hjälp/coachning nu under distansarbete jämfört med innan?
Hur mycket direkt kommunikation (prata eller maila) har du nu med dina medarbetare jämfört med innan?
Hur identifierar du dina medarbetares behov? Skiljer sig processen från när ni var på kontoret?

Ability:
Känner du att du kan hjälpa dina medarbetare med deras arbete på samma sätt nu under distansarbete som innan?
Hur ditt inflytande på dina medarbetare förändrats från när ni var på kontoret?

Integrity:
Skulle du säga att du har tydliga värderingar du arbetar efter? Har dessa ändrats under distansarbetet?
Skulle du säga att du blivit mer eller mindre förutsägbar/konsekvent under distansarbete?

Benevolence:
Har du arbetat mer med empati och personliga problem hos dina medarbetare under distansarbete?
Kan du beskriva din relation till dina medarbetare?

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