The role of leadership in the performance of social welfare teams in the Netherlands: A quantitative research on the effect of shared and vertical leadership on responsiveness via the Job Demands-Resources model

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1. Introduction

Since the decentralization in 2015, municipalities became responsible for youth care, social support and labour participation. To organize this, many have set up social welfare teams (Movisie, 2020). However, a study by Movisie showed that nine out of ten municipalities are struggling with heavy caseloads and low capacity. Furthermore, this study showed that they experience a high work pressure. To deal with this, some municipalities announced to temporarily free extra money for these teams, but this was deemed insufficient (Jansen, 2016). To better understand the complexity of this decentralization, the Cultural Planning Office (SCP) also did an evaluation five years after implementation. They found that especially smaller municipalities are struggling, since they are not always able to organize high complex care. The corona crisis further complicated this, because this caused new vulnerable groups in society (Kromhout, Van Echtelt, Feijten, 2020). The question therefore arises whether this increased work pressure might influence the team performance of social welfare teams, and especially if this influenced their responsiveness in these changing circumstances. Another important way to look at how team performance is affected in social welfare teams, is by looking at the vitality of employees. High vitality showed to increase energy and increase quality of work. However, the corona crisis showed to have a negative impact on vitality within social workers as well. A study by Movisie showed that 15 percent of the social workers (N = 343) felt increasingly less vital during the crisis (Jansen, Ketel, Liefhebber, Panhuijzen & Van Pelt, 2021). To better understand how social workers are affected by the decentralization and the corona crisis, it is important to take these factors into account.

In the past years, much research has been done on how to relieve work pressure and increase vitality for employees. The Job-Demands Resources model is one way to look at this. In short, this model emphasizes how job demands and job resources can help in reaching positive outcomes in work, such as a high team performance, and help in relieving negative health outcomes, such as burnouts, among employees. Schaufeli and Taris (2014) give an extensive overview of potential job resources that can help in reaching these positive outcomes and mitigating negative effects. One of these is leadership (Schaufeli & Tauris, 2014, p. 64). Leadership has gained a lot of interest for public management scholars. However, leadership has shown to be a wide concept, with many different approaches. In social welfare teams, two different broad approaches can be distinguished, vertical leadership, wherein there is a single designated leader, and shared leadership, which refers to leadership that is distributed among team members (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007). However, not much research has been done

on what seems to be the best approach. This research therefore tries to fill this gap, by comparing these two types of leadership behaviours within social welfare teams, and what seems to be the best fit. However, as mentioned earlier, leadership is a broad concept. Therefore, this study focusses specifically on what Yukl (2012) calls *supporting* leadership behaviour, because this behaviour focusses on showing positive regard, building cooperative relationships, and helping employees cope with stressful situations (Yukl, 2012, p. 71). In times of the pandemic, and the changing circumstances after the decentralization, this is a type of leadership behaviour that might be much needed.

Social welfare teams are a relatively new concept in the Netherlands that have increased enormously since the implementation of the decentralization of 2015. In 2014, only 69 percent of the municipalities in the Netherlands used these teams. In the summer of 2019, this had increased to 83 percent (Movisie, 2020). Research of leadership in social welfare teams showed that many have adopted a shared leadership approach, and that goal-oriented teamwork and task-oriented teamwork can have a positive effect on team performance (Steijn, Van der Voet, Kuipers & Tummers, 2016). However, a majority of shared leadership research has been done in the educational and healthcare sector (Sweeney, Clarke & Higgs, 2019). Furthermore, it is not yet clear how vertical leadership fits into this. Research suggests that vertical leadership is an essential element in teams, because this can help in increasing levels of shared leadership (Hoch, 2012).

This study therefore looks at social welfare teams and the differences in shared and vertical leadership and their effect on responsiveness. This research uses the theoretical framework of Schaufeli and Taris (2014), the Job Demands-Resources [JD-R] model, to get a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and team performance by taking into account the levels of work pressure and vitality.

1.1 Research objective and question

This is a quantitative research that focusses on social welfare teams within the Netherlands. To get a better understanding of the type of leadership that fits within social welfare teams, levels of vertical and shared leadership are compared. Furthermore, this research focusses on the perceptions of vitality and work pressure of employees and their influence on team performance, as rated by leaders. This is formulated in the following research question:

"To what extent do supporting vertical leadership and supporting shared leadership behaviour have a relationship with team performance through vitality and work pressure in social welfare teams from the Netherlands?"

This research takes the leadership behaviours vertical and shared leadership as an independent variable and team performance as the dependent variable. For leadership, the taxonomy of Yukl (2012) is used, focussing on *supporting* behaviour, which falls under the meta-category relations oriented (Yukl, 2012). For team performance, the model of Hood (1991) is used, focussing on the aspect of responsiveness of social work professionals.

In line with the JD-R model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), vitality and work pressure are studied as a mediator to get a better understanding of the effect of individual level outcomes of leadership and its effect on team performance. Vitality is an element of the concept *work engagement*, that is seen as an opponent to being burned out.

To examine this research question, a multi-source analysis is done to get a good understanding of the different concepts. For both the independent and mediating variables, perceptions of employees are used to get a better grasp of how they experience leadership practices, and aspects like vitality and work pressure in their work. For the dependent variable, being team performance, perceptions of supervisors are used to make the analysis more objective.

1.2 Societal and scientific relevance

In research regarding leadership behaviours, often both commercial and non-commercial settings are examined in one research, even though these settings both show many differences in context (Sweeney, et al. 2019). To get a better understanding of the concept of shared leadership, as opposed to vertical leadership, it is important to understand the difference between leadership between these two sectors and whether leadership behaviours across them show similar effects. In for example the healthcare sector, there is still an emphasis on hierarchical structures. A systematic review done to explore the effect of a focal leader showed that empowering and relational leadership styles were associated with positive outcomes for nursing team performance (O'Donovan, Rogers, De Brún, Nicholson & Ward, 2021).

Furthermore, an empirical study by Kleine, Rudolph and Zacher (2019) in Germany showed a positive association between thriving at work, which is characterized by a joint sense of vitality and learning, and supportive leadership behaviour (rc = .44). Another study by Tims, Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2011) showed that transformational leadership, when conducted on a daily basis, can influence follower work engagement through follower personal resources (Bakker, 2014). To get a better understanding of the processes behind these relationships, this study uses the JD-R model by Schaufeli and Taris (2014). This study aims to extend the knowledge on the use of this model and specifically on the role of leadership in this model,

since not much research has been done on this topic. Furthermore, this study aims to extend the knowledge on the differences between shared and vertical leadership and its effect on team performance.

The societal relevance of this study mainly stems from reports that municipalities are worried about the increased pressure on social welfare teams. Employees would struggle with a high work pressure, and an increase in the amount of clients with complex problems (Van Wijngaarden, 2018). Moreover, the corona crisis negatively influenced feelings of vitality among social workers (Jansen, et al. 2021) and further challenged the work of social welfare teams because this caused more vulnerable groups to exist (Kromhout, et al. 2020). Many studies have shown that good leadership behaviour can help in engaging employees and decreasing work pressure. Therefore, this research can better help municipalities understand what types of leadership behaviour are effective and how leadership in social welfare teams can efficiently be organized. This study can therefore help in answering the question on how to structure these teams to help them achieve their goals, either with one leader, or with a shared leadership approach. Furthermore, by doing so, this research can help increase team performance and thereby increase client satisfaction. This research can further help in identifying effective leadership behaviours in team-based organisations.

1.3 Roadmap

This thesis follows the following outline. In the following chapter, previous research and theories are discussed on the differences between vertical and shared leadership, vitality and work pressure and their influence on team performance, by using the JD-R model. In this chapter, the different concepts are described, as well as their link. Chapter three discusses the methods used to conduct this research, and its implications. This follows with the results. Chapter five ends with a conclusion and discussion, which focus on the main takeaways from this thesis, and what can be done in future research to further understand the complexity of leadership practices.

2. Theoretical insights

In this chapter, the conceptual framework for this research is set. First, this chapter defines the different concepts used, giving a formal definition. Second (in section 2.6), the Job Demands-Resources model is introduced and used to give more insight into how leadership behaviours and team performance are related through vitality and work pressure. This chapter concludes with the hypotheses on which the analysis are based.

2.1 Team performance: responsiveness

Team performance has been a widely debated topic in the public sector, with an increased focus on performance management since the introduction of New Public Management. This new approach uses private sector practices in the public sector, with the idea of "running government like a business" (Hood, 1991; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). Since then, there has been much debate on what team performance entails and how this can be measured in the public sector. An important scholar in this debate is Christopher Hood, who argued the importance of business-type managerialism in the public sector. For this, he identified three sets of core values in public management, namely being *sigma-type values*, *theta-type values* and *lambda-type values*, which can be found in table 1 (Hood, 1991, p. 11).

Table 1. Three sets of core values in public management.

	Sigma-type values **Keep it lean and purposeful**	*Theta-type values* **Keep it honest and fair**	*Lambda-type values* **Keep it robust and resilient**
Standard of success	*Frugality* (matching of resources to tasks for given goals)	*Rectitude* (achievement of fairness, mutuality, the proper discharge of duties)	*Resilience* (achievement of reliability, adaptivity, robustness)
Standard of failure	*Waste* (muddle, confusion, inefficiency)	*Malversation* (unfairness, bias, abuse of office)	*Catastrophe* (risk, breakdown. collapse)
Currency of Success and Failure	*Money and time* (resource costs of producers and consumers)	*Trust and entitlements* (consent, legitimacy, due process, political entitlements)	*Security and survival* (confidence, life and limb)
Control emphasis	*Output*	*Process*	*Input/process*
Slack	*Low*	*Medium*	*High*
Goals	*Fixed/single*	*Incompatible* 'Double bind'	*Emergent/multiple*
Information	Costed, segmented (commercial assets)	Structured	Rich exchange, collective asset
Coupling	*Tight*	*Medium*	*Loose*

Note. (Hood, 1991, p. 11)

Sigma-type values focus on matching resources to the defined tasks. This relates to economy and parsimony. Theta-type values focus on honesty and fairness, with an emphasis on process-controls. The last type of values, lambda-type values, look at the achievement of security and resilience (Hood, 1991).

Hood (1991) argued the importance of making a distinction between these core values, because of the multiplicity of values in the public sector, which often make them overlap, or even contradict each other. Therefore, it is important to determine on which value the emphasis lies to be able to measure a success or failure. From these three different types of values, three different measurements can be derived to measure success. These measurements include: *efficiency*, which falls under sigma-type values, *legality*, which falls under theta-type values and *responsiveness*, which falls under lambda-type values.

Efficiency looks at the costs that a team make and whether they operate cost consciously, because they use tax money that society pays for. *Legality* is similar to the concept of equality and assumes that same cases get the same treatment. In these social welfare teams, this can require custom work, to make sure that they can aim for same outputs. Last, *responsiveness* is defined as whether the team can adequately and quickly adapt to changing circumstances (Van Zijl, Bernards, Van der Voet, Steijn & Van Schothorst, 2021). Because of the aforementioned increased complexity in cases during the work of social welfare teams (Van Wijngaarden, 2018), and the challenging circumstances that social welfare teams went through during the Covid-19 crisis, this thesis focusses on responsiveness as a measurement of team performance.

2.2 Vitality and work pressure

Now that this study explored how to look at team performance, it is important to understand what influences performance of these teams. This study tries to find out how leadership practices and performance are related. For this, two mediators are used: vitality and work pressure. Vitality and work pressure are concepts that are often used in the field of organisational psychology. Vitality is a part of a larger concept called *work engagement*. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) define engaged employees as people who feel "vital and energetic, who are dedicated and involved" and who are completely *absorbed* by their work (p. 89). The first part of the definition of work engagement refers to vitality, which they define as "fizzing with energy, feeling strong and fit, being able to continue working tirelessly and for a long time, and having a great mental resilience and ditto perseverance" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 91).

Work pressure is defined by Dolcos and Daley (2009) as "a work stressor emanating from both physical and psychological work demands" (p. 294). Bakker and Demerouti (2007)

examined these work demands in the theoretical framework called the Job Demands-Resources model. Other work demands include emotional demands and an unfavourable physical environment. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) define these work demands as "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs" (p. 312). Research has shown that these types of work demands can lead to health impairment, sleeping problems and exhaustion, which then can lead to a lower team performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). However, since work pressure can lead to exhaustion and dissatisfaction with employees' work (Van Zijl, et al. 2021), this study sees work pressure as an individual level measurement of well-being.

2.3 Leadership behaviours

As aforementioned, the main aim of this study is to understand how leadership behaviours can help in increasing performance through their effect on vitality and work pressure. This research aims to understand the differences in outcome between shared and vertical leadership. Therefore, the following section examines the differences between these two approaches. To make this distinction more concrete, the leadership approaches focus on one type of behaviour, being *supporting behaviour*, following the taxonomy of Yukl (2012).

2.3.1 Shared leadership (supporting behaviour)

Shared leadership is a concept that some researchers have also labelled self-management. Many researchers have given a definition for shared leadership. For example, Pearce (2004) mention that "shared leadership occurs when all members of a team are fully engaged in the leadership of the team and are not hesitant to influence and guide their fellow team members in an effort to maximize the potential of the team as a whole." (p. 48). Pearce therefore assumes that for shared leadership to occur, all team members need to participate. However, as Carson et al. (2007) argue, not all members always participate in leadership activities. They see vertical and shared leadership behaviours rather as endpoints to a continuum, which is "based on the number of leadership sources (i.e., team members) having a high degree of influence in a team" (p. 1220). The low end of the continuum are therefore cases in which a single leader is followed (Carson, et al. 2007). This can also be defined as vertical leadership, which is discussed in the following section. This study follows the definition of Carson, et al. (2007), resulting in the formal definition of shared leadership "as an emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members" (p. 1218). The high end of this continuum is in line with the definition of Pearce (2004), meaning that all team members

are engaged in leadership practices within the team. However, there have not been many studies focussing on the different behaviours within shared leadership practices. Therefore, the approach that Yukl (2012) uses, is used for shared leadership as well. This allows this study to focus solely on supporting shared leadership behaviour.

2.3.2 Supporting leadership behaviour

Following the definition of Carson et al. (2007), the lower end of the continuum is when there is one leader. This is what Pearce (2004) also calls vertical leadership, because there is one person firmly in charge and the rest of the team are what he calls *followers.* This follows the more traditional models of leadership (Pearce, 2004). Yukl (2012) theorized along this concept of vertical leadership and identified 15 different effective leadership behaviours that a leader can use in an organization, using 4 meta-categories, being: task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented and external. Yukl proposes that these different behaviours can help in identifying conditions that influence the effectiveness on organizational outcomes of these behaviours (Yukl, 2012). This study looks at the meta-category relations-oriented and specifically to the effect of a leader using *supporting* behaviour.

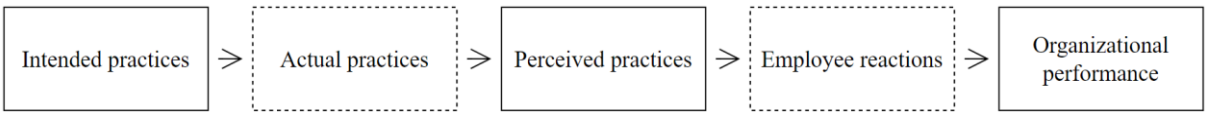
According to Yukl (2012), "leaders use supporting to show positive regard, build cooperative relationships, and help people cope with stressful situations. Examples include showing concern for the needs and feelings of individual team members, listening carefully when a member is worried or upset, providing support and encouragement when there is a difficult or stressful task, and expressing confidence that someone can perform a difficult task" (p. 71). According to research, this type of behaviour has a significant relationship with leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2012). Unfortunately, this article does not include how this relationship can be explained.

A literature review on effective leadership behaviour in the healthcare sector by Künzle, Kolbe and Grote (2010) gives some insights. They define supporting behaviour along the concept of Yukl, where they see supportive leaders as "being friendly, cooperative, and showing consideration and concern for the needs and feelings of team members" (Künzle, et al. 2010, p. 10). This literature review emphasized the importance of using supporting leadership behaviour, because of the effect of using emotion as a leader. By using emotion, a leader could improve team performance. Especially humour, because this can help in times of stress to lighten the mood and thereby increase performance. A leader is seen here as an important person in setting what they call the *emotional tone*. As opposed to this, a negative climate can result in less motivation and lower group performance (Künzle, et al. 2010).

2.3.3 Process model of leadership practices

The above sections showed how different types of leadership practices can be distinguished in the literature. Yukl (2012) distinguished 15 different types of behaviour. In this paper, Yukl builds on the idea that leaders can effectively improve performance of a team by "influencing processes that determine performance" (p. 66). Yukl (2012) mentions that the leadership behaviours in this taxonomy should be observable, distinct, measurable, and relevant for different leaders. However, the process model of leadership practices by Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen (2015) (see figure 1) shows that what a leader intends does not automatically lead to an increased organizational performance. Their model takes into account that what a leader may intend to achieve with their leadership behaviour might not always be how they implement this, because they often face *implementation challenges*, because of time, resistance or scarce resources. This is what they call *actual practices* and this is expected to be below the intended level. Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen (2015) further explain that employees can impose differential meanings on those practices. Furthermore, employees only acknowledge a part of this. This is what they call *perceived practices*. Their research showed that leader-intended leadership is not related to performance, but that only employee-perceived leadership shows a positive relationship with organizational performance (Jacobsen & Bøgh Andersen, 2015). Therefore, this research looks at perceived leadership practices.

Figure 1. Process model of leadership practices.



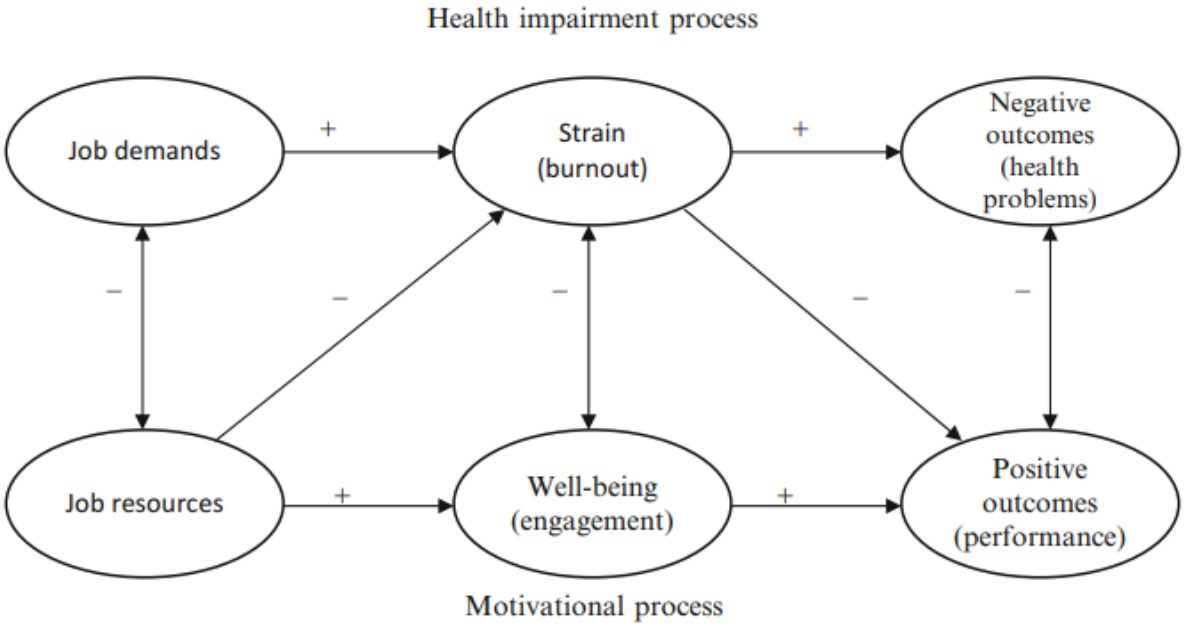
Note. Derived from Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen (2015), p. 830.

2.4 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model

To conclude, there are many aspects to take into account when looking at leadership practices, since there are many types of leadership behaviour, and it also depends on how this is measured. To get a better understanding of how these practices are related to the mediators, vitality and work pressure, and the dependent variable performance, the revised Job Demands-Resources model by Schaufeli and Taris (2014) is used. They define two different processes through which job demands and resources can influence negative outcomes such as health problems and positive outcomes on performance. These are called the health impairment process and a motivational process. This model assumes that any demand and any resource can have an effect on the health and well-being of employees. It is a broad scope to better understand how

employees are affected in their work. The entire model can be found in figure 2 (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014 p. 16).

Figure 2. The revised Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model.



Note. Derived from Schaufeli and Taris (2014), p. 16.

According to this model, in a workplace there are two different dimensions to keep in mind that can influence a worker: job demands and job resources. Job demands are defined as "those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs" (Schaufeli & Taris, p. 45). In short, the health-impairment process explains that high job demands, such as emotional demands, job insecurity, and role ambiguity can lead to strain and health impairment. When there are high job demands, this can decrease performance, showing the importance of limiting these job demands. Moreover, in the case of high job demands, employees are more likely to suffer from a burnout. At the same time, job resources can limit the negative effect of job demands, and reduce the possibility of employees experiencing a burnout (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Job resources are defined as "those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development" (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014, p. 45). They mention that examples of job resources are "feedback, job control and social support" (p. 45). Schaufeli and Taris (2014) explain that through the motivational process, high job resources can increase

motivation and productivity of employees. Therefore, this research mainly focusses on establishing the effect of these job resources as defined by Schaufeli and Taris (2014). A more extensive overview of potential job resources (p. 64) showed that leadership, team cohesion, team harmony and trust in management are, among many other, also possible job resources (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Therefore, in this study, leadership behaviours are seen as a job resource that can help motivate employees.

2.4.1 Motivational process

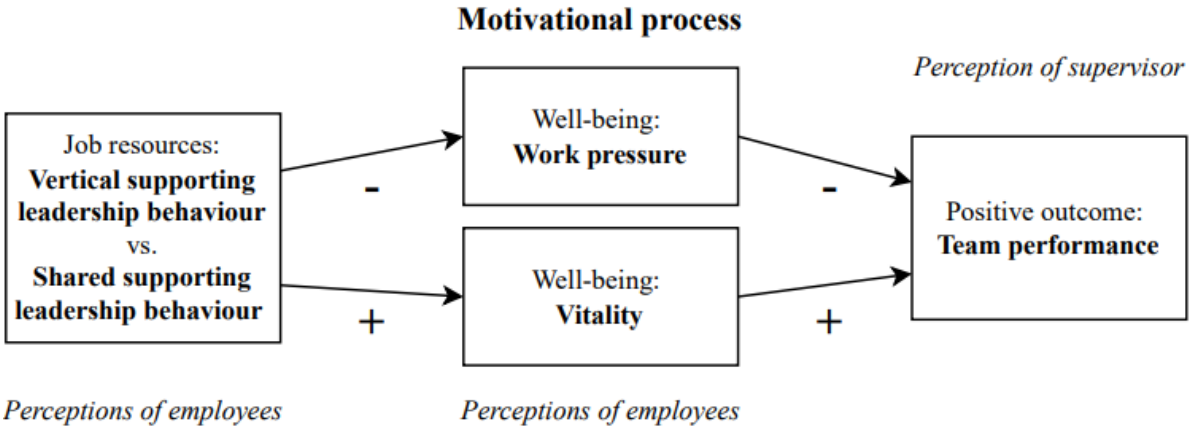
The relationship between the job resource of leadership behaviour and team performance can be understood by what Schaufeli and Taris (2014) call the motivational process. As mentioned before, high job resources can lead to positive outcomes, such as higher productivity and motivation. Overall, as can be seen in figure 2, high job resources can eventually lead to a better performance. In the motivational process, Schaufeli and Taris (2014) explain this effect through the mediating variable of well-being (engagement). When job resources are high, employees feel more engaged with their work, and when they feel more engaged, this would have a positive effect on performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). However, well-being is again a broad concept. One way to look at well-being is by looking at how employees perceive their work in terms of work pressure, vitality and satisfaction (Van Zijl, et al. 2021). As mentioned in section 2.2, vitality is an important part of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, when there is a high work pressure, this can lead to exhaustion and employees being unsatisfied by their work (Van Zijl, et al. 2021). As opposed to the Job Demands-Resources model by Schaufeli and Taris (2014), in which work pressure is seen as a job demand, this study therefore defines work pressure as an important indicator for measuring well-being of employees. This is also in line with a study in the IT sector that showed that work pressure can have a negative effect on their IT workers' performance (Wilson & Sheetz, 2010). When filling in the relevant variables in this model, the following figure can be derived (see figure 3, p. 15).

To answer the question to what extent vertical leadership and shared leadership have a relationship with team performance through the individual level outcomes vitality and work pressure in social welfare teams from the Netherlands, four different hypotheses can be derived. The first two focus on the relationship of leadership with team performance through perceived levels of work pressure:

H1: *Work pressure negatively mediates the relationship between vertical supporting leadership behaviour and team performance.*

H2: *Work pressure negatively mediates the relationship between shared supporting leadership and team performance.*

Figure 3. Hypotheses in a theoretical framework.



Note. Adjusted Job Demands-Resources Model.

The first two hypotheses both show a negative relationship between leadership and perceived work pressure, and work pressure with team performance. Because these are both negative, this makes the relationship between leadership and team performance positive. High job resources such as leadership behaviours, can be related to lower levels of work pressure (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). At the same time, less work pressure can enhance team performance (Wilson & Sheetz, 2010). The third and fourth hypotheses focus on the relationship of leadership with team performance through perceived vitality:

H3: *Vitality positively mediates the relationship between vertical supporting leadership behaviour and team performance.*

H4: *Vitality positively mediates the relationship between shared supporting leadership and team performance.*

This study therefore tries to identify the differences in the effect of supporting leadership behaviour versus supporting shared leadership practices on team performance. Since there have not been any similar studies that explore this distinction, there are no hypotheses formulated about the extent to which the effects of vertical and shared leadership are different. This is a point of attention for the analysis, and is the main goal of this study.

As can also be seen in figure 3, this study uses perceptions of employees and supervisors to understand this relationship. This means that both the independent variable and mediators

are measured using perceptions from employees, while the dependent variable is measured by using data from supervisors. More on the research design can be found in the next chapter (chapter 3).

3. Research Design

3.1 Research design

This study focusses on the social domain in the Netherlands, and specifically on the use of social welfare teams. The research aims to be understand the relationship between using different kind of leadership styles and team performance. To answer the research question, a quantitative, large-N design is chosen to find out how the aforementioned variables are related, since this seems to fit the research question best. Toshkov (2016) argues that this approach is good for identifying and estimating weak and heterogeneous causal relationships. As Toshkov (2016) mentions, this can help in identifying a *systematic signal* from all the "noisy data" that the world gives us (Toshkov, 2016, p. 200). Furthermore, this type of design builds on the idea that there is a certain structure in the social and political worlds. This means that a single study can be helpful in understanding another case (Toshkov, 2016). This design can therefore not only be used to understand social welfare teams in the Netherlands better, but also on how teams in general across similar contexts can be understood. Furthermore, this research design can help in testing the Job Demands-Resources model in practice. Again, a large-N quantitative design is useful here, because the theory may not conform with each individual case, but if the theory has any bearing on reality, the distribution of outcomes of this study should conform with certain patterns of the theory (Toshkov, 2016).

However, it is important to note some possible downsides of this design as well. First, this design only focusses on association. This study provides only the idea of how the variables are related, but not on which causes this. Furthermore, it is possible that this design comes with an *omitted variables bias*. This means that it is possible that there is another variable that explains both performance and leadership which is not looked at in this study (Toshkov, 2016). This study tries to limit this by including multiple control variables. This is discussed further on in this chapter.

3.2 Data collection

As mentioned before, this study looks at social welfare teams in the Netherlands. This research uses data that was collected in a research from 2020, called *'Teamwerk in de Wijk'* that was conducted by Van Zijl et al. (2021). This was a long-term research project from the University

of Leiden, together with the Erasmus University of Rotterdam to establish the functioning and performance of social welfare teams since the introduction of the decentralization in 2015, which was discussed in chapter 1. The research of Van Zijl et al. (2021) focussed on four different themes, being: *teamwork, leadership, individual work perceptions,* and *innovation and performance.* Data was collected using online questionnaires that were distributed among both supervisors, as well as employees in social welfare teams. The social welfare teams studied consisted of both executive teams and neighbourhood teams (Van Zijl et al. 2021). The current study uses a multi-source approach, using both data from supervisors as well as from the employees.

3.2.1 Sample

The data collected in the project *Teamwerk in de Wijk* consisted of 87 teams, from five different municipalities across the Netherlands. The researchers decided to include 70 teams (80,5%) in their final dataset. This was done after careful consideration to make the dataset as representative as possible per team. For this reason, they decided to exclude all teams in which less than 30% of the professionals participated in the research. The response rates per team included in the dataset varied from 30% to 100%, with an average response rate of 48% professionals per team. Furthermore, 72 of 87 supervisors were included in the dataset after completing the questionnaire (79,3%) (Van Zijl et al. 2021). For this research, because this is based on individual perceptions, only teams in which less than 25% responded, were excluded. This is done to limit the possibility of nonresponse bias. Furthermore, since this study uses a multi-source approach, the teams were excluded of which the supervisor did not fill in the questionnaire, since this information is needed to measure the dependent variable. This resulted in a sample of 66 teams, with 66 supervisors, with an average response rate of 44% professionals per team.

The dataset of the employees initially consisted of 844 respondents, of which 705 were left after the cases in which the supervisor did not fill in the questionnaire were deleted. 10,8% (N=76) identified themselves as men, and 88,5% (N=624) as women. 0,7% (N=5) identified themselves as other/private. The average age of the respondents was 42. Most of them (77,6%) completed a higher professional education/university of applied sciences. 20% completed an university degree or received a doctorate degree. 2,4% completed responded that they completed another education. The supervisors included in the final dataset, consisted of 66 supervisors, of which 24,2% (N=16) identified themselves as men, and 75,8% as women (N=50), with an average age of 48 years old. In line with the professionals in the team, most

supervisors (71,2%) completed a higher professional education/university of applied sciences. 28,8% got their degree at a university.

3.3 Measurement of variables

As mentioned before, the data used in this study focussed on four themes: teamwork, leadership, individual work perceptions, and innovation and performance. This study focusses on three of those themes: leadership, individual work perceptions, and (innovation and) performance, with the variables: supporting leadership behaviour, shared leadership, vitality, work pressure, and team performance. The questionnaires used to measure these variables can be found in attachment 1 (for employees), and attachment 2 (for supervisors). This only includes the relevant variables used in this study. The measurements per variable are discussed below.

3.3.1 Vertical supporting leadership behaviour

For the independent variable vertical supporting leadership behaviour, the definition of Yukl (2012) is used. Furthermore, following the process model of Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen (2015), vertical supporting leadership behaviour is looked at by how this is perceived by employees. Therefore, this type of leadership behaviour is measured by using perceptions of employees on how they rate their supervisor on supporting leadership behaviour. This measurement uses three items. The items included were whether their leader "has attention to the needs of individual team members", "is involved with the team members" and whether their leader "supports team members if needed with a difficult task". Employees could rate whether their supervisor showed these behaviours using a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = totally disagree; 2 = partly disagree; 3 = neither agree, nor disagree; 4 = partly agree; 5 = totally agree). The measurement for vertical supporting leadership showed to be reliable (3 items; $\alpha = .897$)

3.3.2 Shared supporting leadership behaviour

For shared supporting leadership behaviour, the definition of Carson et al. (2007) is used. Therefore, this study aims to find out to what extent members of a team show leadership influences. To make this distinction reliable, the same questions were used as to measure vertical supporting leadership behaviour. However, in this case, employees were not asked whether their supervisor showed these behaviours, but they were asked to rate whether other team members participated in supporting behaviour, using a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree). Again, this is measured by looking at perceived shared leadership practices. The measurement for shared leadership showed to be reliable (3 items; $\alpha = .872$)

3.3.3 Mediating variables: vitality and work pressure

The mediating variables are measured using perceptions of employees. Vitality is defined according to the manual of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). This is measured using three items, using a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree). The items included "I am brimming with energy at work"; "when I work, I feel fit and strong" and "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work". The measurement for vitality showed to be reliable (3 items; α = .873).

The second mediating variable to measure well-being is work pressure. This is also measured using perceptions of employees to rate their own feelings of work pressure. 3 items were used on a 5 point-Likert scale (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree): my work … "requires me to work hard"; "is emotionally demanding" and "requires more time than I have". The measurement for work pressure showed to be relatively reliable (3 items; α = .685). However, the reliability of work pressure seems to be lower than the other concepts measured in this study. This can be explained by the fact that these items measure different aspects of work pressure. This is especially the case for the second item "my work is emotionally demanding". The total correlation with the other items is .473. This might influence the internal consistency of the measurement. However, excluding this item did not increase the reliability. Furthermore, because this study makes use of secondary data, this study moves on with the current measurement of work pressure.

3.3.4 Team performance

The dependent variable team performance is defined according to what Hood (1991) calls responsiveness. To objectively measure this, the supervisors of the teams were asked to rate the team's performance by 3 measures, whether their team "responds adequately to changing circumstances"; "responds seriously to suggestions for improvement" and "continues to do her job well in difficult circumstances". The measurement for responsiveness showed to be reliable (3 items; α = .756).

3.3.5 Control variables

In this research, commonly used control variables were included in the analysis: age and education level (categories), to rule out some possible confounding variables. For example, age and education level might have an influence on the experience of professionals, and thereby their performance. Furthermore, gender is included as a control variable, to exclude the possibility of there being a gender-bias in how their performance is rated by their supervisor. Moreover, the control variables in which municipality they are active and their tenure are

included, because this can explain why some municipalities have a higher performance. By including these variables, this study aims to mitigate the effect of a possible confounder bias (Toshkov, 2016). By including these variables, this study does not exclude a possibility of there being confounder bias, but only tries to limit this effect.

The control variables are measured as following. Education levels were divided into three different categories: higher professional education/university of applied sciences, university degree/doctorate degree, and other. For gender, this was also divided into three different categories: 1 = man; 2 = woman; and 3 = other/private. Respondents could fill out their exact age per year, and tenure as a number per month that they are active in the social welfare team. Furthermore, respondents could fill out their municipality number. Five different municipalities were included in this research, from the numbers 1 to 5. Some respondents did not fill in their age (N = 9) and/or correct tenure (N = 30). However, since these respondents did fill in the other relevant variables, they are included in the analysis. Dummy variables are created for the control variables gender, municipality, and education, because these variables had data including three or more categories.

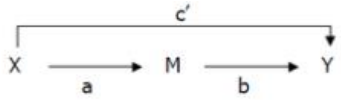
3.4 Analysis

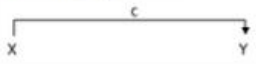
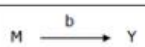
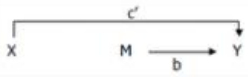
The analysis of the data start by providing a correlation matrix to identify the relationships between the main variables: shared and vertical leadership, work pressure, vitality and team performance. This is done using a Pearson's r correlation test. Furthermore, this correlation matrix includes the control variables age and tenure. By doing so, more insight is gained into how the variables are related to each other.

Second, this study follows with the mediation analysis to investigate the relationship between leadership and team performance, through the mediating variables vitality and work pressure. The mediation analysis used in this study follows the steps as Kenny (2021) explains them. The analysis is done by using a multiple regression analysis. First, this study examines if there is a relationship between vertical leadership and team performance, and between shared leadership and team performance that may be mediated, by doing a regression analysis. When this is shown to not be the case, this study does continue, since this might be explained by the mediating variable. Second, a regression analysis is conducted between vertical leadership and vitality, shared leadership and vitality, vertical leadership and work pressure, and shared leadership and work pressure. Third, to find out whether there is a mediation effect, a regression analysis is done between the two mediators with team performance, while controlling for the independent variables shared and vertical supporting leadership. Last, a regression analysis is

done to establish whether the mediating variables fully mediate the relationship between leadership and performance, by using the mediating variables as a controlling variable. The controlling variables age, gender, education, municipality number, and tenure are added in all four steps, to reduce the possibility of confounder bias. These steps can also be found in figure 4 (Mwandigha, 2014, p. 7), including the visual representation. For the analysis, this study used the program SPSS statistics.

Figure 4. Baron and Kenny's approach to mediation analysis.



	Analysis	*Visual Depiction*
Step 1	Conduct a simple regression analysis with X predicting Y to test for path *c* alone, $Y = B_0 + B_1X + e$	
Step 2	Conduct a simple regression analysis with X predicting M to test for path *a*, $M = B_0 + B_1X + e$.	
Step 3	Conduct a simple regression analysis with M predicting Y to test the significance of path *b* alone, $Y = B_0 + B_1M + e$.	
Step 4	Conduct a multiple regression analysis with X and M predicting Y, $Y = B_0 + B_1X + B_2M + e$	

Note. Derived from Mwandigha (2014), p. 7 (figure 3).

3.5 Validity and reliability

The current project uses a quantitative approach. This increases the reliability of this study, since this can make it easier to compare cases, and different teams. Furthermore, as mentioned before, this design is preferred over single-case designs, because it can help identify and estimate weak heterogeneous relationships. However, because of this, it is hard to find out whether there is causation between variables (Toshkov, 2016). This study tries to limit the last pitfall, by including control variables, and looking at the possibility of there being mediating variables. However, full causation cannot be established in this design.

Furthermore, because of the relatively big number of respondents used in this study, this increases the reliability as well. This can increase the generalizability to the population. However, in the current study, because of the limited span time which is set out for this study, individual perceptions of team members and supervisors are used. This is a disadvantage and negatively impacts the reliability of this study, because the perceptions could be dependent on each other within a team. This study notes this, but does not take this into account. Moreover, the multi-source aspect of this study is also seen as a strength. Because this study uses the

ratings of supervisors to measure team performance, and the ratings of employees for the other variables, this makes it more objective and therefore increases the overall validity of this study.

Moreover, the measurements per variable all showed to be relatively reliable according to the Chronbach's alpha. Only work pressure showed to have a lower score than 0.7 on Chronbach's alpha. However, since this study uses existing data, no additional questions could be added to increase the internal consistency. This negatively impacts the reliability of this study. However, the other variables showed to have a high internal consistency, meaning that the used measurements are reliable.

Furthermore, because this research looks at specific types of leadership behaviour, this increased the validity. The leadership types of behaviours are made concrete, and only a specific type is used to establish amounts of leadership behaviour. Moreover, the measurement of team performance is also taken apart and only one concept is used, namely being responsiveness. By doing so, this positively impacts content validity. The implications that arise from this are discussed further in chapter 5.

Last, because of the large-N approach of this study, this positively impacts the external validity. Because of this, this study can help in indicating effective ways to organize social welfare teams in the Netherlands. However, this study also notes that there are only five different municipalities included in the sample. This limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized. However, this study is a good start for finding new approaches to organize social welfare teams in the Netherlands.

4. Results

This thesis is based on the question whether there is a difference between vertical and shared supporting leadership behaviour, and its effect on team performance in social welfare teams. In this chapter, the results of the analysis are shown to be able to answer the research question:

"To what extent do supporting vertical leadership and supporting shared leadership behaviour have a relationship with team performance through vitality and work pressure in social welfare teams from the Netherlands?"

The first section gives an insight into the data, by showcasing some descriptive statistics, and a correlation matrix to see how variables are related. Second, a regression analysis is done to check whether there is a direct relationship between the two types of leadership behaviour with team performance. Third, a mediation analysis is done to find out whether there is a relationship between the leadership behaviours and the mediating variables vitality and work pressure. After

this, a multiple regression analysis is discussed to establish the relationship between the mediating variables and team performance, controlling for leadership behaviour. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the differences between the two types of leadership behaviours and its effect.

4.1 Descriptives

To be able to understand the data and how it is related, this section starts with giving more insight into the data.

Table 2. Demographic information of the professionals in the dataset.

	Frequency	**Percentage (%)**	**Cumulative percentage (%)**
Gender			
Men	76	10.8	11.5
Women	624	88.5	99.3
Other/private	5	0.7	100
Age			
20-30	127	18.4	18.4
31-40	228	32.3	50.7
41-50	167	23.9	74.6
51-60	134	19.0	93.6
>60	39	5.5	99.1
Education			
Higher education	547	77.6	77.6
University/promoted	141	20	97.6
Other	17	2.4	100
Tenure			
1 month - 1 year	149	21.1	21.1
13 months - 2 years	116	16.5	37.6
25 months – 3 years	117	16.6	54.2
37 months – 4 years	79	11.2	65.4
49 months – 5 years	111	15.7	81.1
61 months – 6 years	80	11.3	92.4
> 6 years	18	2.6	95

Municipality number			
1	246	34.9	34.9
2	264	37.4	72.3
3	39	5.5	77.9
4	93	13.2	91.1
5	63	8.9	100

On average, the professionals (N = 699) from the social welfare teams included in this study work 29 hours per week (M = 29,4). Most of them (26,2%), reported to work 32 hours per week. This differs from 3 hours per week in a parttime function, to a fulltime job of 38 hours per week. The professionals included in this research come from five different municipalities. The number of professionals per municipality, and other demographic information about the professionals included in the dataset that are controlled for in the analysis later on, are shown in table 2. As can be seen in table 2, most professionals come from the first two municipalities (72,3%). From the other three municipalities included in this study, less professionals participated.

Table 3 shows the descriptives of the main variables of this study: shared supporting leadership and vertical supporting leadership, vitality and work pressure, and team performance.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the independent variables, mediating variables and dependent variable.

	Minimum	**Maximum**	**M**	**SD**
Vertical supporting leadership	1.00	5.00	4.67	.86
Shared supporting leadership	1.00	5.00	4.43	.66
Vitality	1.00	5.00	3.86	.81
Work pressure	1.00	5.00	3.95	.77
Team performance	3.00	5.00	4.42	.45

Note. N = 705

The results show that overall, the professionals report to show a high amount of shared leadership behaviour in the team (M = 4.43). Furthermore, they report that their supervisor also shows a high amount of supporting leadership behaviour (M = 4.67). The reports about the team show that they show a bit less supporting behaviour than their supervisor, and that there is also a bigger difference between these teams (SD = .66), even though this difference is small. Furthermore, it shows that overall the supervisors positively rated the responsiveness of their

team, since the minimum score is 3.00 (M = 4.42). In terms of validity and work pressure, the results show a lower score on average. For vitality this was M = 3.86. The employees also reported that they do feel work pressure, M = 3.85. These statistics give a better overview of the data used in this study, before conducting the analysis.

4.2 Correlation Matrix main variables

Before testing the hypotheses, a correlation analysis is conducted, to be able to better understand the relationships between the main variables: vertical supporting leadership, shared supporting leadership, work pressure, vitality and team performance. Furthermore, the control variables age, and tenure are added. The results can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. Pearson's r correlation matrix between the main and control variables.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. Vertical supporting leadership	1						
2. Shared supporting leadership	.323**	1					
3. Work pressure	-.006	.079*	1				
4. Vitality	.273**	.212**	-.019	1			
5. Team performance	.104**	.023	-.024	.007	1		
6. Age	-.076*	.023	.129**	.061	-.042	1	
7. Tenure	-.063	.000	.094*	-.067	-.068	.272**	1

Note. * p = <.05 ** p = <.01. This does not include the categorical control variables: education, gender and municipality number.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between shared and vertical leadership behaviour, $r(703) = .323$, $p < .001$. Since both leadership behaviours seem to be connected, the leadership behaviours are added as a control variable in further analysis. This means that when analysing the effect of shared leadership on the mediating variables, vertical leadership is used as a controlling variable, and vice versa.

Table 4 further shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between vertical supporting leadership and team performance. This relationship showed to be small and

positive $r(703) = .104$, $p = .006$. However, shared supporting leadership did not show a significant relationship with team performance, $r(703) = .023$, $p = .535$. When analysing the relationships between the two types of leadership behaviour, it is interesting to see that both types of leadership have a positive significant, $p < .001$ relationship with vitality. However, for work pressure this is only the case for shared supporting leadership $r(703) = .079$, $p = .037$. Furthermore, this relationship showed to be positive, which is opposite of what is expected. For vertical supporting leadership, the results do show a negative relationship as expected, but this was not deemed significant. The mediating variables work pressure and vitality also showed no significant relationship with team performance.

The correlation matrix as showcased in table 4 also shows a positive significant relationship between age and perceived work pressure, $r(703) = .129$, $p = <.001$. This also coincides with the finding that tenure shows a positive significant relationship with work pressure, $r(703) = .094$, $p = .013$.

4.3 Regression analysis direct relationship leadership and performance

After the relationships between the variables is analysed, the hypotheses are tested, following the analysis strategy of Kenny (2021). First, this study examined what he calls *path C*. This checks whether there is a direct relationship between vertical leadership and team performance, and between shared leadership and team performance that may be mediated. This is done using a multiple regression analysis. The results can be seen in table 5.

Table 5. Regression Model Predicting Team Performance.

	***B* (95% CI)**	**β**	***p***	***sr²***
Vertical supporting leadership	.042 [.000, .083]*	.080	.050	.006
Shared supporting leadership	-.006 [-.058, .046)	-.009	.815	<.001

Note. $N = 705$. CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$. Unstandardised (*B*) and Standardized (β) Regression Coefficients, and Squared Semi-Partial Correlations (sr^2), controlling for age, gender, education, tenure, and municipality type.

The results show that there is no significant relationship between shared supporting leadership and team performance. However, the results do show a positive significant relationship between vertical supporting leadership and team performance, $B = .042$, $p = .007$. Even though there is no direct significant relationship between shared supporting leadership and team performance, this study does continue. This relationship might be explained by the mediation, as previously discussed. This is discussed further on in this chapter.

4.4 Mediation analysis

Second, a multiple regression analysis is conducted between vertical leadership and vitality, shared leadership and vitality, vertical leadership and work pressure, and shared leadership and work pressure. This is what Kenny describes as *path A*. The results can be seen in table 6.

Table 6. Regression Model Predicting Work Pressure and Vitality.

	***B* (95% CI)**	**β**	***p***	***sr²***
Vertical supporting leadership	.001 [-.070, .072]	.001	.973	<.001
Shared supporting leadership	.085 [-.004, .175)	.074	.060	.005
Dependent variable: Work Pressure				
Vertical supporting leadership	.208 [.135, .282]**	.219	<.001	.044
Shared supporting leadership	.177 [.085, .269)**	.145	<.001	.020
Dependent variable: Vitality				

Note. N = 705. CI = confidence interval. ** $p < .01$. Unstandardised (B) and Standardized (β) Regression Coefficients, and Squared Semi-Partial Correlations (sr^2), controlling for age, gender, education, tenure, and municipality type.

As can be seen in table 6, both vertical supporting leadership behaviour (B = .001, p = .973), and shared supporting leadership behaviour (B = .085, p = .060) showed no significant relationship with work pressure. Furthermore, the results show a positive relationship of work pressure with both types of leadership. This does not meet the expectation, as hypothesized in figure 3 (p. 14), but is important to take into account even though this finding was not deemed significant. However, as can also be seen in table 5, a very small percentage <0.01% of the variability in perceived work pressure can be accounted for by the amount of vertical supporting leadership. For shared leadership, this is only 0.05%.

As opposed to work pressure, vitality did show a significant positive relationship for both types of leadership behaviour, $p < .001$. This meets the expectation as formulated in chapter 2. Vertical supporting leadership showed to explain 4,4% of the variability in perceived vitality of employees. For shared supporting leadership, this is a bit less, with 2% that can be explained by the amount of shared supporting leadership. However, to fully understand the mediation and test the hypotheses, a second regression analysis is conducted.

The hypotheses as set out in chapter 2, are tested by a third analysis, to establish the relationship between the two mediators with team performance. In this analysis, first an analysis is done where vertical supporting leadership is used as a controlling variable, to rule out its

effect on team performance. Second, an analysis is conducted with shared leadership as an added controlling variable. This is *path B* (Kenny, 2021).

Table 7. Regression Model Predicting Team Performance.

	***B* (95% CI)**	**β**	***p***	***sr²***
Model 1				
D1 Gender	-.010 [-.117, .097]	-.007	.853	<.001
D2 Gender	-.139 [-.584, .306]	-.024	.539	.001
D1 Education	-.008 [-.095, .080]	-.007	.865	<.001
D2 Education	-.070 [-.290, .151]	-.024	.537	.001
D1 Municipality	-.131 [-.214, -.048]**	-.142	.002	.014
D2 Municipality	.211 [.062, .360]**	.109	.006	.011
D3 Municipality	-.067 [-.175, .040]	-.052	.220	.002
D4 Municipality	-.048 [-.175, .078]	-.031	.453	.001
Age	.000 [-.003, .004]	.011	.779	<.001
Tenure	-.001 [-.003, .000]	-.069	.082	.004
Work pressure	-.005 [-.049, .039]	-.009	.822	<.001
Vitality	-.013 [-.055, .029]	-.024	.536	.001
Vertical supporting leadership	.043 [.003, .084]*	.084	.036	.006
Model 2				
D1 Gender	-.015 [-.122, .093]	-.010	.790	<.001
D2 Gender	-.165 [-.611, .280]	-.028	.467	.001
D1 Education	-.005 [-.093, .082]	-.005	.905	<.001
D2 Education	-.062 [-.283, .160]	-.021	.584	.001
D1 Municipality	-.142 [-.225, -.059]**	-.154	<.001	.016
D2 Municipality	.210 [.061, .360]**	.109	.006	.011
D3 Municipality	-.087 [-.193, .020]	-.066	.112	.003
D4 Municipality	-.073 [-.198, .052]	-.047	.255	.002
Age	.000 [-.003, .003]	.005	.893	<.001
Tenure	-.001 [-.003, .000]	-.072	.071	.005
Work pressure	-.004 [-.049, .040]	-.008	.842	<.001
Vitality	-.004 [-.045, .038]	-.007	.866	<.001
Shared supporting leadership	.013 [-.038, .063]	.019	.622	<.001

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

This analysis further shows the fourth step as described by Kenny, path *C',* where the mediating variables are used as a controlling variable to establish if there is partial or full mediation. The unstandardised (*B*) and standardized (β) regression coefficients, and squared semi-partial (or 'part') correlations (sr^2) for each predictor in the regression model are reported in table 7.

Table 7 shows that work pressure, when controlling for age, education, gender, tenure, what municipality they are from, and the leadership behaviours, show no significant relationship with team performance. This is both the case in which vertical leadership is used as an extra control variable, B = -.005, p = .822, as well as with shared supporting leadership, B = -.004, p = .842.Work pressure does show a negative relationship with team performance, as expected, but this was deemed not significant. The hypotheses H1 and H2, are therefore both rejected.

Further analysis of table 7 shows that vitality also has no significant relationship with team performance. Again this was both the case in which vertical supporting leadership was used as an extra controlling variable, B = -.013, p = .536, as well as with shared supporting leadership, B = -.004, p = .866. Moreover, this relationship was found to be negative, even though this was not as expected. The hypotheses H3 and H4 are therefore also both rejected. Table 7 does show a significant relationship between what municipality the professionals are from and team performance.

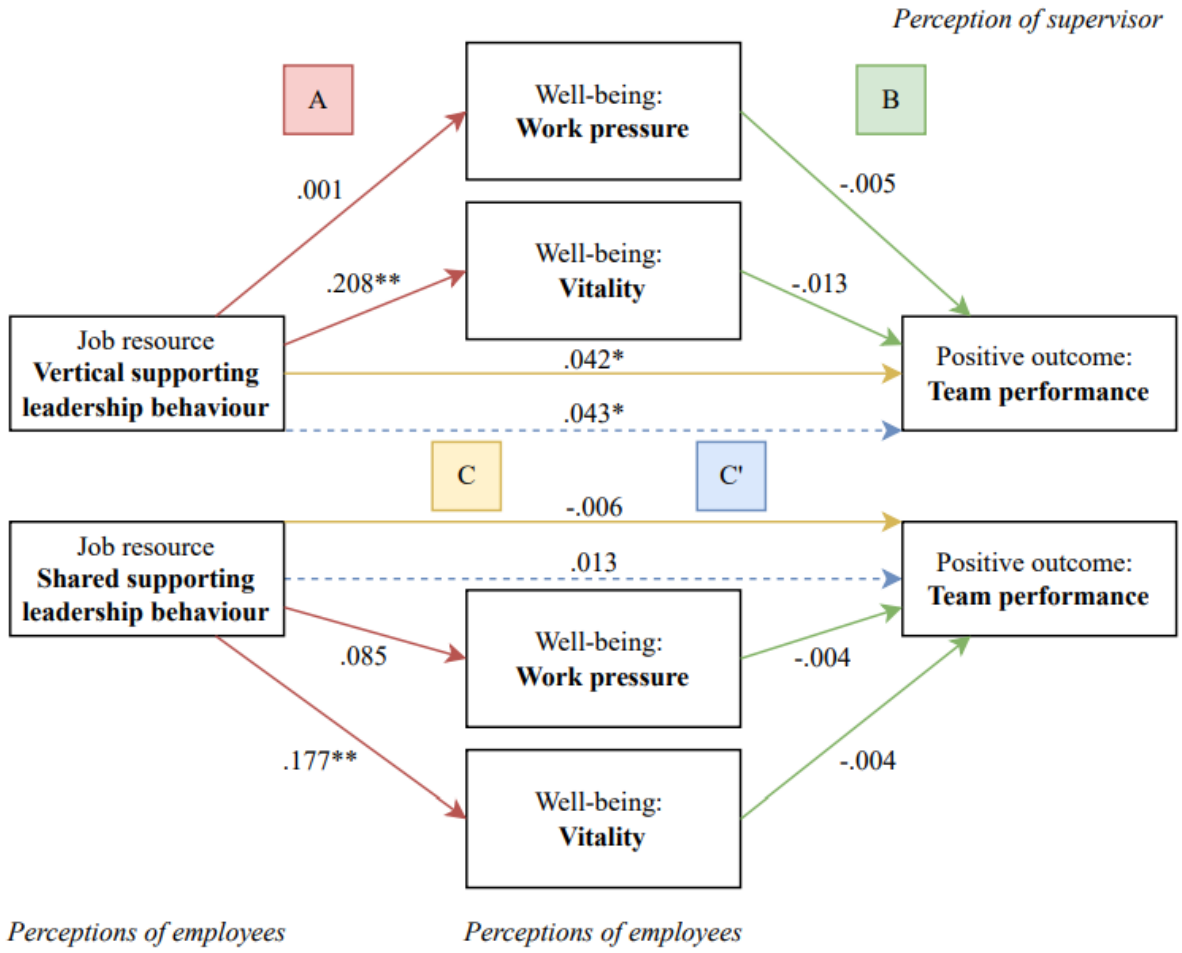
4.5 Vertical vs. shared leadership

To summarize the results, figure 5 (p. 30) has been formed. Figure 5 shows the unstandardized *B* coefficients of the different relationships that have been analysed. The results show that shared supporting leadership does not have an effect on team performance. The results show no direct significant effect, but also no significant effect when controlling for perceived work pressure and perceived vitality. However, what is interesting is that the direct effect of shared supporting leadership behaviour first showed to be negative, but when controlling for work pressure and vitality, this relationship shows to be positive, indicating that shared supporting leadership does in fact have a positive effect on team performance, when including the mediating variables as a control variable, even though this was not deemed significant. Furthermore, shared supporting leadership behaviour did show a positive and significant relationship with perceived levels of vitality.

Figure 5 further shows that vertical supporting leadership behaviour does have a direct effect on team performance. This effect remains when controlling for the mediating

variables vitality and work pressure. Similar to shared leadership, vertical leadership also has a significant positive effect on the perceived level of vitality among employees.

Figure 5. Multipe regression results (*B*), of the JD-R model hypothesis test.



Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

When comparing the two types of leadership behaviour within social welfare teams, one finding stands out. The results show that 0,6% of the variability in team performance can be explained by vertical supporting behaviour of supervisors. In comparison, less than 0.01% of the variability in team performance can be explained by the level of shared supporting leadership within a team.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This thesis aimed to get a better understanding of the differences between vertical and shared leadership behaviour in social welfare teams and its effect on team performance, by using insights from the Job Demands-Resources model by Schaufeli and Taris (2014). This is done by using a multi-source mediation analysis as provided by Kenny (2021) to understand how

team performance might be influenced through the perceived vitality and work pressure of employees. This research found partial evidence for the Job-Demands Resources model, through its effect of job resources on vitality, but did not find a partial, or full mediation, thereby rejecting all four hypotheses.

5.1 Conclusion

To conclude, both vertical supporting leadership behaviour, and shared supporting leadership behaviour showed to positively affect the job engagement measurement used in this study, namely vitality. However, this study did not find evidence that these job resources, can also limit the amount of job demands, such as work pressure. Furthermore, vitality and work pressure both did not significantly improve team performance. Opposite to the expectations, vitality even showed to have a negative relationship with team performance.

However, this study did give us more insights into the differences between vertical and shared supporting leadership, and thereby on the main aim of this study. The results show that vertical supporting leadership has a stronger positive direct relationship with team performance, than shared supporting leadership. Furthermore, vertical supporting leadership showed to explain more of the variability (4,4%) in perceived vitality of employees, than shared supporting leadership (2%). This shows that vertical supporting leadership seems to be more effective in encouraging vitality of employees, as well as improving their team performance, as opposed to shared supporting leadership in these social welfare teams. We can derive from these results that it remains important to have a vertical leader in a social welfare team, to support employees when needed. This also coincides with the article of Hoch (2012), and Pearce (2004), who also emphasize the importance of a vertical leader. Especially in new, or re-organized teams. In this case, the vertical leader can help in developing shared leadership, and clarify the overarching vision of the organization (Pearce, 2004).

Another interesting finding is that shared supporting leadership showed to be positively related to work pressure. Even though this was not significant, this is important to keep in mind when creating or reorganizing a social welfare team. Apparently in these teams, when employees are more engaged in supporting leadership behaviour, they also perceive more pressure at their work. This research does note that their perceived work pressure could also be influenced by another variable, that is not included in this study. However, there is a possibility that this is also influenced by how much they participate in leadership practices, so this should be taken into account.

The Job Demands-Resources model therefore did prove to be helpful in understanding the effect of leadership on engagement, and job demands, but the findings do not follow the reasoning of Schaufeli and Taris (2014) that this could increase organizational outcomes. This might be related to the fact that this study limits the measurement of positive organizational outcomes to responsiveness of employees. Therefore, this finding could enrich the theory that it might also depend on what organizational outcome is being measured.

5.2 Discussion

However, this study also has some limitations. Since this study uses a quantitative design, it is hard to find true "pure" relationships between variables, since there is a possibility of there being a confounder bias. Furthermore, it is difficult to establish whether the relationship between the variables is causal, or an association (Toshkov, 2016). Moreover, because of the limited time and resources to conduct this research, this study is based on individual perceptions of professionals in social welfare teams. This might negatively influence the generalizability, since some teams are more representative in this study than others, and their perceptions might be dependent on each other. Moreover, as previously mentioned, this study only looks at one element of team performance, namely being responsiveness, and one type of vertical and shared leadership behaviour, being supporting. This therefore limits the extent to which something can be said about the differences between the effect of vertical and shared leadership on team performance. Last, since this study uses a multi-source approach and supervisors are asked to rate their team on their responsiveness, it is important to take into account that the supervisors may have been subjected to socially desirable answers, since they are also responsible for the performance of their team.

Nevertheless, this study also has some strengths. Foremost, the multi-source aspect of this research. Even though the ratings of supervisors can also be seen as a limitation, their rating of how the team performs is seen as more objective than when the professionals would have rated this themselves. Furthermore, the large-N design of this study is also seen as a plus, since this positively impacts the external validity and this makes it more generalizable to other social welfare teams in the Netherlands. Last, this study uses multiple controlling variables, that reduces the likeliness of there being a confounder bias.

5.3 Practical implications and follow-up research

Since this study has some limitations, it is important to conduct more research on the differences between shared and vertical leadership. This can help in establishing were the strengths of these different kinds of leadership lie and how social welfare teams can be organized to make them

more effective. Furthermore, it might be interesting to study other types of performance measures to get a better grasp of how leadership can positively influence performance in social welfare teams. However, this study is a good start in trying to understand how best to reorganize the social domain, so that the decentralization of 2015 can have the desired effect as set out when this was implemented. This can start with reorganizing it in a way so that supervisors can still have a valid place in the social welfare teams, to help in supporting professionals in the continuously changing circumstances that have been seen in the last years.

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Appendix

Attachment 1: Questionnaire (in Dutch) for employees

Note. The questionnaire is distributed in Dutch. This attachment only includes the relevant variables that are used in the current study.

Persoonlijke gegevens

Geslacht

1. Wat is uw/je geslacht?

- man
- vrouw
- anders/privé

Leeftijd

2. Wat is uw/je leeftijd?

Opleiding

3. Wat is uw/je hoogst voltooide opleiding?

- Basisschool/ Lager voortgezet onderwijs (bijvoorbeeld VMBO, MAVO, ulo, lbo)
- Voortgezet algemeen onderwijs (bijvoorbeeld HAVO, VWO, HBS)
- Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (bijvoorbeeld MBO, leerlingwezen, WEB-middenkader en specialistenopleiding)
- Hoger beroepsonderwijs (HBO)
- Universitair onderwijs (WO)
- Gepromoveerd aan de universiteit

Functie team

4. Wat is uw/je functie in het team?

Ervaring zorgdomein

5. Hoeveel jaren bent u/ ben je werkzaam als professioneel hulpverlener (bijvoorbeeld in de jeugdzorg, jeugdgezondheidszorg, WMO [eventueel ruimte voor andere voorbeelden])?

Moederorganisatie (indien van toepassing)

6. Bij welke "moeder" organisatie bent u werkzaam?

Aantal teams werkzaam (indien van toepassing)

7. Bent u/ ben je in meer dan 1 wijkteam werkzaam?

Team (meeste uren)

8. In welk wijkteam bent u/ben je (indien van toepassing: het meest aantal uren) werkzaam? De vragenlijst heeft in het vervolg enkel betrekking op het team dat u hier invult.

Ervaring team

9. Sinds hoeveel maanden werkt u/ werk je in dit wijkteam?

Uren teams

10. Hoeveel uur per week werkt u/ werk je in dit wijkteam?

Verticaal ondersteunend leiderschap

Mijn [terminologie voor leidinggevende]…

30 heeft aandacht voor de behoeftes van individuele teamleden.

1 2 3 4 5

31 is betrokken met de teamleden.

1 2 3 4 5

32 ondersteunt teamleden indien nodig bij een moeilijke taak .

1 2 3 4 5

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = gedeeltelijk mee oneens; 3 = niet eens, niet oneens; 4 = gedeeltelijk mee eens; 5 = helemaal mee eens

Gedeeld ondersteunend leiderschap

Nu volgen dezelfde stellingen, alleen vragen we u/je deze keer om aan te geven in hoeverre de stellingen van toepassing zijn op de teamleden.

De leden van mijn team…

42 hebben aandacht voor behoeftes van andere teamleden.

1 2 3 4 5

43 zijn betrokken met elkaar.

1 2 3 4 5

44 ondersteunen elkaar indien nodig bij een moeilijke taak.

1 2 3 4 5

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = gedeeltelijk mee oneens; 3 = niet eens, niet oneens; 4 = gedeeltelijk mee eens; 5 = helemaal mee eens

Individuele beleving: vitaliteit

De onderstaande stellingen gaan over de manier waarop je/u het werk op dit moment beleeft. In hoeverre bent u/ ben je het eens met onderstaande stellingen?

73 Op mijn werk bruis ik van energie.

1 2 3 4 5

74 Als ik werk voel ik mij fit en sterk.

1 2 3 4 5

75 Als ik 's morgens opsta heb ik zin om aan het werk te gaan .

1 2 3 4 5

76 Alles bijeengenomen ben ik tevreden met mijn werk.

1 2 3 4 5

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = gedeeltelijk mee oneens; 3 = niet eens, niet oneens; 4 = gedeeltelijk mee eens; 5 = helemaal mee eens

Individuele beleving: werkdruk

Als laatst volgen er nu nog drie afsluitende stellingen over uw werk. In hoeverre bent u/ ben je het eens met onderstaande stellingen?

Mijn werk…

77 vereist dat ik hard werk.

1 2 3 4 5

78 is emotioneel veeleisend.

1 2 3 4 5

79 vereist meer tijd dan ik heb .

1 2 3 4 5

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = gedeeltelijk mee oneens; 3 = niet eens, niet oneens; 4 = gedeeltelijk mee eens; 5 = helemaal mee eens

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. Mocht u/je nog een opmerking willen maken over dit onderzoek dan kan je/kunt u deze hieronder invullen:

Wij danken u/je hartelijk voor uw/je tijd en medewerking.

Attachment 2: Questionnaire (in Dutch) for supervisors

Note. The questionnaire is distributed in Dutch. This attachment only includes the relevant variables that are used in the current study.

Persoonlijke gegevens

Geslacht

1. Wat is uw/je geslacht?

- man
- vrouw
- anders/privé

Leeftijd

2. Wat is uw/je leeftijd?

Opleiding

3. Wat is uw/je hoogst voltooide opleiding?

- Basisschool/ Lager voortgezet onderwijs (bijvoorbeeld VMBO, MAVO, ulo, lbo)
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- Hoger beroepsonderwijs (HBO)
- Universitair onderwijs (WO)
- Gepromoveerd aan de universiteit

Ervaring zorgdomein

4. Ben je in het verleden werkzaam geweest als professioneel hulpverlener (bijvoorbeeld jeugdzorg, WMO)?

5. Heb je eerder een leidinggevende functie gehad?

6. Hoeveel maanden ervaring heb je inmiddels in jouw functie als wijkteamleider binnen de organisatie?

Team

7. Van welk wijkteam ben je de wijkteamleider?

Ervaring team

8. Van welk wijkteam ben je de wijkteamleider?

Team prestaties: responsiviteit

In hoeverre bent u/ ben je het eens met onderstaande stellingen?

Mijn team…

59. speelt adequaat in op veranderde omstandigheden.

1 2 3 4 5

60. reageert serieus op suggesties voor verbetering

1 2 3 4 5

61. blijft haar werk goed doen in moeilijke omstandigheden.

1 2 3 4 5

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = gedeeltelijk mee oneens; 3 = niet eens, niet oneens; 4 = gedeeltelijk mee eens; 5 = helemaal mee eens

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. Mocht u/je nog een opmerking willen maken over dit onderzoek dan kan je/kunt u deze hieronder invullen:

Wij danken u/je hartelijk voor uw/je tijd en medewerking.