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Managerial work and behaviour pattern

- within a cluster of small to medium oil service companies

Master's thesis in organization and management

Supervisor: Agnar Johansen

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Acknowledgment

This Master thesis is the final written work of my study at Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. I have attended this course as part of my master's degree in Organization and Leadership with specialization within project management.

This is an experience-based part-time master programme which require higher education (180 credits) and at least two years of professional experience before one can be admitted.

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Sola, Norway

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Abstract

We have in this thesis studied managers working hours, work activities and distribution of verbal contact throughout a cluster of 40 oil and gas companies on the west coast of Norway. The data was collected by use of a combination of a web-based survey and a diary-log. Based on a comprehensive review of literature, our data was compared with research papers going more than 60 years back in time.

Our results indicate that managers work long hectic hours, which is a health risk both for the individual and the organization. Research have shown strong links between long hours and work related illness such as depression, sleep disturbance and heart disease. When also taking into account that a managers health is closely linked to leadership behaviour and for exercising healthy and effective leadership is it important to not take advantage of top managers will or capacity to excessive work.

We also found that by evaluating the distribution of work activities you can with high accuracy say something about the size of the company. We found a clear pattern in that the higher the amount of activities that are linked to scheduled meeting and less time spent on informal setting such as telephone calls, touring and un-scheduled meeting the larger the business tends to be. The same is found for the different type of leaders. By comparing the distribution of time of the CEO's with the managers we see that the CEO's tends to spend more time in formal meeting and less time behind the desk. This is as expected, as it would be easy to imagine that more formal tasks often follow both the jobtitle and size of the company. Which in turn confirms that the size of the company and the leaders position is a important determinant of managerial work.

In accordance with previous work, our study also reported that leaders are to solve tasks at an extreme pace throughout a working day. Our CEO's reported to take on up-to 49 task per day, meaning that a new task where to be solved approximately every tenth minute. Only 2 per cent of the tasks lasted more than 60 minutes, despite that our research showed that our leaders where interrupted only once every fiftieth minute during the working day, we found no evidence supporting Floren's (2012) study stating that this is one of the key factor for a fast-growing business. Nor did we find supportive evidence that touring the business is a key factor as proposed by Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020).

Key words: Managers; Leaders; Leadership; Working hours; Behaviour; Managerial Work;

Sammendrag

Vi har i denne oppgaven sett nærmere på en leders tidsbruk, arbeidsaktiviteter og verbal kommunikasjon i en klynge på ca 40 olje service bedrifter på vestkysten av Norge. Dataene ble samlet inn ved hjelp av en kombinasjon av nettbasert spørreundersøkelse og en dagbokslogg. Ved å sammenligne dataunderlaget med forskning som går mer enn 60 år tilbake i tid har vi avdekket en rekke interessante funn.

Resultatene våre viser at lederene i vår undersøkelse jobber lange dager, noe som representerer både en helse risiko for den enkelte ansatte men også for organisasjonen. Forskning viser klare sammenhenger mellom høy arbeidsbelastning og arbeidsrelaterte sykdomer slik som depresjon, søvnforstyrrelser og hjertesykdom. Dette må også ses i sammenheng med at en leders helse gjerne er nært knyttet til hans adferd og evne til å utøve sunn, effektiv og god ledelse ovenfor sine medarbeidere. Det kan derfor være viktig for bedriften å ikke utnytte en toppledernes vilje eller kapasitet til å arbeide lange dager.

Vi fant også data som støtter tidligere forskning, ved å evaluere fordelingen av arbeidsaktiviteter, kan med høy nøyaktighet si noe om størrelsen på selskapet. Vi fant et tydelig mønster som viser at, jo høyere del av aktivitetene som er knyttet til planlagte møter og desto mindre tid som er brukt på uformelle aktiviteter, slik som for eksempel telefonsamtaler, inspeksjonsrunder, og ikke-planlagt møter, desto større er gjerne virksomheten. Det samme gjelder for de forskjellige typen ledere. Ved å sammenligne fordelingen av konsernsjefenes tidsbruk med avdelingslederene ser vi at konsernsjefene har en tendens til å bruke betydelig mye mer tid på formell møte og mindre tid på uformelle aktiviteter. Noe som bekrefter at både størrelsen på selskapet og hvilken posisjon lederen har er viktige faktorer når det kommer til arbeidsoppgaver.

I samsvar med tidligere studier, så viser også vår studie at ledere må løse oppgaver i et høyt tempo. Konsernsjefene i vår undersøkelse rapporterte at de håndterte opptil 49 forskjellige oppgaver per dag, noe som betyr at en ny oppgave ble påbegynt omtrent hvert tiende minutt. Bare 2 prosent av oppgavene varte i mer enn 60 minutter, til tross for at forskningen vår viste at våre ledere ble avbrutt skjeldnere enn i andre sammenlignbare studier, fant vi ingen bevis som støttet Florens (2012) studie om at få avbrytelser iløpet av en arbeidsdag er en avgjørende faktor om man ønsker å skape en profitabel virksomhet. Vi fant heller ikke bevis som støtter teorien til Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020) om at inspeksjonsrunder er en avgjørende faktor for å skape en suksessful bedrift.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

The early observational studies contributed to important understanding of what managers in corporations actually do. To a large extent these studies show that the working day of a top manager is unplanned, informal, hectic and fragmented. Managers constantly change their attention from one issue to another, a constant flow of ad hoc activities. This is eventually what makes up their everyday business day life. Adding to the already fragmented and chaotic day of business managers, is the need to change rapidly between different managerial as well as operational tasks. Meaning that the manager must be able to take on a complex set of roles throughout the company.

Manager work long hours and in general they all have a desire to keep control of their organization, which makes it difficult for them to free time by delegation. Research has also shown that managers prefer verbal communication and soft information rather than information presented in reports and long dissertations. While being under a constant pressure of having to deal with a myriad of tasks, it is the manager's job to juggle his attention between operational and administrative tasks and conflicts that arise, meaning that the manager must have a wide range of skillset.

The studies that have been conducted in the past have undoubtedly contribute to important understanding of what managers do. Yet such investigations are still few and those reviewed certainly have shortcomings – The vast majority of these studies that have focused solely on larger successful companies and their CEO's. But how does everyday business life differ for a middle manager of a small to medium size business compared with a top manager? This calls for additional research, and this master thesis tries to paint a picture and answer two important questions;

- a) What is the nature of the managerial work of a manager within a cluster of small to medium oil service companies?**
- b) Is there a single determining factor that can distinguish the managerial behaviour in a small to medium oil service companies from fast-growing businesses?**

1.2 Delimitation

The research is executed within a Norwegian cluster of 40 small to medium companies, within the oil and gas industry. By looking into variations within the cluster of companies examined and compare the results with relevant theory and research in the area, have we tried given answers to the questions above.

As a reference for evaluating the results of our research, have we, as many before us, chosen to use the classical study of Mintzberg's from 1973 as reference. Mintzberg examined patterns of managerial activities by observing 5 CEO in their everyday working environment, using the categories deskwork, telephoning, scheduled meetings, unscheduled meetings, and touring in the organization. His work has to a large extent

formed a foundation for this type of research, several others have used his work as a reference for comparative works in posterity.

No attempt has been made to make comparisons to studies with very different settings than the once mentioned in the paper. It is important to underline that this paper only takes on the questions related to managerial behaviour.

1.3 Report outline

Chapter 1 presents the background and motivation for writing this paper, further the delimitations and report outline are given.

Chapter 2 starts with a short literature review in chronological order of previous research on the same subject. Starting with Fayol's famous work from 1916 and going forward until today's date.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and starts by describing how we performed the literature search. Furthermore, it is described how we evaluated which research method that where to be used. The slightly untraditional way of how to distribute a net survey are described, before a description of the key characteristics are presented.

Chapter 4 presents the results from both the survey and the diary-log. A univariate and to some extent a multivariate analysis are presented. Results are presented in most cases with the help of figures to ease the reading.

Chapter 5 discuss the results based on known theory from the same field. We can reveal that we found both similarities but also significant discrepancies with previous research. Limitations are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6 summarizes the paper and give conclusions to our work. It also presents some suggestions for further work.

Chapter 7 gives an overview of the references used in this paper along with appendix, such as a blank copy of the survey and diary-log sheet.

2 Managerial work, a short literature review

2.1 Conceptualising leadership behaviour

Researchers in management and work behaviour have tried for centuries to get hold of what managers really do (Hales, 1986) (Tengblad, 2012) (Ahmadi, 2020). The French industrialist Henri Fayol (Fayol, 1916) as perhaps one of the most cited authors, described in his article from more than a century ago, managerial work based on five principal managerial function: planning, coordinating, organizing, commanding and controlling. Much of the literature on small businesses has continued to use Fayol's managerial functions as a template for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of entrepreneurs and managers (O'Gorman, 2005).

One of the earliest empirical studies in business administration was performed by Sune Carlson's (Carlson, 1951), in his this study of what Swedish senior managers do at work he primarily found that the senior managers were extremely pressurized in their everyday actions – individuals who rarely had enough time to strategize successfully on behalf of their organizations. Carlson's work would largely set the agenda for research into managerial work in the decades to come. (Foster, 2019)

Around the same time as Carlson published his work, two innovative methods were gaining credence for the collection and analysis of data on managers and their work – diary logs (Burns, 1954), and direct observation (Dalton, 1959). While Burns diary-based work noted that managers often dealt with activities related to production. Dalton's observational work noted that managers spent a considerable amount of their time engaged in informal actions, including seemingly irrational tasks that should or could have been delegated (Foster, 2019).

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a lot of empirical studies of managerial work were performed (Stewart R. , 1998). Qualitative approaches often joined by quantitative research techniques where being used more frequently, this resulted in a general widening of the research focus of managerial work (Foster, 2019). Typically for this time period was that, scholars argued that theoretical understanding of management were based on old assumptions which didn't reflect what managers actually do. Fayol's classical view were especially criticized for being based on weak empirical foundations. (Carlson, 1951) (Mintzberg, 1973).

Several descriptive studies of managers work activities were conducted during this time period (e.g. (Burns, 1954); (Stewart R. , 1967)) all contributing to a very different understanding of managerial practice than the one described by Fayol (1916). Notable here was Henry Mintzberg's (1973) well-cited works on his structured observation approach that sought to connect management theory with managerial practice. In that study, Mintzberg examined patterns of managerial activities using the categories deskwork, telephoning, scheduled meetings, unscheduled meetings, and tours in the organization. His research on the work of five CEOs, largely confirmed the findings of earlier qualitative and ethnographic studies. The image was once again, that a huge volume of fragmented work was being accomplished by executives/senior managers at relentless pace. Work that was highly interactive, often conducted in meetings, and

largely completed by informal verbal means (Foster, 2019). Mintzberg famously state in his paper from 1975 that; "*a synthesis of his findings paints an interesting picture, one as different from Fayol's classical view as a cubist abstract is from a Renaissance picture*" (Mintzberg, 1975).

The 1980s and 1990s were often characterized by focus on a more technocratic view of management. Throughout this period several additional studies drawing on quantitative methods and conceptual papers increased knowledge about what managers do as well as the methods of studying managerial work. (Florén H. , 2006) Hales (Hales, 1999) in his review summarize the core activities of what managers do in the following way:

- short, interrupted and fragmented activities;
- a need to react to events, problems and requirements of others;
- a preoccupation with the exigent, adhoc and unforeseen, rather than the planned;
- a tendency for activities to be embedded in others rather than undertaken separately;
- a high level of verbal interaction, often face-to-face;
- a degree of tension, pressure and conflict in seeking to juggle competing demands; and a degree of choice and negotiation over the nature and boundaries of the managerial job and how it is undertaken (Hales, 1999)

2.2 Comparing characteristics of managerial behaviour across studies.

In Figure 1 is a small selection of relevant studies reproduced with key information with what is found to be relevant studies. Four of which concerning small businesses (Ahmadi, 2020) (Florén, 2012) (O'Gorman, 2005) (Choran, 1969) one concerning intermediate (Kurke, 1983) and two concerning large organizations (Mintzberg, 1973) (Tengblad, 2006). The information is presented in table form to ease the reading and present the result in more comparable way. We have chosen the same approach for comparison as presented by Kurke & Aldrich (1983). They used an abbreviated versions of the table presented originally by Mintzberg (1973), where they chose not to include the mail records. Only the five main activities as defined by Mintzberg; "deskwork sessions", "telephone calls", "scheduled meetings", "unscheduled meetings" and "tours" are presented. The table is organized with organizational size as guiding variable, meaning that the longer to the right in the table, the larger the organization.

Study	Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson	Florén & Tell	O’Gorman	Choran	Kurke & Aldrich	Mintzberg	Tengblad
Year	2020	2012	2005	1969	1983	1973	2006
No. participants (n)	133	6/6	10	3	4	5	4
Type of business	Small	Small	Small	Small	Intermediate	Large	Large
Type of study	Questionnaire	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation
Work Activity							
Number of activities (qty)		57,4		77	34	22	139
Working hours/week (hrs)	52,4	45,5/44,5	-	-	44,17	45,4	72,2
Deskwork (%)	34,4	46/50	28	35	26	22	12
Telephone (%)	17,4	13/13	13	17	8	6	7
Scheduled meeting (%)	16,2	15/17	25	21	50	59	63
Unscheduled meeting (%)	12,4	19/16	25	15	12	10	
Tours (%)	19,6	7/6	9	12	3	3	1
Verbal Contact							
Subordinates (%)		51	67	56	50	48	69
Clients (%)		10	11	7	7	3	
Suppliers and associates (%)		28	11	31	6	17	7
Peers and trade organizations (%)				0,2	4	11	9
Directors and co directors				0	27	12	3
Other				7	7	8	11
Portion of activities							
Lasting less than 9min [%]		80		84	63	49	45
Lasting more than 60 min [%]		1		0	5	10	12

Figure 1, Comparison of managerial behaviour

Ahmadi (Ahmadi, 2020) as the only study that has been included which performed a questionnaire survey, collected data from 133 participants within a group of Swedish profitable growth small- and medium- sized companies. They found that touring the business was a key factor for operational success, making yourself available and accessible for your subordinates in a non-formal way.

Floren and Tell performed a study of six slow-growing and six fast-growing manufacturing firms, they used the same method as developed by Mintzberg and collected almost as much as 330hr of data (Florén, 2012). To their surprise, they found that there were only minor differences between the group of fast growing and slow-growing firms, yet one very important one: The managers in the fast growing firms could work for 25 minutes without being disturbed, compared to 18 minutes for the managers in the group of slow growing firms. This means almost 40% more undisturbed time to focus on the everyday task (Florén, 2012).

O’Gorman conducted in 2005 a study of teen CEO’s of small growth-oriented businesses, amongst other elements they found that the organizational size is an decisive factor in managerial work (O’Gorman, 2005). In Choran’s study (1969) three CEO’s in small US businesses are undertaken a replica of Mintzberg’s study. Kurke & Aldrich’s study involved the observation of four top managers in intermediate organizations for 20 days and to a large extent confirmed Mintzberg’s result.

Mintzberg’s study is as already mentioned a well-documented and known paper within the field of management research. In his study, five CEO’s in large-sized” organisations are observed for a period of 25 days. Tengblad also performed a replica of Mintzberg’s study of four CEO’s over a full working week. The differences that he found was that the CEO’s was exposed to a work load that was much higher than presented in earlier study’s, and a contact pattern that was to a large degree oriented towards subordinates in a group setting and less preoccupation with administrative work.

2.2.1 Working hours

Florén (Florén H. , 2006) tries in his article to describe how managers spend their time throughout the working day, by comparing the work done by Chorán (Chorán, 1969), Noël (Noel, 1989) , Muri and Langford (Muir, 1994), and O`Gorman (O`Gorman, 2005). In his comparable study, he tries to summarize how managers in small firms allocate their time. Based on his findings Florén states that a typical working day for a small firm manager is long and hectic and with few routine events. The manager spend most of his time physically in their organization and working hours are about 45-50 hours per week (Chorán, 1969) (Floren, 2004).

The number of working hours is especially interesting when taking into account the strong links that have been found between high-load and work-related illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and coronary heart disease (Bannai, 2014). Without going into all the details in Bannai's study, his conclusion is that by working more than 40 hours per week or 8 hours per day, he found that long working hours has a significant adverse effect on your health. Kaluza (2020) found a clear link between how leaders felt and how they behave towards their subordinates. Constructive leadership is positively, and destructive leadership is negatively associated with the leader's well-being.

2.2.2 Allocation of time.

Chorán found that one managerial characteristic in particular, differed between small and large businesses (Chorán, 1969). Top managers in small firms spend significantly less time on deskwork and more time on scheduled meeting than their peers in smaller companies (Chorán, 1969). To a large extent, the same conclusion is drawn by Ahmadi (2020), they however include yet another characteristics to evaluate the size of the business – "tours". They found that the smaller the businesses get the more the managers tour the factory floor. Ahmadi found that they could distinguish differences between small and large companies in regards to managers time allocation, suggesting that organizational size matters for managerial allocation of time (Ahmadi, 2020).

One theory is that managers in smaller companies have fewer supporting functions within their organizations that needs to be tended by the managers. This also increase the time spent on informal tasks such as telephoning, touring and un-scheduled meetings, indicating that the degree of formalization is lower in smaller companies. (Ahmadi, 2020).

Based on their findings, Ahmadi (2020) states that there is a clear link between organizational size and managerial work. This is in line with one of Mintzberg's (1973) propositions on the stability of managerial work, he claims that managers have little individual choice and that their practical work is predetermined by their position and follow their regular duties, including ritual and ceremony, negotiations and processing information. A manager's job is enormously complicated and difficult. Managers are overburdened with obligations yet cannot easily delegate their tasks. As a result, they are driven to overwork and forced to do many tasks superficially. (Mintzberg, 1973). This is also pointed out by Hales (1999), claiming that moral rules of the social systems in which the managers are located, reflect how all managers feel compelled by the managerial responsibility to engage in institutionalized routines and rules that surround them. All of which in turn decides what managers do and how they work.

2.2.3 Interaction and communication

Previous research shows that CEO's spend most of their time with subordinates, (Floren, 2004) (O'Gorman, 2005) (Choran, 1969) (Kurke, 1983) (Mintzberg, 1973) (Tengblad, 2006), the studies showed that between 48% and 69% of all the verbal contact were with subordinates. The second largest group are the suppliers and associates which ranges from 6% to 31%. Remaining time is chattered between clients, peer and directors and varies in size. For a complete overview please see Figure 1 for more details.

CEOs of small firms use informal means of communication on a broader scale compared to their peers in larger corporations, they tend to make the telephone and unscheduled meetings their first choice (Choran, 1969) (O'Gorman, 2005). These informal means of communication contribute to the fragmentation of managers' working day (Floren, 2004). O'Gorman (2005) argue that the level of formal communication becomes higher with the size of the organization, implying that CEOs of larger companies uses scheduled meetings far more often than CEO's of smaller organizations. O'Gorman states that this is due to the more ceremonial nature, such as press conferences and contract signing found in large companies.

Another mean of communication that is often used in small companies, and one that is found to be related to the success of the company is touring (Ahmadi, 2020) (Peters, 1984). Touring is defined by the classical researchers (Carlson, 1951) (Mintzberg, 1973) as a tool to make yourself more visible and accessible to your workers, by touring the company you will be able to collect valuable information through informal discussions with employees, creating value for the employee in terms of increased morale and is an efficient way of problem-solving (Kotter, 1982). Management by walking around or MBWA as Peters and Waterman's (Peters, 1984) calls it is characteristic behaviour for managers in successful US companies, it is regarded as a way of bringing managers out of office to talk to employees and clients in an informal manner. MBWA was also found to be a key leadership behaviour factor by the Swedish study performed by Larsson and Vinberg in their study from 2010. (Larsson, 2010). Touring is thus of interest both as a management technique that may be common to effective companies, and as a behaviour important for employee well-being since employees feel that they are seen, respected, and an important part of the team. (Ahmadi, 2020)

Henrik Floren (2012) on the contrary argues that when they went through their observational data from their study, it became apparent that the managers in the slow growing businesses tend to use their tours to control their employees as they don't have the same trust in their employees as their peers in fast growing business.

The need for touring the business is also interpreted differently in the theory, (Ahmadi, 2020) Ahmadi states given the fact that a business is smaller it might be easier for a manager to interact with and relate to a smaller number of employees. This is however in strong contrast with Stewart's (1998) which on the other hand suggest that a small number of employees reduces the need for inspection tours.

2.2.4 Activities and interruptions.

All the studies that Florén investigated conclude that the working day of the managers is characterised by brevity and fragmentation. The number of activities per day for the typical manager in small firms ranges from about 35 to about 72. The studies by Choran (1969) and Florén (2004) both found that about 90% of the activities of the managers

lasted under nine minutes while less than 1 per cent lasted over 60 minutes. Chorán explains this high number of activities and fragmentation of managers' work by the fact that only a few activities were completed without interruption. Correspondingly, O'Gorman (2005) found that the managers' working day was relatively unplanned and constant interruption was a distinctive part of the CEO's working day.

Not only are the managers interrupted by their subordinates or other actors, they tend to fragment their working day themselves. Almost six out of ten activities are initiated by the managers (Chorán, 1969) (Floren, 2004). According to O'Gorman (2005) is this due to the managers' tendency to react immediately to live and received information. As the number of activities accomplished during a working day is so high, managers have difficulty spending time on one activity for a longer time period and very few activities were completed without interruption (Chorán, 1969). Deskwork was stopped by telephone calls or employees coming into the office asking for or giving information. Florén (2003) found in his study that on average, the manager work for 11 minutes before being interrupted. The pattern was consistent in that, as soon as any interrupted primary activity was resumed it was interrupted again (Chorán, 1969) (Floren, 2004).

2.2.5 Multi-role behavior

Muir and Langford (1994) found in their study what they call a "multi-role behaviour", where managers take on a myriad of roles. This was supported by O'Gorman (2005), who stated that CEOs constantly change roles and functions during a working day. The CEOs frequently switch and redirect the focus of their attention. One minute a CEO might be reviewing financial results, the next minute he could be negotiating price changes with a customer (O'Gorman, 2005). Managers tended to react to live information and act immediately on information received. Except for a small number of scheduled meetings their days seemed relatively unplanned with constant interruption being the principle activator of CEO actions (O'Gorman, 2005). On this area O'Gorman's work to a large degree coincides the work of Chorán (Chorán, 1969), he found that small firm managers need to be both executives and middle managers while they at the same time work as project teams members. Small firm managers must be able to take on different roles and to operate different organizational functions, both managerial and operational, depending on what needs to be done and they must switch rapidly between those functions and roles (Florén H. , 2006).

Consequently, Muir and Langford (1994) argue that managers need three basic skills: technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills. Hence, they need to be skilled at the lower, middle and top management levels, yet they must also be able to bridge these roles. In the words of Muir and Langford (Muir, 1994) they need to be entrepreneurs as well as technicians.

The fact that small firm managers spend time on non-managerial tasks is interpreted differently by the different researchers. Muir and Langford (1994) found that one of the managers was spending too much time on "laborious and time-consuming clerical work, which according to them could have been better and easily delegated. Chorán (1969) on the other hand explains this by the argument that the manager have a desire to keep control of vital organizational functions. "If the manager deems that any one function is vital to the organization's well-being, he will assume that position" (Chorán, 1969).

Another theory of why the small firm manager take on such a roll, is the fact that there is only a limited number of employees who can actually carry out the jobs, in that context the manager works as the backup person, taking on any roll that the firm may require. (Choran, 1969)

Muir and Langford (1994) put forward argument in that they assume non-managerial work is time badly spent for managers. Choran (1969) on the other hand, assumes that the presence of operational roles is vital for the organisation and therefore difficult to exclude from the work of managers in small firms.

3 Methodology

3.1 In search of theory

We began this review with a structured keyword search, followed by an initial reading of what was characterized as the most relevant journal articles and papers based on their abstract review. This was followed by a backward and forward snowballing literature search, and soon a pattern of the most cited works started to emerge. For this cross-sectional study, journal articles are considered as the primary data source, but also books and book chapters are included when found relevant. Unpublished work and web pages without valid references are excluded. Journal articles are found through resources given by NTNU database such as SCOPUS and ISI.

The initial search was based on a combination of five search words, assumed to be related with managerial work: "Manager", "Leader", "Behaviour", "Work", "Activities". The keywords mentioned returned a high number of articles, but by limiting the search to managerial activities, and removing returns which contained results such as "motivation", "strategy" and "governance", the number of article's was reduced significantly. When in doubt of the relevance of an article the abstract was read. Elimination of journals was mainly done based on our own scholarly understanding of quality, on the contrary we focused on journals with high citation patterns. We focused explicitly with research on everyday work of managers, which is tasked with overseeing staff and/or tasks of other. Individuals that too some extent is a formally part of the organizational upper hierarchy.

Given the wide range of research articles that exist within this topic, where we forced to restrict the in-depth review to the time period ranging from 1951–2020. With one exception, Fayol's classical review (Fayol, 1916) is briefly mentioned as his work is known to have formed the basis of most of this research within this area. Commencing with Carlson's (1951) the study follows other reviews such as Chorán (1969), Kurke & Aldrich (1983), Muir and Langford (Muir, 1994) O'Gorman (2005) Floren & Tell (2012) Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020) Common for all this research articles are that they all base their work to some extent on the timeless work performed by Mintzberg (1973). As a result, several foundational works are briefly acknowledged or entirely excluded for more in-depth discussion of other studies.

3.2 Finding the right research method

Previous studies within this field have to a large extent been carried out as observational studies of a smaller group of people. In our compilation of previous work presented in Figure 1 is it only Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020) that have used a questioner as basis of their research. Observational studies have the obvious advantage of being able to follow the object closely and gain in-depth knowledge of their everyday life. The disadvantage is that it is a time-consuming process and that the group of subjects must therefore be reduced accordingly. On the other hand, the advantage of using a quantitative approach such as a questioner, is that you may increase the number of recipients without the use of time increases correspondingly. We concluded that since it

was desirable to conduct a study across a larger number of companies within the same cluster, it would be too extensive to conduct this as an observational study. As with Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020) it became natural to use a survey as basis for our research.

3.3 Main outcome

The questions in the survey are designed to give answer to how many working hours a manager puts into the job per week, how the time is distributed and who they communicate with. In addition are a handful of questions related to relation, tasks and change incorporated to give a more complementary picture of certain topics and areas

The recipients were for instance asked to estimate how the distribution of time is divided between the following activities; "Deskwork" (Mail and general administration), "Telephone", "Scheduled meeting" (Meetings booked at least one day in advance), "Unscheduled meeting" (receiving a uninvited visit in the office) and "Touring" (walking around and talking to colleagues). These five categories are the same as used in previous research by Mintzberg and his successors of researchers within the same field. When looking into categories we found that one category related to personal time (doctor appointments, hairdresser, dentist and toilet visit) was missing as a category. We therefore choose to include this additional category to get a more complete picture of a manager's everyday work life.

In order to understand who, the managers communicates with and to what extent, the recipients were asked to evaluate who they interact with throughout the day, divided into the following five categories; Subordinates, Clients, Suppliers and associates, peers and trade organizations, directors and Co directors. Choran (1969), Kurke & Aldrich (1983) and Mintzberg (1973) amongst others have in addition to the mentioned categories included one additional category called "other", this category was excluded from our survey since the description was inaccurate and would easily end up being a digest of uncertainty for the respondent.

Another key element was to determine the number of tasks performed by each manager and time spent in average on each task. This was evaluated using a diary log sheet with a small excerpt of the respondents as described in section 3.3.2. The same alternative as presented for evaluation the time spent was used; "Deskwork" "Telephoning", "Scheduled meetings", "Unscheduled meetings" and "Tours", combined with three different duration interval of 0-9, 9-60 and >60 min where used to log the activities. In addition, the subject where asked to check off in a separate box every time they were interrupted from completing their task.

3.3.1 Getting the questions right

The questionnaire was designed based on thorough analysis of literature but as a step to ensure the highest possible repeatability in the survey, we reached out to Elena Ahmadi, a co writher of the paper Managers work and behaviour patterns in profitable growth SME's. (Ahmadi, 2020). She was kind enough to let me have a copy of the key questions which was used in their survey. As the questions where given to us in Swedish, we have translated it to the best of our ability into Norwegian for the use in our survey.

To test the validity of the questionnaire and to ensure that the respondents understood the questionnaire before distributing, was a test pilot performed on three subjects. After the survey was conducted, a detailed interview with the subjects was conducted to ensure that the wording and the questions were all clear. The interview highlighted that some of the questions were difficult to fill out and several improvements were suggested, such as drop-down lists, menu and automatic summation of percentage distribution. A copy of the final questionnaire as it was distributed to our recipients can be found in appendix 1 [Norwegian only].

Any questionnaire with missing data was excluded from the analysis, also managers not working full time was excluded. When the questionnaires with some missing data were analysed and compared with the remaining results, it was found that they were very similar, hence it is not expected that the excluded data would have influenced the overall results.

3.3.2 Keeping track of tasks

Another element that was highlighted by the respondents in the pilot survey was the difficulty of giving exact figures for the how many tasks they execute each day, especially when having to also estimate the duration of each task. It was therefore concluded that instead of having this as part of the questionnaire, this should be logged by use of a daily log instead. Of the respondents that replied to the survey, a random selection of 4 people was asked to log their tasks throughout two normal working days in a typical work week.

It was taken into account the experiences that Florén's and Tell gained from their observational study (Florén, 2003) before making the daily log sheet. Florén's and Tell originally asked all their research objects to write a diary by using the same layout as designed by Carlson (Carlson, 1951). According to Florén and Tell, this did not go very well as managers found very little time to write down their activities, the result was a collection of very brief notes. Their previous experience was considered when we designed our diary log, we ensured that the amount of data to be filled along with the number of questions were kept at an absolute minimum. A copy of the log used can be found in appendix 2 [Norwegian only].

How honest and carefully the respondent has filled in the diary-log sheet is not addressed. It is obvious that the respondents have the opportunity of embellishing the answers, but on the other hand, there is nothing to gain by doing so. All the respondents were reassured that the questionnaires were kept anonymous. The answers in the diary study have all been anonymized. It has also been kept a secret for all except those which participated in the diary survey who the respondents are.

In order to verify the results and to be able to compare the response given in the log sheet with the web-based net survey, two mean values were calculated.

Mean of task – A calculated percentage value based on the total number of tasks

Mean of time – A calculated percentage value based on the stated duration of each task

In order to calculate the "Mean of task". The average mean from each of the respondents of the diary log was transferred into a spreadsheet. Mean of task is then calculated based on the total amount of tasks carried out on one day. Figure 2

For calculating the “Mean of time”, a mid-value of the time span given in the log sheet where used as a baseline, this was then multiplied with an factor to get the total duration of all the tasks as close to 480 minutes (8 hours). The factor was found using Newtons method and calculated to be 1,1246.

Activity	Duration	Average amount of tasks	Mean of Task	Est. Duration	Duration Factor	Duration per task	Duration min	Mean of time
Deskwork	0-9 min	15	40,5 %	5	1,1246	5,623	84,3	17,57 %
	9-60 min	3	8,1 %	30	1,1246	33,738	101,2	21,08 %
	> 60 min	0,375	1,0 %	60	1,1246	67,476	25,3	5,27 %
Telephone	0-9 min	5,5	14,9 %	5	1,1246	5,623	30,9	6,44 %
	9-60 min	0,75	2,0 %	30	1,1246	33,738	25,3	5,27 %
	> 60 min	0	0,0 %	60	1,1246	67,476	0,0	0,00 %
Scheduled meeting	0-9 min	0,25	0,7 %	5	1,1246	5,623	1,4	0,29 %
	9-60 min	1,5	4,1 %	30	1,1246	33,738	50,6	10,54 %
	> 60 min	0,5	1,4 %	60	1,1246	67,476	33,7	7,03 %
Un-scheduled meeting	0-9 min	3,5	9,5 %	5	1,1246	5,623	19,7	4,10 %
	9-60 min	2	5,4 %	30	1,1246	33,738	67,5	14,06 %
	> 60 min	0	0,0 %	60	1,1246	67,476	0,0	0,00 %
Tours	0-9 min	4,125	11,1 %	5	1,1246	5,623	23,2	4,83 %
	9-60 min	0,5	1,4 %	30	1,1246	33,738	16,9	3,51 %
	> 60 min	0	0,0 %	60	1,1246	67,476	0,0	0,00 %
Sum		37	100,0 %				480	100,00 %

Figure 2, Calculation example of mean of task and mean of time

3.3.3 Asking for permission

Average response rate for an anonymous net-based survey is typically only ranging from 15-25%. Calculation therefor showed that to ensure enough confidence level we would need to send the survey too around 120 recipients. Meaning that four to five members of the management team in each company had to be addressed to ensure enough response on the survey. We therefore approached the board of director and asked permission for distribution of the survey, but this was rejected due to the high number of recipients.

To mitigate with their requirements of reducing the size of recipients, we instead asked permission to send out the survey to three persons from each management team within a random selection of 12 companies. Reducing the number of respondents by a factor of three.

After getting the board of directors’ approval to distribute the survey, we gave each of the twelve CEO’s in each company a phone call. We explained that we were about to send out an survey, underlaying that it had been pre-approved by the board of directors, reason for sending it, the importance of it and lastly that it could be completed in less than 5 minutes. Further we asked them if they could provide us with the name of two of their subordinates that could participate in answering the survey. The goal by doing it this way was to give each of the CEO’s a form of affiliation to the task and highlight that their feedback was being noticed and was of high importance.

All the CEO’s where positive and they all provided us with name of two of their subordinates without any hesitation. After hanging up on the phone we immediately sent them an email with a summary of what we had discussed on the phone and some additional information about when and where it would take place, along with our contact information. The CEO’s where all asked to forward the mail to the same two subordinates

as they had presented earlier, given them a heads up that a survey was to be distributed within the next few days.

It was an extensive job that took some time to complete, but it was well worth it. We ended up with a response rate of approximately 92%, only 3 recipients failed to complete the survey. Our 95% confidence level was only reduced by as little as 0,8% ending at $\pm 14,5\%$ compared with what could have been typical for a mass distribution of a net-survey to the mentioned 120 recipients.

3.4 Inclusion criteria

The data for this study are collected within a cluster of 40 companies on the west coast of Norway. The companies are all in one way or another related to the oil and gas industry and are privately owned. Total turnover in each company is ranging from 20-300 million NOK, number of employees largely coincides the total turnover in the company and range from 6-250 employees. Inclusion criteria for respondents are that they must be employed within one of the companies in this cluster. They must hold a managerial roll position in the formally part of the organizational upper hierarchy such as CEO or department manager.

3.5 Key characteristics

Key characteristics of the respondents in our survey are given in the Figure 3 below. Sex was measured as male or female. Education was presented as a drop-down list where the subject where to select the highest formal degree ranging from; Upper secondary school, Technical college, Bachelor, Master and PhD. Managerial experience is the number of years that the respondent has worked in a managerial position within the cluster. Tenure would give answer to how long he has been an employee, including any jobs changes internally within the cluster. Number of employees indicates the size of the company where the respondent work.

Managers Key Characteristics (n=33)		
		Frequency
Sex	Male	27
	Female	6
Age	Average	48
Education	No univercity degree	45 %
	Univercity degree	55 %
Position	CEO	30 %
	Dep. Manager	70 %
Organizational tenure	0-3 Years	24 %
	3-6 Years	9 %
	6-10 Years	21 %
	>10 Years	45 %
Managerial experience	0-3 Years	27 %
	3-6 Years	18 %
	6-10 Years	18 %
	>10 Years	36 %
Number of employees	0-39 Pax	42 %
	40-79 Pax	9 %
	80-119 Pax	36 %
	>120 Pax	12 %

Figure 3, Managers Key Characteristics

The data was collected in December 2020 and the questionnaire were sent out to a total of 36 participants, whereas we received 33 responses. The average respondent were 48 years old, 82% were male and 55% had a university degree. 76% of the managers had been working for the cluster for more than 3 years whereas 36% of the questioned managers had been in a leading position for more than 10 years. Of the managers which participated in the survey, 88% of them worked in a company with 120 employees or less. The companies in our sample are not a homogeneous group as for instance the number of employees varies from 6-250 people.

3.6 Statistical analysis

Since the questionnaire was sent out through the digital net-based survey portal, Netigate, the data coding was already done by the software and the survey could be efficiently downloaded directly as an excel sheet. Minimal amount of rework had to be done to the data before the responses could be further processed and evaluated, with two exceptions. At the end of the survey we had included a dialogue box, this was used by some of the respondents to give additional information, mostly constructive feedback on the survey, but in one instance we found information here that caused us to manually change one of the answers in this questionnaire. Another instance where the data had to be manually updated was for the question related to year of birth, one respondent had entered his year of birth with two digits instead of four.

The first step consisted of a descriptive analysis of gender, age and working hours by simply using arithmetic mean. For further analysis, most of the commonly used measures for central tendency were calculated. Such as; mean, mode, standard deviation and range. A correlation analysis was performed in order to see whether variables were linearly related. For this work we used pivot tables in excel to easily see the results based on different variables. Further a univariate and to some extent a multivariate analysis with multiple linear regression analysis were performed in order to evaluate whether working hours, work activity or verbal communication were related to education, gender, age, leadership or any other key characteristic.

A qualitative comparison study was performed with in total seven other studies that also have used Mintzberg's categories. (Ahmadi, 2020) (Florén, 2012) (O'Gorman, 2005) (Choran, 1969) (Kurke, 1983) (Mintzberg, 1973) (Tengblad, 2006).

4 Results

4.1 Net survey

The main outcome of the study are the extent and nature of managerial work measured in terms of distribution of time, tasks and communication. The relevant findings from the net survey and diary log are as presented in the following section.

4.1.1 Working Hours

On average the respondents in our survey worked 39,5 hours during business hours, another 5,15 hours per week was spent on evenings, after close of business. Yet another 2,3 hours were spent on public holidays and weekends. In total the average employee reported to be working 46,9 hours per week as shown in Figure 4.

4.1.2 Work activities

The managers in the cluster spend 43,7% of their time behind the desk. 16,5% on the telephone while 19,2% of the time is used on scheduled meetings. Unscheduled meetings count for 12,2% of their time, while touring the organization counts for 6,1% percent. Personal time amount to 2,4% as shown in Figure 4

<i>n=33</i>	Mean	Mode	Min	Max	SD
Work Activity					
Working hours/week (hrs)	46,9	52	63	39	5,8
Deskwork (%)	43,7	50	10	90	20,5
Telephone (%)	16,5	20	3	40	8,9
Scheduled meeting (%)	19,2	15	0	60	13,6
Unscheduled meeting (%)	12,2	20	1	30	8,1
Tours (%)	6,1	5	0	20	4,4
Personal time (%)	2,4	2	0	5	1,8
Verbal Communication					
Subordinates (%)	35,5	30	5	70	16,0
Clients (%)	23,5	30	0	60	14,9
Directors and co directors	15,1	5	2	70	14,3
Peers and trade organizations (%)	14,0	5	0	50	11,2
Suppliers and associates (%)	11,9	10	0	30	8,2

Figure 4, Distribution of Work Activities

4.1.3 Communication

About 35% of the verbal communication is spent on subordinates, while 23,5% is in dialogue with customers and clients. Time is almost evenly distributed between peers and directors and accounts for about 14-15% while suppliers and associates counts for about 12% of all verbal communication.

4.1.4 Leadership behaviour

Result in Figure 5 are an overall representation of the combined response given from both CEO's and department managers in our survey. Of all the CEO's in the survey 70% of them had a university degree while none of the CEO's were females. In the other studies as presented for instance in Figure 1, the researchers have chosen to focus only on the CEO's. We therefore made a comparison of the results, distinguishing between the response given by the CEO's and the department managers. The first thing we analysed was the number of hours worked per week. On average the CEO's reported to work 49 hours in comparison to the 46 hours by the department manager.

Study	Lia Combined	Lia Dep.Managers	Lia CEO's
Year	2021	2021	2021
No. participants (n)	33	23	10
Type of business	Small	Small	Small
Type of study	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire
Work Activity			
Working hours/week (hrs)	46,9	45,9	49,3
Deskwork (%)	43,7	47,9	34,1
Telephone (%)	16,5	17,2	14,8
Scheduled meeting (%)	19,2	15,2	28,2
Unscheduled meeting (%)	12,2	12,5	11,6
Tours (%)	6,1	5,0	8,4
Personal time (%)	2,4	2,2	2,9
Verbal Contact			
Subordinates (%)	35,5	30,0	48,0
Clients (%)	23,5	21,4	28,3
Suppliers and associates (%)	15,1	12,4	10,9
Peers and trade organizations (%)	14,0	17,7	5,6
Directors and co directors	11,9	18,5	7,2
Other			

Figure 5, Work Activities of Managers and CEO's

As shown in Figure 6, you can see that the reported amount of deskwork and scheduled meetings taken on by the two type of leaders are quite different. The CEO's performed as much as 12% less deskwork than the department managers, but on the other hand they tended almost twice as much scheduled meetings as the department managers. When comparing the response given by the CEO's in our study with the result from the CEO's in the previous studies, and especially the once that have focused on the small business, the data is to a greater extent directly comparable.

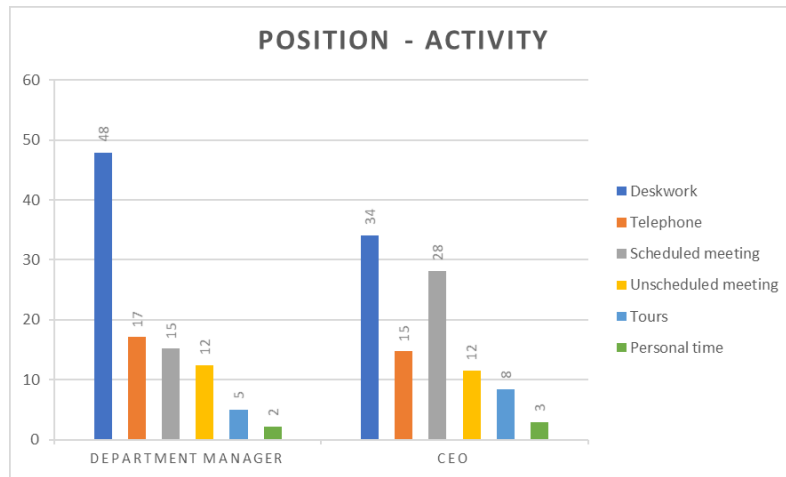


Figure 6, Position - Activity

When comparing who the department manager's and CEO are in verbal contact with, we also saw a higher degree of concurrent with the other studies when we exclude the department managers from the comparison, Figure 7. CEO's spent almost 50% of their time, communicating with subordinates, significantly more than the 30% taken on by the department managers.

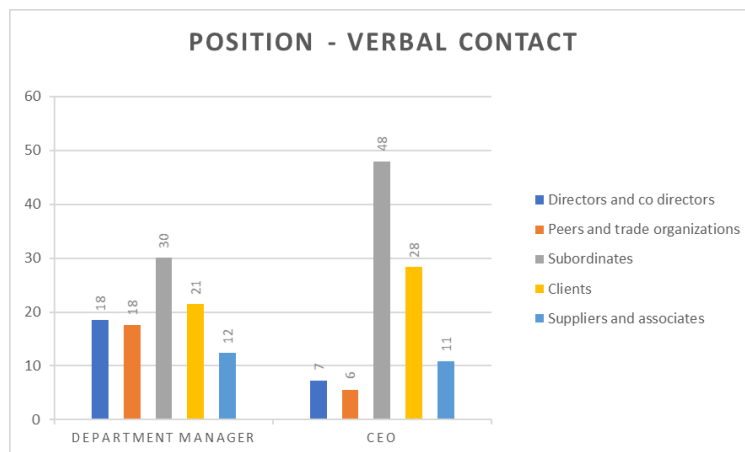


Figure 7, Position - Verbal Contact

All the respondents in the survey, except four department managers, reported that they had either fairly large or a large impact on one's own everyday work life. The respondents that had been with the company for less than 6 years all felt that they had either quite large or very large impact on their everyday work, while all the CEO's reported the same. Only 82% of the department managers reported the same

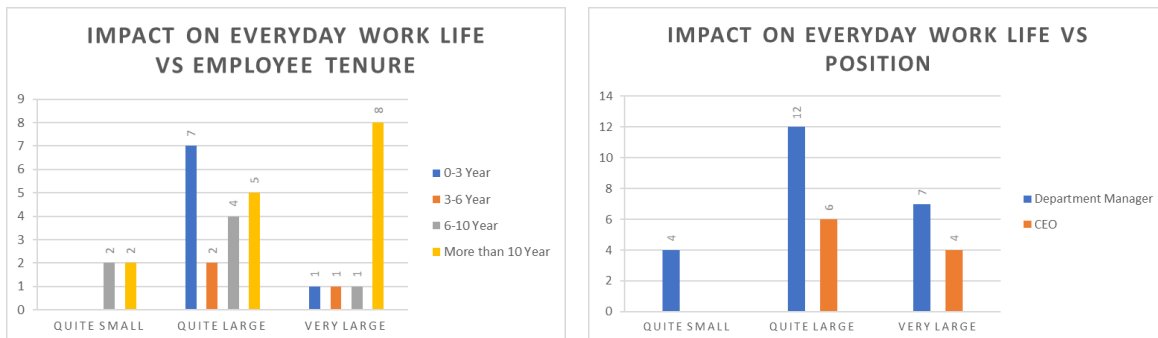


Figure 8, Impact on everyday work life

On the question to whether the respondent perform task that lay outside their area of responsibility, all the CEO's and about 75% of the department mangers replied that they executed at least 2 hours of such work per week. 13% of the department managers replied that they spent more than 10 hours per week on task that lay outside their area of responsibility as shown in Figure 9.

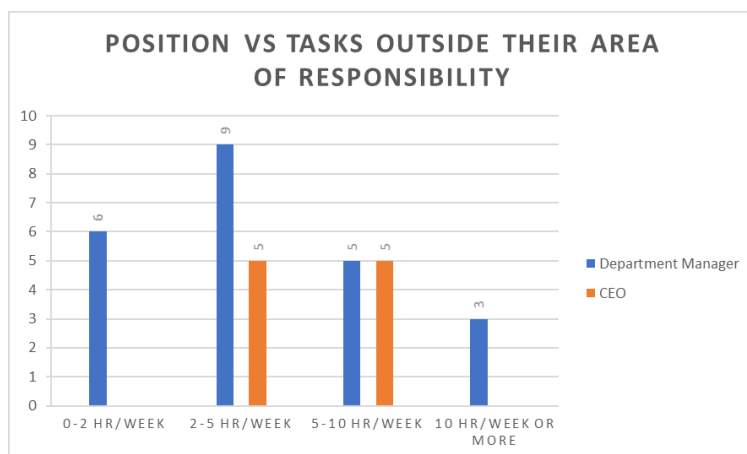


Figure 9 Tasks outside area of responsibility

4.1.5 Gender differences

In the same way as with the CEO's and the department managers a comparison of the response given by the male's and the females where performed. To a large extend the data was gender independent but with a few exceptions. The men where on average 5 years older than the women. While 59% of the men had been an employee of the cluster for 6 years or more, only 33% of the women had been there for the same time period. When comparing the distribution of time for the two genders. The males tend to use less time behind the desk and significantly more time in scheduled meeting. This result should however be seen in conjunction with the fact that there was no female CEO's in the survey. Male and females seems to have the same communication pattern with only minor deviation of 1-2%.

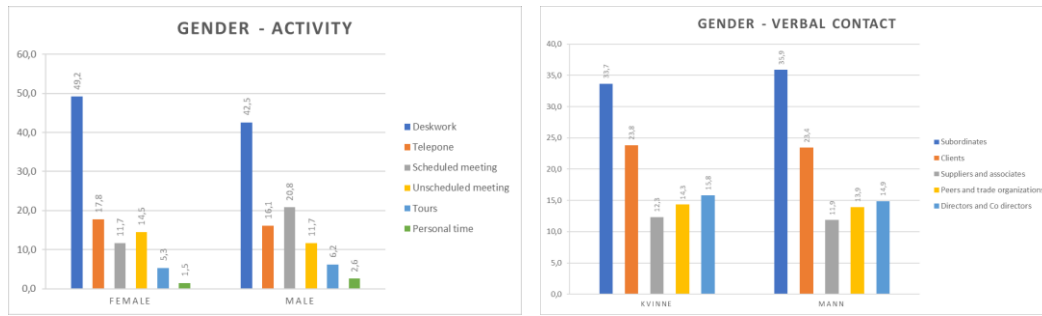


Figure 10 Gender vs Activity and Verbal Contact

4.1.6 Educational variance

Differences in verbal communication becomes significant when separating the respondents into two groups based on education level. As shown in Figure 11 is the amount of communication with the subordinates significantly lower for the group with no formal education. On the contrary the group with no formal education spent almost 30% of their time in verbal communication with clients and customers compared with the 18% in the group with higher education. This should however be seen in conjunction with the fact that about 70% of the CEO's hold a formal degree from a university. Since the CEO are found on a higher hierarchy level it would be as expected for them to communicate more with their subordinates than the group with no formal education.

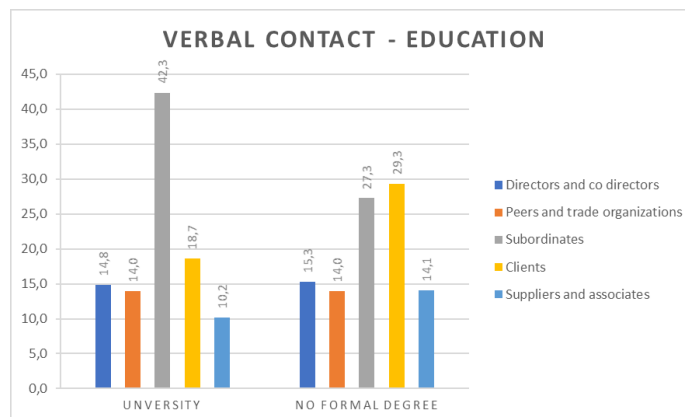


Figure 11, Verbal Contact vs Education

When evaluating how the education level influence the distribution of time, we once again find some discrepancies. One of the most significant differences are the time spent on scheduled meeting, here we see a deviation of almost 10% while other parameters such as touring the business and personal time are kept almost equal.

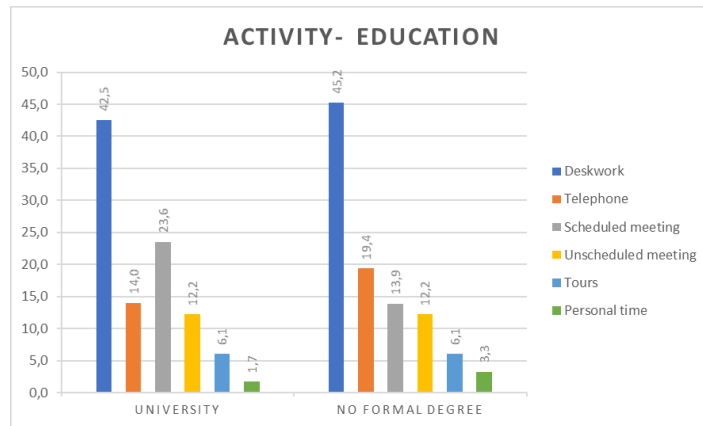


Figure 12 Distribution of time vs Education

4.1.7 Workforce variation

When looking at how the distribution of time is correlated to the number of employees in a company, we see a clear trend in that the larger the company gets the less time the CEO's tend to spend behind the desk. On the contrary, the amount of time spent in scheduled meeting is increased almost equivalent, Figure 13.

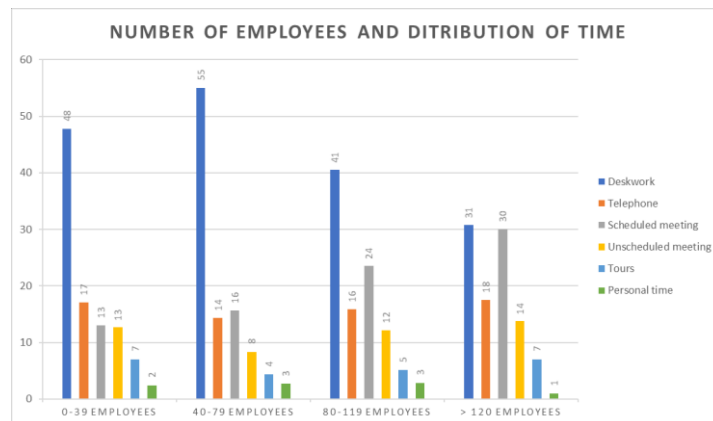


Figure 13 Number of employees vs distribution of time

Figure 14 show that the distribution of time on each task is almost independent of hours worked with one exception. The amount of deskwork taken on by the managers tends to be higher for the lower and upper quartile of the graph.

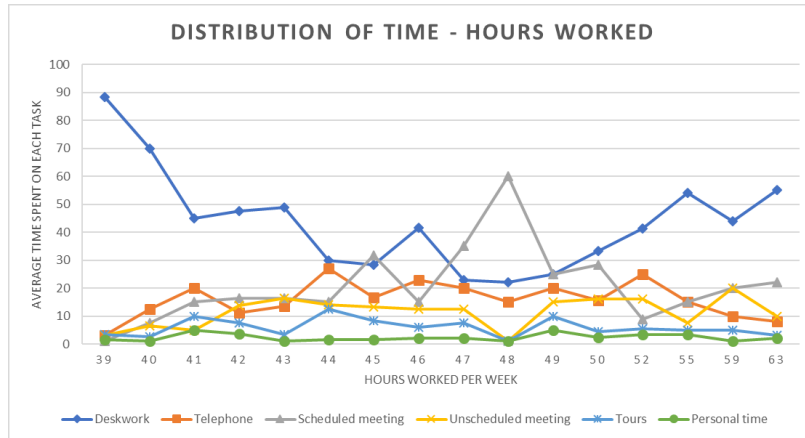


Figure 14, Distribution of time vs Working hours

4.2 Diary log

In order to record the number and duration of tasks executed by a manager each day. Where a selection of 4 managers asked to participate in a diary log sheet survey. Two CEO's and two department managers. A copy of a blank log sheet can be found in appendix 2. By asking the respondent to tick off in the checkbox corresponding to the right combination of duration and activity, the respondent would give answer to both the duration and the type of task executed. About 77% of the task took less than 9 minutes to complete while only 2% of the tasks lasted for more than 60 minutes.

The number of tasks conducted by the manager on a single day ranged from 22 and up to 49. The CEO's took on average on 46,5 task per day while the department managers averaged on 27,5. Meaning that the CEO's started on average on a new task every ten minutes. CEO's where on average interrupted 10,2 times per day, giving them about 50 minutes on average to focus uninterrupted with a task.

In order to check whether the results from the diary log matched with the responses in the net-survey, two values as described in the method section was calculated.

Mean of task – A calculated percentage value based on the total number of tasks

Mean of time – A calculated percentage value based on the stated duration of each task

The results are presented in Figure 15.

Work Activity	Web survey	Diary log	Diary log
	Mean	Mean of task	Mean of time
<i>n=33</i>			
Work Activity			
Interruptions (qty)	9,1		
Deskwork (%)	43,7	49,7	43,9
Telephone (%)	16,5	16,9	11,7
Scheduled meeting (%)	19,2	6,1	17,9
Unscheduled meeting (%)	12,2	14,9	18,2
Tours (%)	6,1	12,5	8,3

Figure 15, Calculated mean values

Comparing the results from the web survey with “mean of time” from the diary log we see that the time spent in phone conversations and unscheduled meetings are deviating with 5-6% while the other activities are deviating 1-2%. When comparing the web survey with the “mean of task”, we see even bigger deviations, for scheduled meetings we see a deviation of 13,1%, also for the deskwork and tours we see large deviations of more than 6%.

4.3 Profit Margin

Figure 16 show the average profit margin for all the companies within the group that participated in the survey. As a reference point this result is compared with data from Statistics Norway, table 07371; Key figures for non-financial limited companies, by industry (SN2007), statistical variable and year. This shows that on average the companies underperform compared with other companies within the mining and extraction, industry and the overall industry in Norway in the same time period. It is noted nevertheless that in the period 2018 to 2019 the cluster managed to increase profits despite that the industry in general had a slight relapse in the same period.

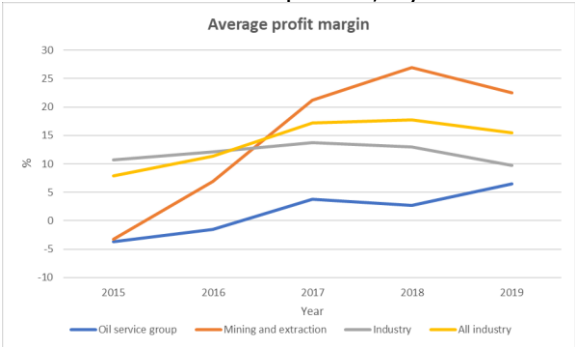


Figure 16, Average profit margin

In order to evaluate whether there is any correlation between higher profit margin and CEO’s touring their business. We extracted the replies from the group of CEOs which reported to spend at least 10% or more of their time on touring the business with the CEO’s that reported that they spent less than 10% of their time on touring. An average of the profit margin was calculated for each of the two groups and the result is presented in the figure below along with the average for the cluster. Figure 17 shows that the curves are largely coincident and show no clear evidence of such correlation.

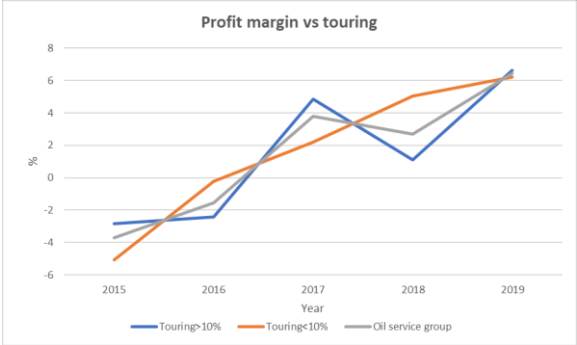


Figure 17, Profit vs Touring

5 Discussions

5.1 Limitations

A direct comparison of the results in our study with previous research would in most cases prove to be difficult as the research community is in unanimous agreement that any research group of company managers is not homogeneous (Florén, 2003). The group of managers which participated in Florén's (2003) study for instance was no exception; One manager was a "sleeping" PhD student, while three of the managers had no formal higher education. Three of the managers had been CEO's for more than 25 years, while one manager had only had his position for 1 year. Florén states that the differences in the managers' work patterns might be explained by their different backgrounds or by the way in which their companies are organized (Florén, 2003). The theoretical foundations for our research question are somewhat old and the technological change that has taken place in the last 50 years are likely to some extent affect the result. However, in particular the Mintzberg (1973) study have been replicated in newer time by for instance Tengblad (2006) confirming that the results from Mintzberg's study still are viable.

Cultural differences may also affect the results to some degree as the Nordic management style are known for being a flatter hierarchical model, which presumably values dialogue and consensus more than the US culture does. (Eriksen, 2006). 2020 was also the year when Covid-19 hit Europe and Norway hard, the use of digital meeting increased and the need to travel was reduced significantly, the respondents were asked to base their answers on a normal work week, but it was never stated whether this where to be pre-Covid-19 or at the "home office situations", applicable at the time. In retrospect, this should perhaps have been communicated to manager more clearly.

Despite that there are some obvious differences between the studies included in this comparison, as e.g. that all but one research study is performed as structured observation. The strength of the comparison lies in the fact that all the studies have used the same parameters as developed by Mintzberg when collecting data. This makes a comparison possible as well as meaningful.

The sample and selection of respondents in our survey impose a potential bias as the participants all came from the same cluster within the same working culture but also same industry. One can also run the argument that the sample size could have been larger, however we believe that the selection of participants represents a random and average sample within the cluster.

Using a net based survey to collect data also imply some challenges, respondent's mood, will to complete the survey and level of stress, just to mention a few, can all affect the answer in some way. A drop-down menu may not fully comply with the answer that the respondent had in mind, instead ending up with picking what he feels are "close enough". Using a diary-log to register how often a manager is interrupted throughout the day is a bit contradictory as the subject would need stop his work, pick up the pen and make a mark, every time he completed a task. One could also run the argument that the Hawthorne effect may affect the result to some extent, as the subject are all aware that

the result from the log sheet where to be used in a study about managerial behaviour. Despite these obvious negative potential effects, we have no reason to believe that the respondents made any alterations to either the web-based net survey or the diary log sheet. We believe that the results presented here is a good representation of how the respondents perceive their everyday working life.

5.2 Comparison of studies.

In order to examine whether the characteristics of our survey differs from other studies in the field, where the arithmetic mean results from our survey compared with result from seven other studies. In this context, it is important to note that O’Gorman and Florén & Tell both focused on small growing business while the other studies are of profitable growth businesses all of which varies in size. Four studies concerning small companies (Ahmadi, 2020) (Florén, 2012) (O’Gorman, 2005) (Choran, 1969), one concerning intermediate companies (Kurke, 1983) and two concerning large organizations (Mintzberg, 1973) (Tengblad, 2006), Figure 18.

Study	Lia	Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson	Florén & Tell	O’Gorman	Choran	Kurke & Aldrich	Mintzberg	Tengblad
Year	2021	2020	2012	2005	1969	1983	1973	2006
No. participants (n)	33	133	6/6	10	3	4	5	4
Type of business	Small	Small	Small	Small	Small	Intermediate	Large	Large
Type of study	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation
Work Activity								
Working hours/week (hrs)	46,9	52,4	45,5/44,5	-	-	44,17	45,4	72,2
Deskwork (%)	43,7	34,4	46/50	28	35	26	22	12
Telephone (%)	16,5	17,4	13/13	13	17	8	6	7
Scheduled meeting (%)	19,2	16,2	15/17	25	21	50	59	63
Unscheduled meeting (%)	12,2	12,4	19/16	25	15	12	10	
Tours (%)	6,1	19,6	7/6	9	12	3	3	1
Personal time (%)	2,4							
Verbal Contact								
Subordinates (%)	35,5		51	67	56	50	48	69
Clients (%)	23,5		10	11	7	7	3	
Suppliers and associates (%)	15,1		28	11	31	6	17	7
Peers and trade organizations (%)	14,0				0,2	4	11	9
Directors and co directors	11,9				0	27	12	3
Other					7	7	8	11

Figure 18, Comparison of previous studies

5.2.1 Long working hours

As compared with the average weekly working hours in Norway of 40 hours, the leaders in our survey work long hours. The respondents in our survey, exceeds this number by more than 17% on average. When extracting the response from the CEO’s, excluding the department managers the figure goes up to 23%. Despite this being a high number, this figure is in line with what you could expect when comparing the result with the research that have been conducted by Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020), Floren & Tell (2012), Kurke & Aldrich (1983) and Mintzberg (1973). In their survey the CEO’s worked in the range of 44 – 52,4 hours per week. Tengblad (2006) on the other hand found in their research that the leaders worked as much as up to 72 hours per week, presenting a significant discrepancy in the data series when compared with all the other studies.

Despite that there is no clear threshold for what can be considered as high work load, there have been found, strong links between long hours and work related illness such as

depression, sleep disturbance and heart disease (Bannai, 2014). When also taking into account that a manager's health is closely linked to leadership behaviour and for exercising healthy and effective leadership (Kaluza, 2020) it is important to not take advantage of top managers' will or capacity to excessive work as this may at one point no longer be in the best interests of the company.

5.2.2 Difference between leaders

When evaluating the results from the survey we found large differences between the results given by the CEO's and the department managers. To a large extent, this is as expected as the CEO's are expected to take on a higher degree of formal tasks such as company presentations, solemn signings of contracts and media handling. On the contrary the department managers found at a lower hierarchy level is to a larger extent expected to run projects, interact with customers and suppliers. This difference becomes clear when comparing the amount of time spent on deskwork and scheduled meeting. The CEO's spent 34,1% of their time behind a desk compared with 47,9% for the managers. On the contrary we see that the CEO's spent 13% more time in scheduled meetings compared with the 15,2% taken on by the department managers.

5.2.3 Small and large businesses

When comparing the results from just the CEO's in our study with previous studies performed by Ahmadi (2020), O'Gorman (2005) and Chorán (1969) on small businesses, we see a large degree of resemblance between the studies. Distribution of time across the different activities are largely coincident. However, when comparing the result with the larger business such as the study performed by Kurk & Aldrich (1983) Mintzberg (1973) and (2006) we see large discrepancies in percentage distribution of time. These findings emphasize the theory of O'Gorman that the organizational size of the business is a decisive factor in managerial work. By evaluating the allocation of time for the different tasks such as deskwork, telephone conversations, scheduled meeting, unscheduled meetings and touring, we can with high probability say something about the size of the company. Typically for the larger businesses is that the amount of deskwork performed by the CEO's is significantly reduced compared to the smaller businesses. For scheduled meeting we find the opposite to be true, in the case where the CEO participate in a high amount of scheduled meeting the bigger the company tends to be.

A company of 200-300 employees can hardly be characterized as a large business, but still we see the same correlation between number of employees and allocation of time in our survey. A decreasing amount of deskwork and increasing amount of scheduled meeting tend to correlate to the size of the business. Which in turn shows that organizational size affects the everyday work life of the managers. The obvious reason for this could be that department managers in small companies have fewer supporting functions such as HR and Finance and therefore needs to address these functions themselves.

Despite that we found a strong correlation between size of the business and work tasks to be performed, all the CEO's in our survey reported that they felt they had a large or at least fairly large influence over their everyday work life. Which is a bit contradictory, a manager might have the subjective feeling of having influence over his everyday work

life. To some extent he obviously do, he can delegate tasks, take on more of what he likes and avoid tasks that he felt he don't master. But the result from our survey, which is in line with previous research, shows that the size of the business without a doubt affects a manager's workday. If you want to become a CEO of a company of significant size, you must expect to spend a lot of your time in formal meeting, while for the smaller businesses you must expect to spend most of your time behind a desk.

5.2.4 Interaction and communication

When it comes to verbal communication the results are as expected when separating the results of the department managers from the CEO'. In accordance with previous research we found that the managers in our group also spend most of their time in verbal communication with their subordinates. Especially the CEO's, they spent almost 50% of their time spent on communicating with this group.

Choran (1969) and O`Gorman (2005) both concluded in their research that small business owners tends to us informal means in a broader scale than their peers in large businesses. Our study largely confirms this theory as we see that time spent in phone conversations and the number of unscheduled meetings along with touring the business account for about 34% of the manger's total time. This is in line with what you could expect as it is easy to see that the larger the company gets, the more formal and structured the conversations and meetings will be.

We see however that when evaluating how much time is spent with clients, our managers reported to spend 21% for the department managers and as much as 28% for the CEO's. This result is significantly higher than what is found in previous studies where this group only accounts for about 7%-11%. Also, when it comes to suppliers and associates, we find big discrepancies in our study compared with previous findings. Suppliers and associates only accounts for about 11%-12% in our study while it averages of 17% in the six studies previously mentioned. The comparison presents however have one major flaw, Ahmadi (2020) Florén and Tell (2012) and O`Gorman's (2005) study are all missing information related to communication. This is especially unfortunate since these studies represents the best foundation for comparison with results in our study. As shown with the evaluation of the work tasks, caution should be exercised when comparing the results from the small businesses with intermediate and large businesses.

The reason for why business leaders in our survey tends to spend more than twice as much time on clients and around 6% less time than larger companies on suppliers and associates remains unanswered. One working theory is that the businesses in our survey are all service companies and are therefore found at a lower level in the supply chain. While larger companies are found at the top levels and therefor interact more frequently with companies at a lower level.

5.2.5 Willingness to take on other task's

Respondents were asked to which extent they take-on task that lay outside their area of responsibility. 81% of the respondents replied that they spent at least 2 hours or more on this kind of tasks. This might seem as a high number, but research show that leaders (particularly in small businesses) have a tendency to react and adopt immediately to live and received information (O`Gorman, 2005). Muir and Langford (1994) found in their

study what they called a “multi-role behaviour”, where leaders, deepening on the current need take on a myriad of roles and are able to switch rapidly between different tasks and organizational functions,

The ability of taking on task that lay outside their area of responsibility are interpreted differently in the theory, and probably with good reason. A manager that spend more than 10 hours each week taking on task that lay outside his field of expertise and responsibility are probably doing something unproductive and should maybe consider delegating more. On the contrary, a leader with enough knowledge to understand, interpret and give advice to a wide range of issues, can hardly be disadvantageous. (Florén H. , 2006). Muir and Langford (1994) argues that the managers need both the technical, human and conceptual skill, while also being able to bridge these skills. Without saying that there is an absolute requirement, there is obviously some benefits of being able to bridge a complex skillset when being a leader of a small business.

5.2.6 Amount of tasks

In accordance with the research of Floren (2004), the CEO’s in our study also reported that they are to solve tasks at an extreme pace throughout a working day. Our CEO’s reported to take on up-to 49 task per day, meaning that a new task where to be solved approximately every tenth minute. This result largely coincide the results found by Chorán (1969) and Floren (2004), they found that only 1 per cent of the tasks in their study lasted more than 60 minutes, while our results came to about 2%. Despite a slightly bigger difference in the amount of tasks lasting less than 9 minutes, where we came to about 80% while Chorán (1969) and Floren (2004) came to about 90%, we believe that there is sufficient similarity to conclude that these are typical features of an everyday working life for a manager, in a small business.

The leaders in our survey reported that they on average were only interrupted 9-10 times per day, giving them about 50 minutes uninterrupted time to focus on a task. Based on our own professional experience and previous studies by Chorán (1969) and Floren (2004), we believe that there is reason to doubt the results in our survey. We believe that the result should at least be interpreted with a high degree of uncertainty. What are to be characterized as disturbance or interruption is subjective and will vary from person to person. It was known from the start that using a dairy log to collect this type of data could prove difficult (Florén, 2003). The challenge is to get good and accurate answers since the object itself must log all events and at the same time conduct their daily duties. We see no reason for that the managers in our survey are interrupted almost five time less than their peers in other studies.

The ability of working uninterrupted is especially interesting when evaluating this in conjunction with the findings of Florén (2012) study. They found very little difference between the fast-growing business and slow-growing firms, but their research revealed one major difference. The CEO’s of the fast-growing businesses had more time to focus on each individual task compared with the slow growing companies. If this where to be true and we were to believe that the respondents in our study are allowed to focus as much as 5 times longer on each task than their peers in other businesses then, all the business in our survey should be fast growing businesses – something which is hardly true when looking at Figure 16.

5.2.7 Touring

Ahmadi, Macassa & Larsson (2020) goes a long way in indicating that one of the most important factors to success in small businesses are related to the touring of the business. They state that by touring the business, you make yourself available and accessible for you employees and able to collect and harness valuable information, and through informal meeting and discussions with the employees increases moral and efficiency amongst the employees. Our respondents reported that they on average used as little as 6,1% of their time touring the business.

Despite that one can run the argument that a direct comparison with the study performed by Ahmadi (2020), as their study is focused around profitable growth small to medium sized businesses. We found no correlation in our study that supports their findings that touring the business are related to strong business growth. If this where to be true we would have expected to see that the CEO's spending most time on touring would have outperformed their colleagues spending little time on such activity. As shown in Figure 17 this was not the case, result show that the businesses in our study performed at an equal level, and according to industry standard regardless of how much time the CEO's spent touring the factory floor.

There are a numerous papers supporting the statement that touring the business has an positive effect on the employees wellbeing and effectiveness of the organisation (Kotter, 1982) (Peters, 1984) (Larsson, 2010). However, as pointed out by Henrik Floren (2012) the positive effect of touring strongly depends on the motive of the leader, in cases where the leader tours the business in order to control and monitor the employees and their way of working, this may set in motion a negative spiral of unmotivated and destructive work processes.

6 Concluding remarks

Despite that the results from our study are compared with research on businesses of varying size, and in addition research that is somewhat old, we still believe that a comparison provides both benefit and value. To a large extent our finding replicates what has been proven in the past with a few exceptions.

The **nature of the managerial work of a manager within a cluster of small to medium oil service companies** are complex and made up by many small factors. Leaders in our study work long hours, ranging from 44-52,4 hours a week. Which on one hand can be positive for the business, but on the other hand research have proven strong links between work related illness, reduced employee motivation and long working hours of the leader. These findings coincide with previous research.

Simply by looking at the figures for the five work activity factors such as Deskwork, Telephone Calls, Planned Meetings, Unplanned Meeting and Tours, can we with a high degree of certainty say something about the size and revenue of the business. The larger the company tends to be, the more time is spent on scheduled meeting and less time is spent behind a desk. This finding is supported by previous papers that we have compared our result with. Businesses of same size and revenue are in fact very much alike and tends to have the same working activity pattern.

Taking this one step further, one can state that if a person has the desire to become a CEO of a large business, he must be willing to spend most of his time in formal meetings, while for the smaller businesses he shall expect to spend a significantly portion of his time behind a desk taking on clerkish work.

Regardless of type of business and size, a manager will be expected to take on tasks that are outside his area of responsibility and should be prepared to switch rapidly between different tasks and organizational functions. He should be prepared to take on a myriad of tasks at a relentless pace. On average, a manager are required to carry out a task approximately every tenth minute throughout the working day.

Interruptions are also a big part of everyday work life for a leader, in this area our research deviated from previously findings as our managers reported to be able to focus on average for fifty minutes on a task without being interrupted, while previous papers show that a leader on average where to be interrupted every tenth minute. We find no logical explanation for this big discrepancy, and we therefore question the result of our study on point.

What is both striking and surprising when reviewing earlier studies such as Henrik Floren (2012) and Elena Ahmadi (2020) is that they both seem to have found the magic recipe for a fast growing, high profit business. Simply by getting more uninterrupted time behind the desk or by spending more time on touring, the business should thrive. Without a doubt it can have a positive effect to tour the business as described by Ahmadi (2020) , but without having a tool to measure the quality of the tours, only benchmarking the quantity and stating that this is the golden key to success would be too easy. It is also easy to imagine that a more reactive and hectic work situation caused by a myriad of task that are to be solved in a relentless pace would eventually influence the

managers ability or opportunity to focus over time. Even less find time to give priority to strategy and outward thinking as pointed out by Floren (2012).

But we believe that this is a far more complicated and elusive question. We found no evidence in our research that indicates that businesses with a higher degree of managers touring the business where any more successful. We believe that the question to what makes some companies outperform other are far more complex than described in these papers. One that cannot be answered simply by altering the managerial behaviour, hire or outsource some tasks to free up some time.

We therefor found **no single determining factor that can distinguish the managerial behaviour in a small to medium oil service companies from a fast-growing business**. We simply don't believe that there is one single factor that make up the difference between a slow and a fast-growing business. We found no evidence in our study that supports such a simple approach to a very complex reality. We believe that whether a business turns out as a success story or not is simply not given by the allocation of managerial time alone. We believe that this is a far more complicated picture consisting of a countless number of factors. Such a question could form the basis for further research and would, if answered, be of significant importance for business owners around the world.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Web Survey

Appendix 2: Diary Log Sheet

En studie av en leders arbeidshverdag

Denne spørreundersøkelsen blir gjennomført som en del av en master oppgave ved NTNU.

Arbeidet søker å finne svar på hvordan ledere i [redacted] disponerer tiden, hvor mye de arbeider, hvilke arbeidsoppgaver som dominerer deres arbeidshverdag og hvilke personer de har interaksjon med. Svarene fra undersøkelsen vil bli sammenlignet med kjent ledelsesteori som er gjort innenfor dette området.

Vi takker for at du har sagt deg villig til å bidra i undersøkelsen, men minner samtidig om at deltakelsen er frivillig.

Alle opplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og bare de involverte i prosjektet vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet.

Undersøkelsen tar ca 4-5 minutter å gjennomføre.

Har du spørsmål om undersøkelsen kan disse rettes til:

Bjørn André Lia

Bjornandre.lia@ikm.no
Tlf: 97775403

1. Først noen spørsmål om deg

Spørsmål 1/5

Det er svært viktig at alle spørsmålene blir besvart, om du ikke kan svare eksakt vil vi at du angir et estimat.

Hvis det er forhold ved spørreskjemaet du vil utdype kan du benytte svarfeltet i slutten av undersøkelsen til å klarifisere dine svar.

Kjønn

- Mann
- Kvinne

Hvilket år er du født?

Høyeste utdanning

- Ingen formell utdanning
- Videregående
- Fagskole
- Bachelor
- Mastergrad (MBA, Sivilingeniør)
- Doktorgrad (Phd)

2. Deg og din bedrift.

Spørsmål 2/5

Er du ansatt i fulltids stilling (100%) ?

- Ja
- Nei

Hva er din stillingstittel? (Velg det alternativet som er nærmest)

- Dagligleder
- Avdelingsleder

Hvor mange år har du vært ansatt i []?

- 0-3 År
- 3-6 År
- 6-10 År
- Mer enn 10 År

Hvor mange år har du hatt en stilling med lederansvar i []?

- 0-3 År
- 3-6 År
- 6-10 År
- Mer enn 10 År

Hvor mange ansatte er det i din bedrift?

- 0-39 ansatte
- 40-79 ansatte
- 80-119 ansatte
- Flere enn 120 ansatte

Hvilke ansvarsområder faller inn under din stilling?

- Kunde/Salg
- Personalansvar
- Teknisk ansvar/Engineering
- Økonomi
- Administrativt (Profil/Loss)
- Prosjektledelse

I hvilken grad opplever du å ha innflytelse på din egen tidsbruk?

- Svært liten
- Ganske liten
- Ganske stor
- Svært stor

I hvilken grad tar du på deg arbeidsoppgaver som ligger utenfor ditt arbeidsområde?

- 0-2 timer i uken
- 2-5 timer i uken
- 5-10 timer i uken
- 10 timer eller mer

3. Fordeling av arbeidstid og arbeidsmengde

Spørsmål 3/5

Hvor mange timer jobber du i snitt per uke fordelt på de tre alternativene under? (Ta utgangspunkt i en uke som ligner mest mulig på en normal arbeidsuke.)

- Innenfor kontortid
- På kvelder/ettermiddager
- I helger og på fridager

Ingen felter kan stå blanke, benytt 0 i tilfeller hvor du ønsker å la et felt stå blankt. Summen av de tre spørsmålene er vist i dialogboksen i bunn.

Hvor mange timer jobber du i gjennomsnitt per uke innenfor kontortid?

Hvor mange timer jobber du om kveldene? (Utenfor kontortid)

Hvor mange timer arbeider du i helger og på fridager?

[SUM=0] Totalt antall timer arbeidet per uke.

4. Fordeling av arbeidsoppgaver

Spørsmål 4/5

Hvor mye tid bruker du (i prosent) på de seks forskjellige oppgavene? (Ta utgangspunkt i en typisk arbeidsdag)

- Kontorarbeid
- Telefonsamtaler
- Planlagte møter
- Uplanlagte møter
- Spotane turer i organisasjonen
- Personlig tid

Fyll ut med verdien 0-100% på hvert spørsmål - ingen felter kan stå blanke. Summen av de seks spørsmålene er vist i dialogboksen i bunn og må bli 100%.

Kontorarbeid (f.eks. e-post, attestering av timelister, adm. oppgaver, tilbudsarbeid)

Telefon samtaler (Ink.Teams etc.)

Planlagte møter (Møter som er avtalt minst en dag i forveien)

Uplanlagte møter (F.eks. at noen stikker innom kontoret ditt, uanmeldt kundebesøk etc)

Spontane turer i organisasjonen (Bevege seg rundt i virksomheten, snakke med ansatte, hente kaffe, hente noe i printer, inspeksjoner i verksted m.m)

Personlig tid (Toalett besøk, legebesøk, frisør, bank tjenester, aviser etc.)

[SUM=100] Sum i prosent.

5. Kommunikasjon med andre
Spørsmål 5/5

Av den tiden som du bruker på verbal kommunikasjon med andre - hvor stor prosent andel bruker du på hver av de fem postene under? (Ta utgangspunkt i en uke som ligner mest mulig på en normal arbeidsuke. Inkluder kommunikasjon i møter, gangen, lunsj, telefon samtaler, Skype, Teams etc.)

- Samtaler med overordnet
- Samtaler med likestilte
- Samtaler med underordnet
- Samtaler med klienter/kunder
- Samtaler med leverandører

Du må du fylle ut med verdien 0-100% på hvert spørsmål - ingen felter kan stå blanke. Summen av de fem spørsmålene er vist i dialogboksen i bunn, og må bli 100%.

Samtaler med overordnet (En som befinner seg på et nivå over i organisasjonen)

Samtaler med likestilt (En som befinner seg på likt nivå i organisasjonen)

Samtaler med underordnede (En som befinner seg på et lavere nivå i organisasjonen)

Samtaler med klienter/kunder

Samtaler med leverandører

[SUM=100] Sum i prosent

6. Øvrige kommentarer

Har du kommentarer til undersøkelsen, eller til opplysningene du har gitt ved tidligere spørsmål, så kan du benytte kommentarfeltet under.

Egenvurderingsskjema - Antall arbeidsoppgaver og varighet

Vi ber deg om å ta utgangspunkt i en typisk arbeidsdag. Velg en dag som ligner mest mulig på en normal arbeidsdag.

Undersøkelsen søker å finne svar på hvor mange arbeidsoppgaver gjør du i løpet av en dag og varigheten på disse oppgavene.

En oppgave er i denne sammenheng definert ved å ta en telefon samtale, å svare på en mail, å gå i et møte, sende en faktura, utarbeide et tilbud etc.

Sett et merke i rett boks hver gang du har fullført en oppgave.

Type oppgave	Varighet på oppgaven		
	0-9min	9-60 min	60 min eller mer.
Administrative oppgaver. Svare på mail, sende faktura attestere timelister etc.			
Telefon samtaler Inkludert skype, teams etc.			
Planlagte møter. Møter som er planlagt minst en dag i forveien			
Uplanlagte møter. Spontane møter. Uanmeldt kundebesøk, besøk på kontoret etc.			
Spontane turer i organisasjonen. Hente kaffe, hente papir i printer, inspisere verksted etc.)			

Sett et merke i boksen hver gang du har blitt avbrutt i arbeidet med å fullfør en av oppgavene over.

(Avbrytelse kan være i form av telefonsamtale, sms, mail, uanmeldt besøk, etc.)

Avbrytelse fra å fullføre arbeidet.	
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