

TITLE: An Investigation into Leadership Practices and Performance of Newspapers in Norway and Sweden

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to find out more and about the effectiveness and efficiency of newspaper leadership.

METHODOLOGY: Newspaper editors and administrators in Norway and Sweden comprised the target population, with eventually 147 responding (26% response rate, with 79 from Norway and 68 from Sweden). Most respondents were male (84%), 41-50 years old (41%), university educated (74%), with an average of 18.1 years in the newspaper industry and 11.6 years with the current newspaper. Performance was assessed by three variables looking at circulation growth, market share, and profitability.

Various problems with the data, some possibly cultural, prompted the researcher to empirically revise the LPI. The result was three scales (the first two being combinations of the original scales – challenging and vision, and enabling and modeling – and the last one being the original on encouraging) referred to as change and vision, collaboration, and motivation.

KEY FINDINGS: “The conclusion is that on the whole the self-perception of leadership styles and behaviors as expressed in the LPI-sales are not the only explaining factors of a newspaper with high objective performance, but motivation and appreciation of the employees is the factor in the leadership model that ‘stands out’” (pp. 115-116). No significant differences were found in the perception of leadership practices in Norway and Sweden. No significant differences were found in the perceptions between editors and managers when it comes to leadership practices. A significant relationship was found between leadership and robustness (perceived competitiveness of the newspaper).

“As the analysis clearly shows there are positive and significant correlations between the leadership criteria, the environmental monitoring, the strategic perspective and the collaborative culture of the newspaper organization” (p. 153). “Motivation is the last and perhaps most important factor of all. To recognize the individual contributions, to nurture and develop them, is clearly important in many newspapers ignored. The best newspapers have built on the individual excellence, grow and develop talent and make certain that there is a celebration when milestones are reached. The positive leadership qualities outlined above are then taken into the daily activities of the newspaper, and show themselves in the development of the long term competitiveness of the newspaper” (p. 154).

“So even if the LPI construct in this study did not fit exactly with the prescribed model, it was nevertheless useful in setting up the structure for the research, and it sharpened the interest for improving a short leadership questionnaire” (p. 163).