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Attributional style and its relation to leadership style and organizational culture

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Abstract

Attributional styles have been paid little attention in the organizational context and previous research has mostly focused on the consequences of attributional styles, such as how attributional styles influence work behaviors. Attributional styles development in work settings has thereby been paid little attention, as for example, how individuals' way of attributing in an organization can be shaped with the help of organizational factors. Therefore this study investigated how employees' perceptions of leadership style and organizational culture were related to the attributional styles; internal, external, stability and control. Eight standard multiple regressions analyses were conducted, four with the leadership styles and four with the organizational culture. The participants ($n = 127$) worked in different sectors, branches and they had different occupations. The results showed that employees' perceptions of the leadership styles were statistically significant related to the attributional style control and employees' perceptions of the organizational culture were statistically significant related to the attributional styles internal, external and control. Clan culture and market culture were statistically significant independent related to internal attributional style, clan culture was statistically significant independent related to external attributional style and clan culture was statistically significant independent related to the attributional style control. None of the leadership styles were statistically significant independent related to the attributional style control.

Keywords: organizational context, attributions, attributional style, leadership style, organizational culture

Scholars in the organizational sciences have underutilized the attribution theory (Harvey, Madison, Martinko, Crook & Crook, 2014) and the role of attributional styles has been paid little attention in occupational settings (Furnham, Sadka & Brewin 1992; Furnham, Brewin & O'Kelly, 1994). During the last decades there have been very few empirical studies that have investigated the association between success in organizations and attributional styles (Smith, Caputi & Crittenden, 2013) and research about attributional processes has not focused on the impact of the organizational environment (Bitter & Gardner, 1995). Also, most of the articles that have been published about the attribution theory are in the psychology field and not in the organizational field and therefore, when it comes to the application of attribution theory to the organizational field, studies that have been published only represent the tip of the iceberg (Dasborough, Harvey & Martinko, 2011). Partly as a consequence of early criticism, the attribution theory has not commonly been applied to organizational behavior (Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough, 2011a). These criticisms concern that attributional processes are cognitively demanding (Lord & Smith, 1983) and that leaders' behaviors are influenced by several factors and not just by their attributions, meaning that attributions play a smaller role (Mitchell, 1982). These criticisms, in the context of research about attributional styles, have however been shown to be incorrect (Martinko et al., 2011a). With this said, attributional styles in an organizational context seem to be a research area that needs more attention.

Research about attributions has illustrated, in numerous reviews, that attributions matter in the working life (Harvey et al., 2014). Several organizational scholars argue that attributional processes are vital explanatory constructs when it comes to peoples' behaviors in organizations (Dasborough et al., 2011) and a variety of workplace behaviors can be explained through attributional processes (Martinko et al., 2011a). Research has shown that an individual's aggression is influenced by how that individual attribute (Brees, Mackey & Martinko, 2013) and that attributional styles are associated to an individual's behaviors, expectancies and emotions (Martinko, Moss, Douglas & Borkowski, 2007b). Attributions help people adapt their behaviors and people can take more powerful actions when the attributions are clearer (Martinez, Martinko & Ferris, 2012). Furnham et al. (1994) mention further that since expectations and perceptions in relation to some attributional styles lead to different work behaviors, which lead to success, it seems probable that this helps preserve the attributions.

Survival, as in how long a person stays in an organization, and production can be

predicted by the attributional style (Seligman & Schulman, 1986). Furthermore, it has also been shown that performance can be predicted by the attributional style (Corr & Gray, 1996). A person's motivation is also affected by that person's attributional style (Xenikou & Furnham, 1997) and therefore attributions play a central part in the motivation process (Martinko et al., 2011a). Erroneous attributions to ability factors can cause people with low self-efficacy unnecessary loss of motivation and anxieties that might harm their performances (Silver, Mitchell & Gist, 1995). An individual's motivation, performance and achievement striving can also decrease if poor performance is attributed to an unchangeable lack of ability that is uncontrollable and stable, since this might trigger feelings of shame and hopelessness (Hall, Hladkyj, Perry & Ruthig, 2004). Corr and Gray (1996) mention further that in professions that are motivationally challenging, attributional styles are especially important. So by knowing that attributional styles might be important for organizations and why it might be important this leads to the question if individuals' way of attributing can be shaped within an organizational context.

"Attribution styles are stable, trait-like tendencies to make certain types of attributions that affect behaviors across situations" (Martinko et al., 2011a, p.145). In other words, attributional style is seen as a personality characteristic (Martinko, Harvey, Sikora & Douglas, 2011b). Despite this, people's organizational attributional style is said to vary over time, but over short periods of time, they are stable enough to be constructs that can be measured (Kent & Martinko, 1995). Attributional styles can also change and become rather unstable during long periods of time due to frequent failures, obstacles and changes at the workplace (Furnham et al., 1992).

Ashforth and Fugate (2006) mention further that attributional style regarding achievement might be strongly associated to promotion possibilities. Furnham et al. (1992) also mention that the norms regarding behavior and the formal structure in an organization might moderate the association between attributional styles and employees' work behaviors. At the same time, Smith et al. (2013) mention that measures of attributional styles could be used for development of existing employees. With this said it seems like individuals' way of attributing can be shaped within an organizational context.

Ashforth and Fugate (2006) suggest that further research could focus on attributional styles development in work contexts, such as, in what way can leadership practices, reward systems, socializations processes and group dynamics help shape attributional styles within an

organizational context. With this said, there seems to be a need for more knowledge concerning what can shape or develop attributional styles within a work setting. Since other authors have thought about leadership practices as something that might help shape individuals' way of attributing it would be interesting to investigate how the organizational factor, leadership style, is related to employees' attributional styles.

Most research about leadership and attributions highlights how different leader attributions lead to different behaviors among leaders, in other words, leader attributions and its connection to leaders' behaviors (Martinko, Harvey & Douglas, 2007a). With this said most research seems to be about leaders' attributions, for example, how the causes of employees' insufficient performance impact leaders' attributions and the consequences of that (Knowlton & Mitchell, 1980). With this said, there seems to be a gap in the literature from the other perspective, about how leaders might influence employees' attributional styles and therefore it seems to be a need for further research from this angle.

A leader get situational influenced by the culture in the organization but a leader can also influence the organizational culture over time (Yukl, 2013). Furnham et al. (1992) mention further that a corporate attributional style can be developed and been seen in the organizational culture and because of this it would also be interesting to investigate how the organizational factor, organizational culture, is related to employees' attributional styles. Since the study will investigate how leadership styles are related to employees' attributional styles, and leaders are influenced by the organizational culture, at the same time as the organizational culture is influenced by leaders, it makes sense to investigate how organizational culture is related to employees' attributional styles.

To the present author's knowledge, no other study has investigated how employees' perceptions of the leadership style and the organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context. However, one other study by McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) was found that investigated a similar research area. The study investigated emotions of optimism and frustration and if these emotions mediated the association between employees' perceptions of leadership style and their performances. The study showed that employees' optimism increased directly and performance increased indirectly when the employees' perceptions of the transformational leadership were high. Contrariwise, if employees' perceptions of transformational leadership were low this resulted in high levels of frustration

influencing their performances negatively (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). This study showed that employees' perceptions of the transformational leadership style were associated with employees' levels of optimism. These findings are interesting since an optimistic style can be seen as composite scores of attributional styles. According to Martinko et al. (2007b) individuals with an optimistic attributional style make stable and internal attributions when explaining success and unstable and external attributions when explaining failures.

Knowing that employees' perceptions of transformational leadership and an optimistic style are related, this leads to the question of how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles are related to employees' attributional styles. The present study will therefore investigate how they are related by building on to this previous study by investigating another leadership model with three dimensions. The measures in the leadership model are developed in Scandinavia and therefore mirror the Scandinavian culture (Rasulzada & Dackert, 2009). The study will also investigate attributional styles separately instead of using composite scores of attributional styles. Furthermore the present study has added organizational culture to the study with the purpose of investigating how employees' perceptions of the organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context.

Attributions

When people make inferences about causes of their outcomes they make attributions (Harvey et al., 2014), which is considered to be subjective inferences and interpretations about what causes what (Kelly, 1973). Causal attributions are psychological concepts (Lee, Peterson & Tiedens, 2003) that, among others, have been used in research about achievement motivation and clinical disorders (Corr & Gray, 1996). Information, the perceiver's belief and motivation affect attributions and these are called the antecedents of attributions. An individual's interest is also linked to the attribution process and a sense of competence, self-esteem and social standing gets influenced by the attributions that individual make (Kelley & Michela, 1980).

Attributional styles

Attributional styles are also termed explanatory style (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). Seligman introduced attributional style as a personality characteristic and found that individuals vulnerable to depression and individuals not vulnerable to depression differed in their causal

judgments regarding bad and good events in their lives (Furnham et al., 1994). People who habitually interpreted the causes of negative events as global, internal and stable, meaning the causes will affect everything they do, it is their own fault, and the causes will last forever, felt more hopelessness compared to people who interpreted causes of negative events with the opposite styles. The test of explanatory style and of learned helplessness was later extended to performance in the workplace where the explanatory style of sales agents and its relationship to performance was studied. The result showed that sales agents who sold more and survived at a significant higher rate were those who made attributions that were external, unstable and specific instead of making the opposite attributions; internal, stable and global (Seligman & Schulman, 1986).

Attributional style is a measure of an individual's cognitive style and this style is related to both work related behaviors and work related attitudes (Furnham et al., 1994). Silvester, Patterson and Ferguson (2003) mention that attributional styles differ from a conventional personality trait since they hold a core component that is cognitive. "Thus, an individual's cognitions, derived from past experience and acquired knowledge, are viewed as being equally important determinants of an individual's behaviour as the personality traits that they were born with" (Silvester et al., 2003, p.129).

The causal dimensions

  Locus of causality. Locus of causality shows if the perceived cause of an event is either external or internal (Harvey et al., 2014) and these dimensions are related to self-reflective emotions such as personal esteem and pride (Weiner, 1985). The locus of causality refers to the extent to which individuals perceive outcomes as something due to the self or due to external circumstances (Brewin & Furnham, 1986; Henry, 2005). Internality therefore refers to causes within an individual and externality to causes in the environment or situation (Haugen & Lund, 1998). When the perceived cause reflects a person's characteristics such as ability or effort that person makes an internal attribution and when it reflects a situational factor, an external attribution is made. If a person, for example, misses a deadline and blame supervisors or coworkers this person has made an external attribution. If a person explains the missed deadline due to one's own lack of ability, or lack of effort, an internal attribution is made (Harvey et al., 2014).

Stability. The dimension stability refers to the time perspective (Haugen & Lund, 1998; Henry, 2005) whether a cause of an event is transient or persistent (Lee et al., 2003) and whether a cause changes over time (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). It is about the perceived permanence or variability of a causal factor (Harvey et al., 2014). Explanations of causes that are stable could be that new training never interests the employees, whereas explanations of causes that are less stable and transient could be that the training sessions the last couple of times have been bad (Smith et al., 2013).

Control. The dimension control refers to whether an individual can influence the cause of an event or not (Lee et al., 2003) in other words, if the individual can control or not control the causes of an event (Campbell & Martinko, 1998). Factors that are mostly perceived to be uncontrollable are task difficulty and luck, while factors that are considered controllable are effort, and in a smaller extent, the factor ability (Harvey et al., 2014).

Attributional training

After constant failures or punishment individuals have a risk of becoming passive and remain in a state called learned helplessness, which might make individuals think that it is impossible to improve performance. There are, however, some strategies for minimizing organizationally induced helplessness. Attributional training focus on attributions for performance and refers to directing attributions that are unrealistic towards more realistic ones. Attributional training can be seen as a type of counseling for the employees (Martinko & Gardner, 1982) and changing an attributional style or trying to adopt or encourage another way of thinking concerning explanations for events is referred to as attributional retraining (Hall et al., 2004).

Since attributional retraining exists (Hall et al., 2004) and leadership behavior can be used to directly influence individuals in an organization (Yukl, 2013) one might assume that leaders can play a part in this training. Also since research has shown that employees' perceptions of abuse from managers are related to employees´ stable and external attributional styles (Martinko et al., 2011b) and since employees' ways of attributing can get strongly influenced by leaders' reward behaviors, especially since this behavior is highly visible (Bitter & Gardner, 1995) one might assume that leadership behavior can play a part in shaping employees' way of attributing.

Therefore the study will investigate how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context.

Leadership styles

The CPE leadership model consists of three leadership dimensions; change-centered, production-centered and employee-centered (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). This model is an extension of a two-dimension model that has been proposed extensively by trainers and researchers in the leadership field. The CPE model has added a third dimension, the change-oriented dimension, due to changes in the working and business life in the late '70s (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1994). The three dimensions represent different behaviors (Sellgren, Ekvall & Tomson, 2006) and these behaviors have different impact on organizational outcomes (Arvonen & Pettersson, 2002). An individual's leadership style is said to be a combination of the three dimensions and the combination that is seen as the best one depends on the situation and its context (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991).

Change-oriented. The change dimension refers to action for implementations, visionary qualities and creativity (Arvonen & Pettersson, 2002). Change-oriented leaders enjoy discussing new ideas, they see possibilities rather than problems, they experiment with new ways of doing things, they push for growth, they encourage thinking along new lines and they give thoughts and plans about the future. This type of leader also offers ideas about new ways of doing things, they make quick decisions if it is needed, they initiate new projects and they are willing to take risks in decisions. This dimension also describes a leader who is not overcautious, that creates vision, encourage cooperation and does not stress plans that need to be followed (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). To improve adaptation in organizations, leaders with change-oriented behaviors are considered to be the most useful leaders (Yukl, 2008).

Production-oriented. The production-oriented behavior is controlling and formal and the scale contains items such as giving instructions, planning and making a point of rules (Arvonen & Pettersson, 2002). The dimension describes a leader who coordinates work activities, who monitors performances and operations and that is primarily concerned with accomplishing the tasks (Yukl, 2013). These leaders create order, give clear instructions, are controlling in supervision of the work, define and explain the work requirements clearly and set clear goals. This type of leader also plans carefully, makes a point of following principles and rules, analyses

and thinks through before deciding, is very exact about plans being followed and is very clear about who is responsible for what (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). To improve efficiency in an organization, leaders with production-oriented behaviors are considered to be the most useful leaders (Yukl, 2008).

Employee-oriented. The employee dimension describes a leader who is supportive, who increases job satisfaction, cooperation and who builds relationships and identification with the organization or the team (Yukl, 2013). This leader is considerate, has an honest and open style, relies on employees, creates trust in other people and shows respect for the employees as individuals. This type of leader also creates an atmosphere that is free from conflicts, is friendly, is just in treating employees, stands up for them and allows them to decide (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). To improve relations and human resources in an organization, leaders with employee-oriented behaviors are considered to be the most useful leaders (Yukl, 2008).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the underlying assumptions, definitions that are present in the organization, collective memories, taken-for-granted values and expectations, and it reflects how things are in the organization (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Organizational culture has a function to help employees comprehend and respond to the environment around them, which decreases their uncertainty, anxiety and confusion (Yukl, 2013). Culture provides guidelines for how to get along in the organization and these guidelines are often unspoken and unwritten (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Norms concerning the proper behavior in organizations are also communicated to employees through the organizational culture (Brees et al., 2013). Beliefs that get developed in an organization can function as a basis for what is appropriate and inappropriate, and for role expectations, that can work as a guide for employees' behaviors (Yukl, 2013).

Certain corporate attributional styles can evolve in the process of selection and socialization within an organization and these corporate attributional styles can be seen in the organizational culture (Furnham et al., 1992). Furthermore, Lee et al. (2003) mention that certain attributional beliefs can be shared by employees in an organization and that these beliefs often are publicly communicated. "Given the established power of group-level phenomena to influence the perceptions of group members, it is reasonable to expect that the group dynamic could shape the attributions of members" (Martinko et al., 2011a, p.147). Also, since organizational culture is the

beliefs and values that govern organizational behavior (Maloney & Federle, 1991) and because attributional processes help explain organizational behavior (Martinko et al., 2011a) one might assume that the organizational culture play a part in shaping employees' way of attributing. Therefore the study will investigate how employees' perceptions of the organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context.

Cameron and Quinn (1999) suggest that an organization consists of a mix of the four cultures hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy. Further Maloney and Federle (1991) mention that organizations often have one culture type that is stronger, which often is a function of the organizational environment. Deshpandé, Farley and Webster (1993) mention that the four culture types are not mutually exclusive ones at the same time as Maloney and Federle (1991) mention that it is important to note that all culture types can be effective, which means that there are no right or wrong culture types.

The hierarchy culture. Organizations often function like a hierarchy when operating in very stable organizational environments (Maloney & Federle, 1991). In organizations dominated by a hierarchical culture the internal control is maintained by centralized decision-making, rules and specialized jobs. A culture dominated by hierarchy is described as a structured and formalized workplace where procedures steer what the employees do. There is a focus on rule-reinforcement and a large number of standardized procedures. In cultures dominated by hierarchy, stability, efficiency and predictability are considered the long-term matters. Organizations that are characterized more as a hierarchy are also hold together by formal rules and policies and it is important to preserve a smooth running organization. Since effective corporate leaders are great organizers and coordinators in cultures dominated by hierarchy (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and since production-oriented leaders gives clear instructions, creates order and plans carefully (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991) it is probably the production-oriented leadership style that dominates in cultures characterized more as a hierarchy.

The market culture. A culture characterized more as a market is not oriented towards internal affairs but towards the external environment. The major focus is to create competitive advantage, and productivity and competitiveness are the core values that dominate in organizations that are characterized more as a market culture. These core values are reached through a strong emphasis on control, external positioning (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and goal accomplishment (Maloney & Federle, 1991). In cultures characterized more as a market the

management has a major task to drive the organization towards results, productivity and profits and they are in the business because they want to increase their competitive position. A focus on winning is what holds organizations, dominated by a market, together and competitive actions, achieving targets and stretch goals are the long-term matters. The workplace is also said to be results-oriented. Since effective corporate leaders are competitors and hard driving producers, and they are both demanding and tough in cultures dominated by market (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and since production-oriented leaders are primarily concerned with completing the tasks (Yukl, 2013) and controlling in supervision of the work (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991) it is probably the production-oriented leadership style that dominates in cultures characterized more as a market.

   The clan culture. Another form of organization, that is similar to a family, is referred to as a clan organization. Cohesion, a feeling of we-ness, individuality, shared values and goals pervades cultures characterized as a clan. A culture dominated by clan is a friendly workplace that is characterized by corporate commitment to employees and employee involvement programs (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Cultures characterized as clans are team-oriented and team-committed and the organization comes before the individuals (Maloney & Federle, 1991). Management has the major task to ease employees' participation, loyalty, commitment and empower them. It is the tradition and loyalty that holds organizations, characterized by clan, together and employees often share a lot of themselves. Commitment is high in organizations that are dominated by clan and individual development is seen as a long-term benefit where morale and high cohesion are considered to be central. The definitions of success are a concern for employees and for the internal climate, and there is a focus on consensus and participation. Since effective corporate leaders are seen almost like parent figures and most often as mentors in cultures dominated by clan (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and since employee-oriented leaders are considerate, treats and stands up for their employees (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991) it is probably the employee-oriented leadership style that dominates in cultures characterized more as a clan.

   The adhocracy culture. An organization dominated by adhocracy is described as an entrepreneurial, dynamic and creative workplace where employees take risks and stick their necks out. Commitment to innovation and experimentation holds the organization, characterized by adhocracy, together. The importance lays on being in the leading edge of new products, knowledge and services and it is central to be ready for changes and meeting the new challenges

that will appear (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

In order for an organization, characterized by adhocracy, to be effective and endure, it has to function more as an adhocracy culture when facing rapid change (Maloney & Federle, 1991). Adhocracies do not have authority relationships or centralized power and all employees in an organization dominated by adhocracy are often involved in all parts of a project. There are therefore a strong focus on risk-taking, individuality and anticipating the future where the major goals are to foster flexibility, adaptability and creativity. Since effective corporate leaders are risk-oriented, visionary and innovative in cultures dominated by adhocracy (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and since change-oriented leaders create visions, are willing to take risks in decisions and are not overcautious (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991) it is probably the change-oriented leadership style that dominates in cultures characterized by adhocracy.

Aim of the study

Earlier research about attributional styles within an organizational context has focused more on attributional styles consequences in work settings, namely what attributions can lead to. Little attention has thereby been given to attributional styles' development in work settings, namely if individuals' way of attributing can be shaped within an organizational context. The purpose of the present exploratory study is therefore to start exploring this area by investigating how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles and organizational culture are related to the attributional styles internal, external, stability and control. The author in the present study has chosen to explain attributional styles as the attributional behaviors that employees use in the situations they find themselves in. This study will hopefully extend the knowledge about attributional styles in the organizational context by expanding the knowledge of how leadership styles and organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context.

Method

Participants

One big company that provides recruitment and staffing services with many offices spread across Sweden participated in the study. The questionnaire was sent to 135 people, working at more than ten different offices across Sweden. Due to a big selection shortfall with a

low response rate, 30 responses (22.2 %), problem with finding companies that wanted to participate, and time limits another sampling technique was used, namely snowball sampling through social media. Additional 97 answers were gathered through this sampling method ending up at 127 participants in the study. The snowball sampling technique has, among others, been used in the development of a workplace explanatory style questionnaire by Smith et al. (2013).

The participants in the study had different occupations, among others, sales representatives, sales managers, midwives, doctors, recruiters, consultant managers, managing directors, lawyers, economists and administrators. The participants also came from different branches and industries. Most of them came from the branches; staffing and employment, health care and computer, IT and telecommunications, but there were also participants from the branches; education, research and development, public administration and society, banking and finance, retail, legal, accounting and consulting. Regarding work sector, 77.2 % worked in the private sector and 22.8 % in the public sector. There were 30.7 % males and 69.3 % females in the study. Regarding age, 17.3% of the people in the sample was between 18-25 years old, 46.5 % was between 26-35 years old, 18.9 % was between 36-45 years old, 9.4 % was between 46-55 years old and 7.9 % was between 56-65 years old. Regarding highest education level, 15 % of the people in the sample had a high school education, 78.7 % had a university education and 6.3 % had another education. Regarding work position, 78.7 % of the respondents were employees and 21.3 % were managers. Regarding time employed in the current organization, 37 % of the respondents had been employed in the current organization for 0-1 year, 22.8 % for 1-3 years, 15 % for 3-5 years, 11.8 % for 5-8 years and 13.4 % for more than 8 years. Regarding work amount, 76.4 % of the sample worked fulltime, 6.3 % part-time (50%) and 17.3 % of the participants had another work amount. Regarding employment form, 64.6 % of the participants had a permanent employment and 35.4 % had a temporary employment.

Materials

CPE Leadership Model Questionnaire. The participants' perceptions of their managers' leadership style was measured using a shorter version of the standardized, CPE Leadership Model Questionnaire, by Ekvall and Arvonen (1994). This questionnaire measures leadership styles in three dimensions; change-oriented, production-oriented and employee-oriented. The test measures a mix of the three leadership styles and measures to what extent the leader is

characterized by the three dimensions.

The participants rated their closest managers' leadership style by answering 15 questions that were answered on a four point Likert scale ranging from 0-3 where 0= rare/never, 1=sometimes, 2= rather often and 3= often/mostly. In the studies of Ekvall and Arvonen (1991; 1994) the reliability and validity for the scales can be obtained. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .854 for employee-oriented, .914 for change-oriented and .834 for production-oriented. A Swedish version of the questionnaire existed so no translation of the questionnaire was necessary to conduct. A mean score was used for each leadership style dimension, where a high score indicated that this leadership style is often/mostly used.

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument. The participants' perceptions of the organizational culture were measured using the validated OCAI - Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument by Cameron and Quinn (1999). The OCAI measures a mix of four cultures and the scale consist of 24 statements that measures to what extent the organization is characterized by the four organizational cultures; the clan culture, the adhocracy culture, the market culture and the hierarchy culture.

The 24 statements in OCAI are grouped into six key dimensions of organizational culture; dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphases and criteria for success. The OCAI asks the test-takers to divide 100 points regarding the present organizational culture over four alternatives where each of these alternatives represent one of the four culture types. Due to less time consuming, the simplicity and the use of a Likert scale for the other two measures in the present study, a Likert scale was used instead of dividing 100 point on each key dimension. Other authors, such as, Meyer, Hecht, Gill and Toplonytsky (2010) have also used a Likert scale with the OCAI in their study.

The questions were answered on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .906 for clan, .933 for market, .920 for adhocracy and .777 for hierarchy. A translation of the OCAI to Swedish was necessary to conduct since the questionnaire was only available in English. The questionnaire was first back translated and then reviewed together with Farida Rasulzada. The scales were adapted to fit the Swedish context and tested in a shorter pilot study before running. The pilot study consisted of six people with different ages and sex that came from different sectors, occupation areas and branches. These people tested the questionnaire and gave feedback

about the translation and the questions relevance and clarity. A mean score was used for each culture type; where a high score indicated that this organizational culture type was strong.

  Organizational Attributional Style Questionnaire. The participants' self-attributional style within an organizational context was investigated by using the OASQ - Organizational Attributional Style Questionnaire by Kent and Martinko (1995). This questionnaire consists of sixteen negative hypothetical work situations and each situation is followed by seven questions. In the first question the participants are asked to write down what they think is the major cause of the situation followed by six questions about the cause. These six questions mirrors one of the dimensions; internal, external, stability, control, globality and intentionality. Although the questionnaire measures six dimensions of attributional styles, the present study are based on the four dimensions; internal, external, stability and control. Other authors, such as, Martinko et al. (2011b) have also used some items and dimensions from the questionnaire in their study.

  Based on the conclusions from previous literature, it seems as if attributional styles concerning performance for negative events is a more valid and reliable measure compared to attributional styles for positive events (Xenikou & Furnham, 1997). Based on this, the decision was taken to use a test with negative events.

  Item responses ranged from 1-7 on a Likert scale, 1 (nothing to do with me) to 7 (totally due to me) and 1 (nothing to do with other people or circumstances) to 7 (totally due to other circumstances) and 1 (never present) to 7 (always present) and 1 (not at all under my control) to 7 (completely under my control). The reliabilities of the dimensions in previous studies have been .7 to .8 and in the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .766 for internal .748 for external .805 for stability and .710 for control.

  A translation of the OASQ to Swedish was necessary to conduct since this questionnaire was only available in English. The questionnaire was first back translated and then reviewed together with Farida Rasulzada. The questions in the scales were adapted to fit the Swedish context and they were tested before running in a shorter pilot study. The pilot study consisted of six people with different ages and sex that came from different sectors, occupation areas and branches. These people tested the questionnaire and gave feedback about the translation and the questions relevance and clarity. Due to this, the present study used nine of the sixteen hypothetical questions due to relevance to the study's purpose, adaptation to the Swedish working context and minimizing the time of doing the test. The hypothetical questions used in the

present study concerned the areas; performance evaluation, goal achievement, promotion, pay, co-worker relations, superior relations and customer/client/patient relations. The hypothetical questions that were removed from the study concerned; training, layoffs, expense reimbursement, technology and accident. These were removed after receiving feedback from the participants in the pilot study, with the motivation that they were considered less relevant to some work groups and thereby less relevant for a broader domain.

Design

The present study used standard multiple regression analysis, with four continuous dependent variables, the four causal dimensions: internal, external, stability and control in order to answer the two research questions in the study. Eight standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. The first four analyses included the independent variables; change-oriented leadership, production-oriented leadership and employee-oriented leadership and the last four analyses included the independent variables; clan culture, hierarchy culture, adhocracy culture and market culture. This analysis method was chosen because the purpose of the study was to investigate, separately, how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles and organizational culture were related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context.

Procedure

The participants answered a questionnaire on Internet at psychsurveys.org. For the participants in the study invited by their employer, a link was sent out to their e-mail address through the Human Resources department. For participants in the study, invited through social media, a link was posted on LinkedIn and Facebook where people were asked to contribute to research by answering a questionnaire if they met the criteria that they were currently working and that they had a manager ranked above them. They were also encouraged to spread and share the questionnaire further in their networks. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. In the first part the participants answered demographic questions, in the second part the participants rated their attributional styles within an organizational context, in the third part the participants rated how they perceived their manager's leadership style and in the fourth part the participants rated how they perceived the organizational culture.

Ethics

Before the participants started to fill out the questionnaire they were informed about the study and its purpose, that all participants would be anonymous, that all data would be treated confidentially and that the data would not be used for any other purposes. The participants were also informed that they could discontinue the study at any time and that they gave their consent to participate in the study when they answered the questionnaire. No possible harm was considered in the study and the ethical clearance was given from the University of Lund.

Results

Descriptive statistics for Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient among the study variables internal, external, stability, control, clan, adhocracy, market, hierarchy, change, production and employee are presented in Table 1. There were more statistically significant correlations between organizational culture and the attributional styles than there were between leadership styles and the attributional styles.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Product-moment Correlation Coefficient among the study variables

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Mean	SD
1. Internal	-											4.44	1.01
2. External	-.462**	-										4.28	.92
3. Stability	-.045	.160	-									4.59	.94
4. Control	.763**	-.427**	-.056	-								4.06	.87
5. Clan	.319**	-.293**	-.194*	.447**	-							3.44	.97
6. Adhocracy	.302**	-.224*	-.109	.416**	.663**	-						2.86	1.04
7. Market	.316**	-.164	-.167	.252**	.194*	.462**	-					3.04	1.13
8. Hierarchy	.037	.065	-.020	.092	.395**	.255**	.108	-				3.08	.77
9. Change	.216*	-.186*	-.177*	.274**	.553**	.486**	.198*	.199*	-			1.83	.88
10. Production	.184*	-.070	-.233**	.096	.349**	.203*	.234**	.396**	.595**	-		1.75	.72
11. Employee	.137	-.095	-.096	.227*	.495**	.326**	.042	.248**	.500**	.392**	-	2.37	.65

Note. **Correlation is significant at the *p*<.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at the *p*<.05 level (2-tailed) ; n=127

In order to answer the first research question, how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context, four multiple regression analyses were conducted (see Table 2), one analysis for each dependent variable. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. One outlier was detected through Mahalanobis distance and this case was removed from the four standard multiple regression analyses.

After entry of the leadership styles change, production and employee the total variance in internal explained by the model was 5.4%, $F(3,122)=2.31$ $p>.05$. None of the leadership styles dimensions were statistically significant.

After entry of the leadership styles change, production and employee the total variance in external explained by the model was 3.6 %, $F(3,122)=1.50$ $p>.05$. None of the leadership styles dimensions were statistically significant.

After entry of the leadership styles change, production and employee the total variance in stability explained by the model was 5.3 %, $F(3,122)=2.26$ $p>.05$. None of the leadership styles dimensions were statistically significant.

After entry of the leadership styles change, production and employee the total variance in control explained by the model was 9.7 %, $F(3,122)=4.38$ $p<.05$. A Bonferroni adjustment to the alpha level was used to judge the statistical significance. None of the leadership styles dimensions were statistically significant.

The analyses showed that employees' perceptions of the leadership styles were only statistically significant related to the attributional style control and not statistically significant related to the attributional styles internal, external and stability. None of the culture dimensions had a statistically significant independent relation to the attributional style control.

Table 2

Standard Multiple Regression analysis predicting internal, external, stability and control from leadership styles

| | Dependent Variables | | | |
	Internal	External	Stability	Control
Predictor	β	β	β	β
Change	.127	-.207	-.116	.233
Production	.099	.054	-.163	-.086
Employee	.048	-.020	.055	.170
Total R^2	.054	.036	.053	.097[*]
n	126	126	126	126

Note. [*]$p < .05$

In order to answer the second research question, how employees' perceptions of the organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context, four multiple regression analyses were conducted (see Table 3), one analysis for each dependent variable. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

After entry of the organizational cultures; clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy the total variance in internal explained by the model was 18 %, $F(4,122)=6.70$ $p<.001$. Two of the cultures were statistically significant, with clan recording higher beta value (beta = .312, $p = <.01$) than market (beta = .267, $p = <.01$). A Bonferroni adjustment to the alpha level was used to judge the statistical significance.

After entry of the organizational cultures; clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy the total variance in external explained by the model was 13.8 %, $F(4,122)=4.89$ $p<.01$. Only clan culture was statistically significant (beta = -.370, $p = <.01$). A Bonferroni adjustment to the alpha level was used to judge the statistical significance.

After entry of the organizational cultures; clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy the total variance in stability explained by the model was 6,9 %, $F(4,122)=2.26$ $p>.05$. None of the organizational culture dimensions were statistically significant.

After entry of the organizational cultures; clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy the total variance in control explained by the model was 24,6 %, F (4,122)=9.96 $p<.001$. Only clan culture was statistically significant (beta = .372, $p = <.01$). A Bonferroni adjustment to the alpha level was used to judge the statistical significance.

The analyses showed that employees' perceptions of the organizational culture were statistically significant related to the attributional styles; internal, external and control within an organizational context. The analyses showed that the clan culture and the market culture were statistically significant independent related to internal attributional style, the clan culture was statistically significant independent related to external attributional style and clan culture was statistically significant independent related to the attributional style control. The analyses showed that employees' perceptions of the organizational culture were not statistically significant related to the attributional style stability.

Table 3

Standard Multiple Regression analysis predicting internal, external, stability and control from organizational culture

	Dependent Variables			
	Internal	External	Stability	Control
Predictor	β	β	β	β
Clan	.312**	-.370**	-.285	.372**
Adhocracy	.001	.024	.147	.137
Market	.267**	-.126	-.188	.128
Hierarchical	-.115	.219	.075	-.104
Total R^2	.180***	.138**	.069	.246***
n	127	127	127	127

Note. *** $p <.001$ ** $p <.01$ * $p <.05$

Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles and organizational culture were related to the attributional styles; internal, external, stability and control within an organizational context. Briefly, the results revealed that employees' perceptions of the leadership styles were statistically significant related to the attributional style control and employees' perceptions of the organizational culture were statistically significant related to the attributional styles; internal, external and control.

The study wishes to point out that it is unclear what causes what regarding the relation between attributional styles, leadership styles and organizational culture. However, the present study will discuss potential explanations for the findings by assuming that leadership styles and organizational culture are a part of the causes for the attributional styles.

The results in this present study will be discussed in two different sections, first leadership styles relation to employees' attributional styles followed by organizational cultures' relation to employees' attributional styles. These sections will be followed by one section about limitations and one section about future research. The study ends with a short conclusion.

Leadership styles relation to attributional styles

The first research question to answer is how employees' perceptions of the leadership styles were related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context. The findings in the present study showed that the leadership styles in the model were only statistically significant related to the attributional style control and not statistically significant related to the attributional styles; internal, external and stability.

The findings in the present study strongly indicate that it might be other things, besides leadership styles that might influence attributional styles. Since attributional styles are seen as trait-like tendencies (Martinko et al., 2011a) it is probably the participants' personality characteristics that have influenced their attributional style most. A possible explanation for this weak and almost non-existing relation in the present study might be that a majority of the participants had been employed for zero to one year and they had probably, thereby, not had their leaders for such a long time. With this said, this time is probably too short for a leader to create patterns of attributions among the employees in specific situations.

By inspecting the correlation pattern between leadership styles and the attributional styles one might detect a certain pattern. In the present study employees with an internal attributional style rated their leaders more positively than employees with an external attributional style did. The findings in the present study therefore indicate that it might be other things that can explain the relation between leadership styles and attributional styles. It could probably be that the employees' attributional styles influenced the perceptions of the leadership styles, and not the other way around, that leadership styles influenced employees' attributional styles.

These findings in the present study regarding leadership styles are in some extent consistent with the findings of McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) who found that leadership styles were related to employees' levels of optimism. However, the findings in the present study differed in some extent since the study by McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) concerned another leadership approach, namely transformational leadership, and since they investigated its relation to an optimistic style, which can be seen as composite scores of attributional styles. The findings in the present study showed that the leadership styles in the model were related to another attributional style, namely control, and not related to the composite scores of attributional styles for an optimistic attributional style.

Control. The results in the present study showed that leadership styles and the attributional style control had 9.7 % shared variance. According to Cohen's suggestion (1992) the relation between leadership style and control had a small effect size.

Even though the leadership style model as a whole was weakly related to control, none of the three leadership styles in the model had a statistically significant independent relation to the attributional style control. It seems like it might have been the general leadership style dimension that was related to the attributional style control, meaning that those who reported control rated that their leaders had one or several of the leadership styles. By inspecting the correlation patterns in the study one could also see that the attributional style control was statistically significant related to two leadership styles, namely the change-oriented and the employee-oriented leadership style.

Organizational cultures relation to attributional styles

The second research question to answer is how employees' perceptions of the organizational culture are related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational

context. The findings in the study showed that organizational culture was statistically significant related to the attributional styles; internal, external and control, but not statistically significant related to the attributional style stability.

In the present study the organizational culture and the internal attributional style had 18 % shared variance, organizational culture and the external attributional style had 13.8 % shared variance and organizational culture and the attributional style control had 24.6 % shared variance. According to Cohen's suggestion (1992) the relation between culture and internality had a medium effect size, the relation between culture and externality had a small effect size and the relation between culture and control had a medium effect size.

That organizational culture, in some extent, was related to employees' attributional styles in the present study could probably be explained through corporate attributional styles since Furnham et al. (1992) mention that corporate attributional styles can be seen and developed in the organizational culture. These findings in the present study might therefore indicate that all members of an organization together can create a corporate attributional style that becomes a part of the organizational culture that then can influence how employees attribute. In other words, it might be that the employees' attributions in an organization become group attributions that affect the organizational culture and then become corporate attributional styles. These corporate attributional styles might then work as a guide for employees' behaviors and thoughts and will perhaps shape how employees attribute even more. When new members then enter the organization the culture might shape these new members' attributional styles.

The findings in the present study showed that organizational culture had a weak relation to the attributional styles; internal, external and control. Perhaps this result can be explained in terms of that attributional styles actually are seen as trait-like tendencies, in combination with participants in the study being employed for a rather short time, and because of that one cannot expect that the organizational context has had such a strong affect on how employees attribute. The findings in the present study can thereby be somewhat congruent with what Silvester et al. (2003) mention that the personality traits an individual is born with and an individual's cognitions, derived from gained knowledge and previous experiences, are both equally essential causes of an individual's behavior. That the relation was weak in the present study could perhaps be because the participants' personality traits had a greater impact on how they attributed than what their cognitions had. Something that possibly could have caused this is that the majority of

the participants in the study only had been in the organization for zero to one year. This short time in the various organizations could have caused that the participants in the study did not have time to acquire knowledge and gain experience regarding their organizations' culture yet. With this said, zero to one year is probably a rather short time for an organizational culture to be able to shape employees' attributional styles in specific situations. The findings in the present study regarding the organizational cultures relation to internal, external, and control could therefore perhaps have been stronger if the participants' had been employed in their organizations for a longer time.

       Internal. The findings in the present study showed that the clan culture had the strongest statistically significant independent relation to internal attributional style in the model, when all the other culture types were controlled for. This means that the more the culture was characterized by the participants as a clan the more internal attributions they reported, meaning that they explained causes as due to the self more. An explanation for this finding in the present study might be that since a culture dominated by clan is considered to be a friendly workplace where employees share a lot of themselves and since there is a focus on teamwork and concern for employees (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) people will probably be more caring for each other and will probably have more knowledge about each others work situations and performances. This can perhaps make people do more internal attributions because it is probably harder for people to explain failures as due to other people or circumstances if people around them can find out the truth more easily.

       The findings in the present study might also be congruent with what Lee et al. (2003) mention, that making certain external attributions, when it comes to explaining negative events, might lead to negative impression from other people in the organization because it can be seen as someone is obviously lying. Also since an individual's social standing gets influenced by the attributions that individual make (Kelley & Michela, 1980) one might understand that cultures characterized more by clan will make employees do more internal attributions. Cameron and Quinn (1999) also mention that for cultures dominated by clan, morale and the internal climate is important. So with this said one might understand that employees probably will make more internal attributions in cultures characterized by clan since obvious lying can harm the internal climate and perhaps make people question certain people's morale more.

The findings also showed that the culture type market was statistically significant independent related to the internal attributional style, even though the relation was weaker compared to the relation between the clan culture and internal attributional style, when all the other culture types were controlled for. This means that the more the culture was characterized by the participants as a market the more internal attributions they reported, meaning that they explained causes as due to the self more. There can be several explanations for these findings in the present study. Since corporate leaders in cultures dominated by market are tough, demanding and oriented towards productivity and results (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) one might assume that blaming failures on circumstances or other people will probably not be as tolerated in cultures characterized more by market, which can explain why people make more internal attributions.

Other explanations for the findings in the study might be that since cultures dominated by market are focused on competition and getting the job done (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) one might assume that the more the culture is characterized as a market culture, the more internal attributions people will make. This seems quite reasonable because in order to be productive and get the job done, people will probably have to do it themselves because blaming other people or circumstances will probably not get the job done. Another explanation for the findings in the present study might be that cultures dominated by market reward employees individually when it comes to performance (Maloney & Federle, 1991). Individual rewards in combination with a focus on competition and getting the job done will probably make people do more internal attributions since blaming other people or circumstances probably will not take them to the final goal as easily.

External. The findings in the present study showed that the clan culture had a statistically significant independent relation to the external attributional style, when all the other culture types were controlled for. This means that the more the culture was characterized by the participants as a clan the less external attributions they reported, meaning that they explained causes as due to other people or circumstances less. These findings in the present study can perhaps be explained in terms of that external attributions for negative events often are communicated openly (Lee et al., 2003) and if cultures dominated by clan are characterized as a friendly workplace where concern for employees are important (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) people will probably not blame other people and circumstances that easily.

Control. The findings in the present study also showed that the clan culture had a statistically significant independent relation to the attributional style control, when all the other culture types were controlled for. This means that the more the culture was characterized by the participants as a clan the more controllable attributions they reported, meaning that they explained the causes as being under their own control. One explanation for these findings in the present study might be that feelings of self-powerlessness are fostered by limited autonomy and authority (Henry, 2005) and since the goals of cultures dominated by clan is to get all the employees involved in the decisions and in the activities of the organization (Maloney & Federle, 1991) the employees will probably feel that they have more authority and autonomy if they can be a part of the organization and its decisions, which might increase their sense of having control.

Another explanation for this finding in the present study might be that employee development, concern for people and loyalty, which characterizes a culture dominated by clan, in combination with corporate leaders acting like mentors (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) will probably make employees feel more supported, safe and comfortable which also might affect the perception of having control. Also, in cultures dominated by clan the management empower the employees (Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and with this said it makes sense that cultures dominated by clan are positively related to control because empowered employees will probably feel that they have more control than people who are not empowered.

To sum up, since some attributional styles fit some organizations better (Furnham et al., 1992), one might understand that organizational culture and employees' way of attributing are related in different ways. Anyway, the findings in the present study showed that employees' perceptions of the organizational culture were related to the attributional styles; internal, external and control. With this said, the findings of the present study, even though they were weak, might indicate that there is a possibility that the organizational culture can help shape employees' way of attributing. Even though it was unclear regarding what caused what in the present study, the study assumed that leadership styles and organizational culture were a part of the causes for the attributional styles. With this said, this idea have at least hopefully not been contradicted by the results in the present study.

Limitations

The sampling procedure in the study may not have been ideal because the study recruited

participants partly through a non-probability sampling technique, namely through a snowball sampling method. With this method we cannot be certain that the participants were really employed in an organization, what kind of occupation they had, what kind of organization they worked in and so forth. In other words, we cannot know who answered the questionnaire. The reliability regarding the participants' background in the study can therefore be questioned. This technique might also have influenced the sample in terms of participants in the same range of age and in the same occupation area. Also, by using this method, the study couldn't report for the shortfall.

Since men are more likely to make external attributions for failures compared to women (Brees et al., 2013) the sample regarding the sex in the study may not have been ideal. It might have been that the participants' ratings in the study might have affected the relation between external attributional style, organizational culture and leadership styles. Since the majority of the sample in the study was women this might have influenced that there was a higher mean for internal attributional style than for the external attributional style.

The external validity in the study, as a whole, might be questioned because of the non-representative sample. It might be hard to generalize the findings to other populations since the study used a snowball sampling technique and therefore we cannot know whom the participants really were or where they really came from. The questions in the OASQ also reflect negative situations in certain work areas and not work situations in general. In other words, we cannot know how the findings would be if the questionnaire concerned other work situations or positive situations. With this said, these results cannot be generalized to other work areas. Also, regarding the test-retest validity of the study, this could have been improved in the study if a longitudinal study would have been chosen where the participants had answered the questionnaire two times.

For participants invited by their employer the response rate was quite low. This low response rate might be because of several reasons. The staffing and recruitment industry is a very busy branch and the questionnaire took at least 25 minutes to answer. Attributions may also be something that few people understand and can relate to. Also, the first part about attributions might have felt like an unusual questionnaire. Perhaps the hypothetical situations could have seem hard to answer because the participants had to imagine what the cause could have been and they really had to analyze their own behavior, which might have felt demanding and difficult. There are also often a lot of causes for an event but the participants in the study could only

choose one and this might have been demanding because an event might happen because of several causes. With this said, the participants invited by their employer that answered the questionnaire might have answered because of a reason and these people could have differed from the people that did not choose to answer or complete the questionnaire.

The lack of results for the leadership styles in the study might have been because of the relatively low reliability of the attributional styles. Since seven questions were removed from the OASQ this might have been a loss of the internal consistency in the four scales measuring internal, external, stability and control. Three of the scales reported an acceptable value in the present study but only one of the scales reported a preferable value. The OASQ also measure attributions with subjective estimates, namely self-reports. This measures individuals' own perceptions of what the causes are. This can be problematic if a person answers in a specific way only because it is considered a good manner or behavior, for example, making more internal attributions instead of external attributions because it is not considered a good manner to blame your own failures on other people or circumstances. This might have affected the results in the present study in that way that the participants chose a cause that was totally "due to the self" even though the actual cause was totally "due to other people or circumstances".

One reason for why leadership styles were related to only one of the four attributional styles might have been that 37 % of the participants only had been in the organization for zero to one year. This can perhaps be a rather short time for any leadership style to have an affect on employees. It might be quite hard to rate what kind of leadership style a manager has if a person only has had that manager for a short time. Other reasons might be that they had a leader that they did not have so much contact with. In other words, these two variables can have affected the results when it comes to how much the leaders actually could influence their employees.

Since people are not just making self-attributions but also social attributions, which refers to observing other peoples' outcomes (Harvey et al., 2014) this might have affected how the participants rated their managers. Therefore, the study cannot rule out this possibility that social attributions may have impacted how individuals rated their managers leadership style. Therefore there might be a dilemma in the study regarding what causes what. In other words we cannot know the direction of causality, what is affecting what. This can perhaps be more controllable by using experiments instead. Also, the study cannot rule out alternative explanations for the findings. Perhaps the attitude or relationship towards the manager or towards the organization as

a whole could have impacted how the employees' attributed. The internal validity in the study, as a whole, could therefore have increased if the study had reduced the alternative explanations for the findings.

Future Research

The participants in the study were investigated as one group but they came from different branches, sectors and they had different occupations, educations, ages and they had worked different periods of time in the various organizations. Therefore future research could investigate the differences between employees' attributional styles in these groups and see if leadership styles and organizational cultures relation to employee's attributional styles differs depending on these various variables.

Future studies could also investigate "how long time have you had this manager" and "how is your relationship with your manager" because this can affect how much employees actually listen to and follow their leaders. In other words, time and relationship could have mediated the relationship between leadership styles and how employees' attributed. Satisfaction with the organization can also have mediated the relationship between organizational culture and how employees' attributed. Therefore future studies could investigate if the relation between leadership styles and employees' attributional styles and the relation between organizational culture and employees' attributional styles differs depending on an employee's satisfaction with the organization, relationship with the manager and time working for that manager. Also since research has shown that the culture in an organization can be weak or strong (Yukl, 2013) and this might steer the degree of how much the organizational culture can affect employees' attributional styles, future studies could investigate the strength aspect in cultures and see if this impact the relation between organizational culture and attributional styles.

The study concerned causal explanations for negative events and did not concern causal explanations for positive events. Further studies could investigate organizational culture and leadership style and its relationship to employees' attributional styles in relation to positive events and investigate if the relationship differs for negative and positive events. Further studies could also investigate how organizational culture and leadership styles are related to the other attributional styles, globality and intentionality, or investigate how they are related to composite scores of attributional styles, such as an optimistic and pessimistic attributional styles. Future

studies could also investigate the area concerning attributional training in organizations more and investigate if training can develop a more permanent optimistic attributional style.

Since the present study indicated some relation between organizational culture and attributional styles, even though the relation was weak, future research could investigate collective attributions in an organizational context more and why it might influence members in an organization. For the author in the present study, the findings created a curiosity regarding if it really concern the corporate culture in an entire organization or if it concern subcultures and groups within an organization. Also, since the study showed some relation between organizational culture and attributional styles future research could focus on finding out what in a culture that really affects how people attribute. Even though the present study only indicated one relation out of several between leadership styles and attributional styles other researchers could continue doing research about leadership styles and perhaps use other models since leadership actually is seen as a part of the organizational culture and since leadership cultures exist.

The present study chose to refer the participants' way of attributing as behavior instead of style since the study could not show that the participants' attributional styles were affected over time and since the study did not show if the participants used the same attributional styles in other work contexts. Future studies could therefore investigate if it is possible to actually change an individual's attributional style more permanently through the organizational culture, by investigating the individuals' attributional styles in other work contexts and during several times.

The findings in the study can indicate that it might be possible for the organizational culture to shape the way employees' attribute, in relation to negative events in certain work areas. However, since there could be alternative explanations for the findings and since it is unclear what causes what, more research is needed to investigate these variables' relation to the attributional styles; internality, externality and control and especially why they are related. A quasi-experiment would be a beneficial method to investigate this area more closer by exposing experiment groups to different leadership styles and cultures, investigate how people attribute, and then compare experiment groups with control groups.

Conclusion

As the research demonstrates, the usefulness and the effect of the different attributional styles depend on how they are combined and the context in which they operate. However, the aim

of the study was to investigate how employees' perceptions of leadership styles and organizational culture were related to employees' attributional styles within an organizational context. The findings showed that organizational culture and the attributional style control was related and had a medium effect size, organizational culture and internal attributional style was related and had a medium effect size and organizational culture and external attributional style was related and had a small effect size. Leadership styles and the attributional style control were related and had a small effect size.

These findings might indicate that the organizational culture matters in some extent regarding attributional styles, even though the relation was weak, when it comes to explaining negative events in the areas; performance evaluation, goal achievement, promotion, pay, co-worker relations, superior relations and customer/client/patient relations. The inferences in the study should however be interpreted in the light of its limitations. Since it was an exploratory and observational study and since there were several limitations there seem to be a lot of future research needed in the area to clarify the findings in the study and examine what causes what and why organizational culture is related to the attributional styles; internal, external and control. Perhaps these findings can indicate that it can be feasible to do a more extensive study in this area. Nevertheless, this study wishes to point out the possibilities of organizational culture in shaping employees' attributional styles and hopefully this study has opened up new ways of investigating how organizational factors might help shape attributional styles.

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