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The Influence of Direct Executive Managers on Lecturers' Perceptions on New Organisational Aims in Times of Academic Drift

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Abstract

During educational change, managers can contribute positively to the professional's sense of coping ability. The question remains as to whether the managers of lecturers can also influence the perception of lecturers on newly formulated organisational aims. Recently, the changes in many European institutes of Higher Professional Education have been considerable. The innovations-at-hand include the Dutch Higher Professional Education (HPE) institutes changing from teaching-only institutes toward hybrid organisations for teaching *and* research. The role of lecturers is central in implementing research into HPE, especially into the educational programs. Hence, lecturers' views on the new organisational aims are crucial. Based on a quantitative design, lecturers' perceptions on the new organisational aims are measured. As part of a structural equation model, these perceptions are related to how lecturers perceive their direct executives' leadership style, directly, as well as mediated by executive-imputed organisational structures as collaboration systems and decision-making processes. The results show that the direct influence of executives based on their leadership style is limited, while initiating lecturers' participation in decision-making processes is an important influence on lecturers' perceptions on new organisational aims. More empirical insight into leadership factors and organisational structures can enlarge the improvement of goal achievement during organisational change.

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During the past few decades in several European countries, changes in Higher Professional Education (HPE) institutes, such as the British Post-1992 universities and the German *Fachhochschulen*, have been considerable (Kyvik & Skodvin, 2003; Witte, Van der Wende, & Huisman, 2008). Due to the massification of the higher education system in the 20th century, European HPE institutes came to be seen as alternatives to classical universities with the increasing governmental intent to change from teaching-only institutes to organisations of research and teaching (Teichler, 2008). The 1999 Bologna Declaration, and the increase of the knowledge economy increased this process towards the similarity of HPE institutes and traditional universities in many European countries. Outside of Europe, similar examples of “academic drift”—the drive to become a university—have been found in the Liberal Arts Colleges in the United States, although sometimes for different reasons (Jaquette, 2013).

As part of these changing governmental expectations in 2001, the collective Dutch HPE institutions agreed on a treaty with the Ministry of Education to reach for three aims: a) to raise the quality of the educational programmes and teaching staff (educational aim); b) to add to the profession's theoretical body of knowledge (theoretical aim); and c) to promote innovation in the professional field (external aim) (Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science & Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, 2001). It was explicitly expected that the implementation of research as the second primary organisational process would result in these three requested goals. As a result, during the last decade, the Dutch *hogescholen* are changing to hybrid organisations undertaking teaching *and* research.

As part of this treaty, the HPE sector received financial support to start implementing research activities on a larger scale, which had to be used to appoint new professional

researchers where before there were none. The new research activities were expected to study the development of the related vocational fields, such as engineering, teaching, nursing, and marketing. As an effect, innovation and development of the HPE educational programs was intended. Hence, most of the new research had a practice-based character (as opposite to fundamental research) (Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy, 2005). The new researchers implemented several new activities, such as the construction of groups of lecturer-researchers, a system for the evaluation of research quality, and many networks between *hogescholen* and external companies as well as public organisations that targeted research-based innovation. All in all, this meant a large organisational change that affected the foundational beliefs and value systems in these higher educational institutes (Rantz, 2002), which also changes the nature of academic work in these types of institutes (Boyd & Smith, 2011)

The HPE lecturers are not only part of this change, their effort is needed to realise large parts of the formulated aims. Also, due to their direct executive managers being the gate keepers between the central board on the one hand, and the lecturers and students on the other, their influence on the lecturers can have a large impact in the requested changes.

Theoretical and Practical Context

The current study considers the interrelation between the lecturers' perceptions on the content (aims) and their direct context (direct executive managers) of the change process (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Devos, Buelens & Bouckenooghe, 2007), by applying the conceptual model of Witziers, Sleegers, and Imants (1999) (see also Figure 1). As part of the theoretical and practical context, first the relevance of lecturers' perceptions will be explained. Then the possible direct and indirect influence of direct executive managers on the perception

of lecturers is grounded in previous research. The context description will result in the central research question of this study.

The Relevance of Lecturers' Perceptions on Organisational Aims

In the teaching-only HPE institutes, since the mid-1980's research activities used to only appear in the final year of the curricula, and never had a bigger focus than professional competences in students. Most institutions were lacking any "research culture", research hardly existed as a stand-alone activity, and research skills and/or experience usually was no indicator for selection in lecturers' application procedures (Kyvik & Skodvin, 2003). Large groups of lecturers possessed a professional bachelor's degree as their highest formal qualification (Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science, 2011). These features of HPE were a result of the Dutch higher vocational programs being part of secondary education until the 1960's, a separate educational strand since 1986, and only legally part of higher education since 1992. Hence, these institutes did not have a tradition of combining research and teaching, as the Dutch universities have had since the end of the 19th century, which nowadays at least include all lecturers having substantial research experience (Ph.D), sufficient research time, and existing collective national research schools. The 'academic drift' of the HPE was an effect of the governmental choice to 'lift' existing institutes for vocational education to become higher education institutes, and to not found new institutes in addressing the massification of the university system. The implementation of research-activities was one of the final steps in creating institutes of HPE that can be considered equal to but different from the universities. Practice-based research seemed more in line with the educational task of HPE, and preserved the governmental funding for fundamental research for universities. For a more detailed historical overview see: Griffioen (2013).

The agreement between HPE and the Ministry of Education was signed in 2001, but the organisational structure in the *hogescholen*, in most cases, still resembles a lack of research tradition. Often, research organisation and educational organisation are not yet intertwined, or even connected. Present connections mostly consist of small numbers of individual lecturers who both teach and conduct research. Educational programs and research projects often coexist but do not feed each other, although it is the intention to do so. At the same time, slowly but surely the changes in HPE are reaching the day-to-day activities of lecturers, since more and more research is implemented as a second primary process next to teaching in the wider organisation, confronting lecturers with three types of research-related changes in their work surroundings: a) research is being implemented as an obligatory part of all professional education curricula; b) lecturers are expected to raise their formal qualifications, often intended as a way to increase their research ability; and c) research skills now increasingly offer status, whereas teaching and professional competencies were previously the most prominent indicators (Hill & Haigh, 2012).

And although the biggest changes are so far mostly outside of the lecturers' focus, the role of the lecturers is crucial in the further implementation of research within the organisation. In this case, the larger organisation, particularly the collective group of lecturers, plays an important role in reaching the agreed upon organisational goals, mainly when these are connected to their work in educational programmes. Their importance follows from the lecturers being the ultimate connection between the institution, its policy, and the students (and often the main connection with the professional fields related to the educational programmes). Because of this position, lecturers' perceptions and related activities influence the direction and tempo in which the proposed aims are reached or resisted in the wider organisation (Geijsel, Slegers, Van den Berg, & Kelchtermans, 2001; Geijsel, Slegers, Stoel, & Krüger, 2009; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009).

The influence of lecturers can show diverse directions. First, the research and teaching perceptions of lecturers form an often implicit foundation for students' education, since lecturers' perceptions influence the choices that they make in shaping their own teaching as well as research (Visser-Wijnveen, Van Driel, Van der Rijst, Verloop, & Visser, 2009). Second, as soon as the lecturer is involved in curriculum building on top of teaching, these perceptions can influence a larger part of the educational programmes. Additionally, through their personal preferences for a specific balance between the different tasks of research, teaching, and working in the professional field (Boyd & Smith, 2011), their perceptions influence the construction of the wider organisation as well. This effect is only increased to the relatively large numbers of lecturers in the wider HPE organisations.

Previous research shows how lecturers' commitment to their educational institute is positively related to their increased effort, performance, and professionalism. Lecturers' belief in the organisational aims and values is an important aspect of lecturers' motivation to contribute to innovations (Geijsel et al., 2009). If a proposed direction for change receives a positive response, different results will be reached than when they gain large amounts of cynicism (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000). Hence, in the current study the lecturers' perceptions on the three governmental aims are potentially very influential in their realisation and are placed central. This positions this study in line with others that state aspects related to employees' perceptions and actions to be important in change trajectories. This aspect is often overlooked (Wanous et al., 2000).

The Influence of Direct Executive Managers on Lecturers' Perceptions

The educational programmes in *hogescholen* are usually organised into departments that each features one team leader. This "direct executive manager" is an administrator who is formally responsible for the formulation, choice of pedagogy, and quality of execution of educational programmes in consultation with the total team of lecturers. This manager is also

responsible for lecturer applications, job evaluations, and promotional decisions. Often these managers are former lecturers promoted into this managerial role, and almost always are experienced in the specific vocational field (for instance nursing, teaching, or engineering). Due to this organisational construction, the direct executive manager can be seen as the two-way gatekeeper between the policy aims of the central organisation and the actual implementation of innovations within educational programmes.

As the lecturers' shared perceptions of governmental goals for their organisations are important, it is also important how these perceptions can be influenced and therefore increase the amount of commitment among lecturers to accomplish the requested organisational changes (Gregory, 1996). By considering both lecturers view on the proposed changes, as well as their perception of their direct executive managers, two important change factors of content and context are included (Devos et al., 2007). In this respect, it is interesting to consider that the influence of the direct executive managers has not been considered before. These managers (as the lecturers) played no role in the public debate that was present before and during the first years of implementing research into HPE, nor were they considered to be important research objectives (Griffioen, 2013).

This oversight can be explained partly by the fact that newly appointed professional researchers—and not these educational managers—are responsible for research and are therefore seen as the carriers of the expected innovations. But as lecturers' perceptions are important to be able to achieve the expected aims, it is relevant to consider the influence of their direct managers, as previous research in alternate educational systems also indicates. Geijsel et al. (2009) have shown how a stimulating school leader arouses lecturers' awareness and recognition of their own beliefs and values. Also, a stimulating school leader enhances lecturers' ability to solve problems, hence giving them the feeling that they can cope with new

expectations. But the feeling of having an (so perceived) in-effective supervisor can lead to actively blaming this person for difficulties during the organisational changes (Wanous et al., 2000). As such, an executive leader may impact lecturers' willingness to change, and therefore, have a major impact on the innovation's success (Geijsel et al., 2009; Marks & Printy, 2003; Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers, 2010). In the HPE organisational structure, the possible effect of this influence increases since these lowest executives are the main gatekeepers between lecturers and the central organisation.

The influence of the direct executive in the setting of organisational development in the current study is modelled based on the intellectually stimulating leadership (ILS) concept. ILS of a direct executive manager intends to increase the lecturers' ability to solve the problems connected to the innovation, and therefore, can stimulate the intellectual climate of the organisation as a whole in addition to helping to change lecturers' opinions (and connected attitudes) regarding the organisation's main tasks (Marks & Printy, 2003; Moolenaar et al., 2010). Additionally, ILS can be considered a sufficient concept in this study, since the *content* of the change also requests an alteration in lecturers from being more practice and professional oriented, towards more research-academic, or intellectually oriented. ISL, as part of the concept of transformational leadership, is one of the most referenced types of leadership that may hold potential in reforming systems through innovative practises (Moolenaar et al., 2010). Transformational leadership focuses on change, provides intellectual stimulation, and aims to bring innovation to the organisation (Geijsel et al., 2009; Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformational leadership has also shown to be positively related to organisational commitment (Khasawneh, Omari, & Abu-Tineh, 2012).

The connection between the lecturers' perceptions on the new organisational aims and ILS within the current study is modelled after the Witziers et al. (1999) model (see also Fig. 1). This model was developed to qualitatively and conceptually describe educational organisations

through leadership style, participation in collaboration, participation in decision making, and the amount of consensus between lecturers in educational institutions, to provide a more multi-dimensional perspective on educational organisations than leadership alone. Since then, it has also been applied in quantitative research to analyse educational departments in primary (Geijsel et al., 2009), prevocational, and senior secondary education (Geijsel et al., 2001) and is now applied within Higher Professional Education.

In line with the model of Witziers et al. (1999), lecturers' perceptions of the new organisational aims will be seen as the amount of consensus among lecturers on the innovation at hand. It is presumed in this study that the lecturers' perception of ILS is directly positively related to their perception of the new organisational aims (Hypothesis 1; see also Fig. 1).

<Insert Figure 1 about here>

Direct and Indirect Influence of Managers on Lecturers' Perceptions

The presumption in this study is that the way in which lecturers perceive organisational aims is related to the direct executives' leadership style, as well as to the organisational arrangements that direct executive leaders choose to create through formal and informal organisational processes. Through these arrangements, direct executive's influence the (possible) amount of lecturers' organisational participation and hence their feeling of ownership towards the proposed changes (Wanous et al., 2000).

In the debate about school design strategies, Moolenaar et al. (2010) and Rowan (1990) assumed that the development of staff collaboration and staff participation in decision making leads to an increase in the teaching staff's commitment and their identification with the school. Research into the effect of collaboration shows that lecturer collaboration has strong positive effects on professional development and change (Geijsel et al., 2009). Rowan (1990), using a

study by Little (1982), showed that collaborative practises—to talk about teaching, to provide one another with feedback, and to design materials together, for example—can help lecturers overcome their norms of privacy and individual teaching autonomy towards direct colleagues, which are obstacles to favourable attitudes toward collective improvement. Open communication turns out to be an advantage to organisations in times of flux and change (Tschannen - Moran, 2009). Still, the combined previous research shows the general effects of collaborative structures on lecturer commitment and practises have proven to be difficult to pinpoint. This study presumes that the lecturers' perception on collaboration will positively affect how they perceive the new organisational aims (Hypothesis 2).

The second organisational option is to engage lecturers in decision-making processes (Moolenaar et al., 2010). A perceived increase of participation in organisational decision making will increase lecturers' ownership of organisational aims and can thus reinforce the extent to which lecturers have internalised school aims and values as their personal goals (Geijsel et al., 2009). In addition, a greater effort is generated when personal and organisational aims agree with one another (Jongmans, Slegers, Biemans, & De Jong, 2004). Increased levels of lecturer participation in school decisions are assumed to enhance both lecturer commitment and school quality (Rowan, 1990). In addition, participation in decision making has been found to be important for the success of lecturers' implementation of large-scale educational innovations (Geijsel et al., 2001; Moolenaar et al., 2010). In the present study, a higher sense of participation in decision making is expected to have a positive effect on the lecturers' perceptions of the research aims due to a greater feeling of ownership (Hypothesis 3).

So, in previous research, both collaboration and participation in decision making have been found to influence the level of the educational community, thus resulting in increased motivation and a stronger commitment to shared aims among lecturers. Van Geijsel et al. (2009) found an unexpected stimulating effect of collaboration on decision making; therefore, these

effects are also expected in the current study (Hypothesis 4). Previous research also shows that the managerial constructs – collaboration and decision making – are positively influenced by the perceived leadership of direct executive managers (Geijsel et al., 2001; Geijsel et al., 2009). Hence, the current study presumes a positive influence of leadership on collaboration (Hypothesis 5), as well as of leadership on decision making processes (Hypothesis 6).

Combined, this results in the central question for this study: What is the influence of direct educational executives on lecturers' perceptions of new organisational aims in an changing context, both directly as well as mediated through structures of collaboration and participation in decision making?

Method

Sample

All lecturers of six urban Dutch institutes for Higher Professional Education (HPE, in Dutch: *hogescholen*) were asked to complete an extensive online questionnaire on research-related topics ($N = 1053$; response rate = 21%). Of the respondents, most are men (54%) and most have university degrees (69%), of which 6% are PhDs. The range of respondents who come from each institution is 8% to 28% of the total sample. The mean age is 47 years (range 21–68 years). The characteristics are near to average when compared with national characteristics (Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science, 2011; Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, 2011).

Variables

To operationalize the conceptual model of Witziers et al. (1999), the research instruments of Geijsel et al. (2001; 2009) and Moolenaar et al. (2010) that were originally used in Dutch primary and secondary (vocational) education, were now adjusted for use in the HPE situation to measure the following:

1. Intellectually stimulating leadership: lecturers' individual perceptions of intellectual stimulation by their direct executive manager (independent variable, six items);
2. Participation in collaboration: the extent to which lecturers experience professional collaboration (mediator variable, nine items); and
3. Participation in decision making: the extent to which lecturers feel that they participate in the school's decision making regarding education, innovation, and school improvement issues (mediator variable, seven items).

The measurements of the three research aims were based on previous research by Griffioen and De Jong (2014):

4. External innovation aims: the perception of the importance of businesses' and social organisations' improvement as a result of research (four items, dependent variable);
5. Educational aims: the perception of the importance of education's improvement as an effect of research activities (two items, dependent variable); and
6. Theoretical aims: the perceived importance of contributing to theory resulting from research (four items, dependent variable).

For descriptives and scaling of all observed variables, see Table 1 (the correlation matrix can be requested from the authors).

< Insert Table 1 about here >

Modelling and Analysis

The measurement model is first tested in a confirmative procedure to confirm the latent factors as applied in previous studies. Second, the structural model is added (arrows in Fig. 2). Since the full model used in this study has not been tested as a whole before, the relationships in the path model will be explored through the method of model trimming by applying structural

equation modelling, using Mplus6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2007). The most parsimonious model (at $p < .05$) will be accepted as the final model. The maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method is used to obtain parameter estimates and to evaluate the strength of fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) will be used as the measure of fit due to the relatively large sample size ($< .08$ indicates a satisfactory fit, and $< .05$ indicates a close fit), which negatively influences the chi-square measurement (Kline, 2011). The size of the chi-square (CHISQ) is used to compare the fit of different models in both steps. Confidence intervals of 98% around parameter estimates are used for significance testing. In addition to the overall strength of fit, local fit was evaluated through an inspection of the observed variables' correlation residuals.

The scores on the observed variables are not multivariately and normally distributed. However, Hoogland and Boomsma (1998) suggested that this does not seriously bias the maximum likelihood estimation of the model parameters. For data screening and descriptive analysis, SPSS18 is used.

The measurement model, with six common factors, directly provided a good approximate fit to the data (RMSEA = .054) with the most parsimonious model possible. Therefore, this model is used for further analysis (for factor loadings and residual variances, see Table 1). The proportion of explained variance for the individual items ranged from 18% to 76%. All items loaded both positively and significantly (confidence interval of 98%) on the related common factor. All factors correlated positively.

After adding the structural relations, the full model with all direct effects was trimmed step-by-step by constraining the smallest non-significant effect to zero. The most parsimonious model that was hierarchical identical to the previous models was considered the model of the best fit. Hence, with model 7 showing significant deviation from model 6 ($\Delta X^2=7.597, p=.006$), model 6 was indicated as the final model. Introducing the structural relations to the

measurement model did not significantly worsen the model fit ($\Delta\chi^2=5.84$, $\Delta df=5$, $p=.32$) and the overall fit of the final structural model was satisfactory (RMSEA=.053). For a graphical display of the first model and the final model, see Figure 2.

< Insert Figure 2 about here >

Findings

Descriptive Analysis: Perceptions of Lecturers

The results show that lecturers perceive the three aims of research as fairly important, with average scores ranging from 2.9 to 3.6 (for all descriptive results, see Table 1). Lecturers find the educational focus of research the most important when compared to the external and theoretical aims. Therefore, when asked what research activities should be targeted, lecturers show that they consider their institutes to be the first of all educational institutes. At the same time, on average, all lecturers aim higher than the median of 2.5, implying that they find all activities at least somewhat important.

The results show that lecturers have a somewhat positive mean opinion on their direct executive manager's intellectually stimulating leadership qualities as well as on collaboration and decision making procedures. For leadership especially, the score on the item "creation of possibilities for personal development" is relatively high. The mean score on "the support in reflecting on new experiences" is lowest but still above the mean.

As far as the organisational structures created by the managers, for collaboration, the lecturers have a more positive opinion on the informal aspects, such as "learning from each other" or "talking about developments in the field". The more institutionalised aspect of collaboration—"interview"—receives the lowest mean score.

The results for decision making show that lecturers perceive that they influence the content and structure of their teaching. But as far as deciding on the more organisational aspects,

such as the allocation of tasks, the scores show that their perceived influence is smaller. This division of perceived influence in decision-making topics is in line with results from Jongmans et al. (2004).

Influence of Direct Executive Managers on Lecturers' Perceptions

Based on previous research, we expected direct effects of leadership on the three different aims of research (Hypothesis 1). The final structural model's results show only one small direct effect of leadership on the research aims—namely, on external research aims. The two other research aims were indirectly affected by leadership via small effects of collaboration and decision making (see Table 2 for all parameter estimates).

For the indirect effects of leadership on perceptions of research aims, the results show the direct effects of ISL on participation in collaboration (Hypothesis 5) and participation in decision making (Hypothesis 6). These effects in the final model are rather large and explain 19% of the variance of collaboration and 38% of the variance of decision-making processes. The effects of leadership, collaboration, and decision making on the three organisational aims are smaller. Collaboration does not show a direct effect on research aims (Hypothesis 2)—only an indirect effect through decision making (Hypothesis 4). Decision-making structures positively affect the three aims (Hypothesis 3), although the explained variance is small (1–3%).

The standardised total effects of leadership on the research-related aims are small to moderate and significant for external aims (.18), for theoretical aims (.08), and for educational aims (.06).

< *Insert Table 2 about here* >

Discussion

When the context of the lecturers' work changes because of innovations, a question arises: How do lecturers perceive these new organisational aims? And can direct executive managers positively influence lecturers' perceptions directly, or through organisational arrangements such as collaborative or decision-making procedures? This article considers these questions through the case of the Dutch institutes for Higher Professional Education (HPE) that—by governmental intent—are changing from teaching-only institutes to hybrids of teaching and research. The influence of the direct executive manager on lecturers' perceptions on the new organisational aims was modelled through the conceptual model by Witziers et al. (1999). The results show that the direct influence of the executive manager on the way lecturers perceive new organisational aims is limited and primarily mediated through how organisational arrangements, such as collaborative and decision-making processes, are perceived.

The current study considered the new organisational aims for research activities as formulated in the treaty between the *hogescholen* and the Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science (2001). The results show that lecturers considered the aim to improve education to be the highest of importance. Based on the results, in the lecturers' opinions, even research activities should be first and foremost directed toward educational improvement. And since the educational focus remains on top even in research perspectives, one could argue that – in the lecturers perspective - this still makes the HPE first and foremost *educational* institutes and not (yet) hybrids of a combination of research and teaching, as is intended. Furthermore, the descriptive results show that lecturers in HPE perceive the intellectually stimulating capacities of their direct executive manager as being just above medium. Lecturers also see their own possibilities on participation in collaboration as well as their participation in decision making as just above medium, which implies room for improvement.

Second, the relation between the leadership style of direct executive managers and lecturers' perceptions of new organisational aims was considered. The presumption was that the influence of direct executive managers was to be both directly as well as mediated by organisational structures as collaboration and decision-making processes. The expectation was that an intellectually stimulating direct executive manager can positively influence the perception of the lecturers' three research aims (directly). The results show that this hypothesis held true for the external research aims although it was rejected for the educational and theoretical aims. Possibly, the culture of inward loyalty of lecturers—primarily directed at their students and teaching—can play a role in this regard (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Seyd, 2000). Apparently in such a culture, direct executive managers can stimulate a more external attitude among lecturers, but this does not affect how lecturers perceive the theoretical or educational aims. These possible explanations need to be studied in future research.

It can be concluded that the influence of the direct executive manager on lecturers' perceptions in this study is mainly mediated by organisational structures, especially by decision-making processes, as was also found in previous studies' regarding alternate educational systems (Geijsel et al., 2001; Geijsel et al., 2009). The combined results of current and previous research imply that, on average, intellectually stimulating leaders can positively affect how lecturers perceive the collaboration in the organisation as well as the decision-making procedures present in the organisation in all educational contexts from Primary to Higher Education. One can say that in changing educational contexts, this interaction – as was also conceptually modelled by Witziers et al. (1999) - can be considered an important foundation for future managerial practise and further research. Also, in line with advises from previous research (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Devos et al., 2007), future research should consider these results in a more comparable manner, to deepen the perspective on the influence of the specific educational contexts on how organisational change is perceived.

The current study is limited to the effect size of the leadership style of direct executive managers on the lecturers' perception, but does not show how to influence lecturers' perceptions on new organisational aims. Also, the interaction between lecturers' perceptions and the different local practices to implement research into the culture and structure of the wider organisation was omitted in the current study. In future research, qualitative and longitudinal research instruments could address deepen this insight. Additionally, in the current study, only a small amount of variance in the perception of research aims was explained by the direct executive managers' leadership style or the organisational structures created. These results suggest that further research should consider variables beyond leadership style, and the organisational structure, such as the amount to which lecturers feel able to provide new requested skills related to the new aims (Griffioen, De Jong, & Jak, 2013; Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijssel, 2011), and also identity career-related influences to their perceptions (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012), since the new aims provide new opportunities for lecturers' careers. Furthermore, since the current study was limited to intellectual stimulating leadership, other aspects of leadership (Randall & Coakley, 2007; Wallo, Ellstrom, & Kock, 2013), as well as the combination of vision, aims, and implementation in practise (Randall & Coakley, 2007) should be considered.

Recently, HPE management have noticed their limited influence so far, and have set new implementation strategies (e.g. Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, 2015). In the studied educational organisations, the agreed upon aims were, in practise, hardly combined with a substantial institutional vision or elaborate strategies for implementation. This made the aims in practise so far often of a rather instrumental character, which can also be a possible base for resistance within the organisation. The new strategic approaches seem to be more directed towards the internal organisations, which provide new perspectives on organisational change, and hence for higher education research. And since the institutions for Higher Professional

Education can be considered a new object of study in this field, hopefully the current study provides a foundation to build on by providing a model for the interaction between the direct executive managers' leadership style, organisational structures as collaboration and decision-making processes, and lecturers' perceptions on organisational aims.

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Table 1: M and SD of observed variables, factor loadings and residual variances of the measurement model

	Descriptives		First order factor loadings	
	M	SD	unst	stnd
First order common factors (Likert-4: 1=fully disagree – 4=fully agree)				
<i>Research at hogescholen should...</i>				
	External Aims	3.2	0.6	
Enlarge external orientation of the institution	3.2	0.8	.92	.70
Help companies and public organizations innovate	3.2	0.8	.81	.59
Improve position of institution in society	3.0	0.9	1	.68
Solve practical issues of professional practise	3.5	0.7	.56	.48
	Theoretical Aims	3.2	0.6	
Create new knowledge	3.3	0.7	1	.87
Develop new theories	2.9	0.9	.80	.57
Deliver good researchers from UAS	2.9	0.9	.59	.43
Bring new knowledge to education	3.4	0.7	.86	.82
	Educational Aims	3.5	0.6	
Improve the quality of education	3.6	0.6	.76	.71
Improve the level of the teaching staff	3.3	0.7	1	.82
	Intellectually Stimulating Leadership	2.8	0.8	
<i>My direct executive manager...</i>				
Creates enough possibilities for the personal development of employees	3.0	0.8	.81	.77
Encourages employees to try new things of their interest	2.9	0.9	.94	.85
Stimulates working with new methods	2.7	0.9	.97	.87
Encourages searching and discussing new relevant information and ideas	2.7	0.9	1	.87
Helps employees to reflect on their new experiences	2.6	0.9	.94	.83
Takes an interest in problems of employees during innovations	2.7	0.9	.88	.77
	Participation in Collaboration	2.8	0.5	
My direct colleagues talk to me about developments in our field	2.9	0.8	.97	.69
My direct colleagues give me feedback on my way of working	2.6	0.7	.99	.72
My direct colleagues give me support in taking new initiatives	2.9	0.7	.91	.72
My direct colleagues tell me about the problems they face in their work and how they solve them	2.9	0.7	.93	.71
My direct colleagues share their learning experiences of training	2.5	0.8	1	.70
My direct colleagues allow me to learn from them	3.1	0.7	.90	.73
At our institution intervision takes place to learn from one another	2.4	0.9	.92	.56
Working with colleagues is a real need for me	3.1	0.7	.76	.57
I have a solid picture of the specific skills of my direct colleagues	3.0	0.7	.68	.52
	Participation in Decision Making	2.8	0.6	
Employees decide among themselves who can do which tasks best	2.4	0.8	.75	.61
These is mutual decision making as far as changes in teaching practises	3.1	0.8	.93	.76
There is enough room for lecturers to adjust decisions to their own teaching situation	2.8	0.7	.71	.68
Lecturers are able to influence the content of separate education modules	3.1	0.7	.65	.64
Lecturers co-decide on new didactic methods during lessons	3.0	0.8	.79	.71
Lecturers decide together how the educational program of different grades are tuned	2.9	0.8	.94	.80

At our educational program we co-decide on educational aims 2.7 0.8 1 .81

Table 2: Effects between common factors and their residual variances

				Variances	
		B	β	<i>unst</i>	<i>stand</i>
Direct Effects					
Intellectually Stimulating Leadership →				.62	1
	External Aims	.08	.11		
	Collaboration	.30	.44		
	Decision making	.31	.52		
Decision making →				.29	.62
	External Aims	.12	.14		
	Theoretical aims	.15	.16		
	Educational aims	.09	.11		
Collaboration →				.22	.81
	Decision Making	.49	.38		
External Aims ↔ Theoretical Aims		.19	.50		
Theoretical Aims ↔ Educational Aims		.22	.58		
Educational Aims ↔ External Aims		.17	.50		
Indirect Effects					
Intellectually Stimulating Leadership →					
	Decision making → External Aims	.04	.05		
	Decision making → Theoretical aims	.05	.06		
	Decision making → Educational aims	.03	.04		
	Collaboration → Decision Making	.14	.17		
	Collaboration → Decision Making → External Aims	.02	.02		
	Collaboration → Decision Making → Theoretical Aims	.02	.03		
	Collaboration → Decision Making → Educational Aims	.01	.02		
Collaboration →					
	Decision Making → External Aims	.06	.05		
	Decision Making → Theoretical Aims	.07	.06		
	Decision Making → Educational Aims	.04	.04		
Total Effects					
Intellectually Stimulating Leadership →					
	External aims	.14	.18		
	Theoretical aims	.07	.08		
	Educational aims	.04	.06		
	Collaboration	.30	.44		
	Decision making	.45	.69		
External aims				.33	.95
Theoretical aims				.41	.97
Educational aims				.33	.99

All direct and indirect effects are significant at $\alpha=.01$

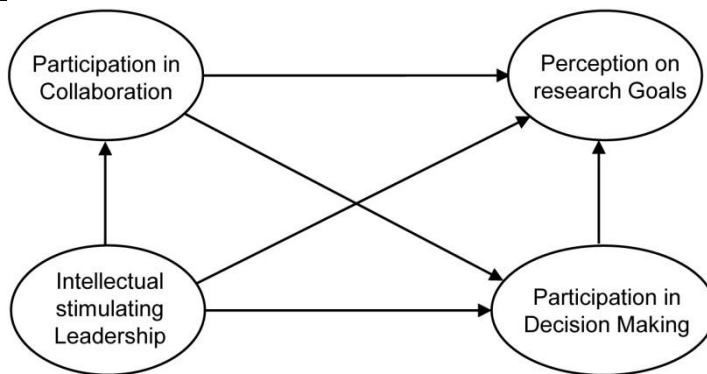


Figure 1: Hypothesised Model on the Influence of Direct Executive Managers on Lecturers' Perceptions.

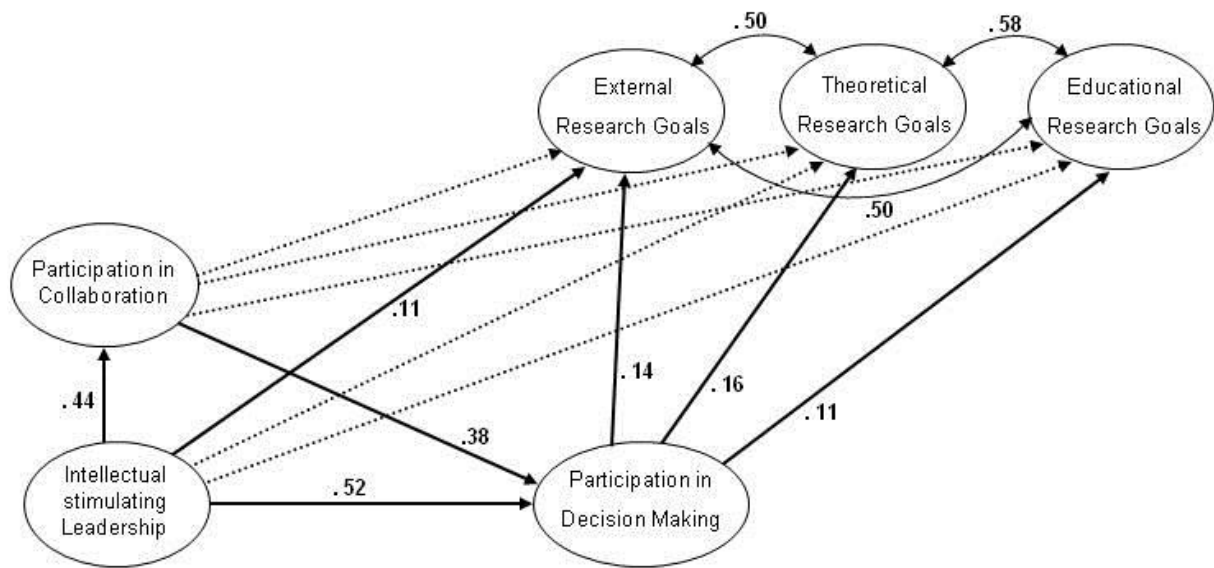


Figure 2: The start model 1 (all arrows) and the final model 6 (without dotted arrows). All standardized effects. All direct effects, indirect effects and covariances significant at CI=98%.