The Pièce de Résistance of Leadership Networks
– A study of network member attitudes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to clarify and document the member perspective of leadership networks in terms of how members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks can be explained. This purpose was fulfilled by asking and answering the questions of how member attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks can be explained. The study was conducted via a pre-research study of one network organization as well as interviews with two other network organizations. In total, the study investigated three network organizations, including 19 respondents, 13 for the survey and six for the interviews. It was concluded in both the pre-research as well as the main research, that expectations from the members’ perspective had a tendency toward organizational outcomes in the pre-consumption phase, and that the expectations on the network were mainly focused on individual outcomes in the post-consumption phase. The study also demonstrates that there are factors outside of the study’s analytical framework, such as the network position, the ego network structure and the whole network structure, that affect the network outcomes, and thus potentially the explanation for the members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks.

Keywords
Pre-consumption expectation; experience; post-consumption expectation; attitude; network outcome; network position; ego network structure; whole network structure; organizational outcome; individual outcome.
Foreword

Before we begin, we would like to give a special thanks to Leon Caesarius, Ulrika Thorin and Sara Elingfors who has constantly challenged, critiqued and supported us in the process of this study, without fail. Additionally, we thank the people at EGN and Kompetensgruppen, and the four members from BNI who helped us fulfill the intended purpose of this study. We also thank Lars-Göran Ottosson, Gunilla Ottosson Troedsson, Karin Bengtsson, Alexander Nilsson, Susanne Engman Albertsson, Peter Albertsson, Felicia Albertsson Engman and Joakim Eriksson for giving us inspiration and motivation. Lastly, we thank Alexander Ottosson for his patience and brilliance.

To all of you, we say this – stay great, stay humble.

Yours truly,

_________________________
Fabian Ottosson

Uppsala university 2018-06-01

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Linus Albertsson Engman

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Firms face a more dynamic and complex organizational environment than ever before (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Consequently, the demand for, and pressure on, agile leaders who can adapt their firms accordingly has never been higher (ibid). Hereinafter, leaders are defined as, and not limited to the position of a manager, people with influence to affect change in their firms. The pressure is especially high since 71 percent of firms feel that their leaders are not equipped to deal with the future and only 19 percent of firms claim they are good at developing leaders internally (Ruhmann, 2017). Effective leaders who employ real change with great results have become a rare commodity and every firm wants it, searches for it and, at high costs, aspire to it (ibid). At the same time, the support channels and ways to improve for leaders are numerous – management consultants, leadership speakers, leadership coaches, leadership networks, etc. (Fallon, 2017).

Among those support channels, leadership networks, also called knowledge networks (Teigland, 2003) or peer leadership networks (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010), with the purpose of challenging leaders to develop themselves and their firms, is important for an aspiring leader (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Bearing this in mind, it is not peculiar that there has been a boom in leadership networks (Fredricks, 2003). In Sweden, some examples of these kinds of networks are EGN, Styrelseakademien, BNI, Ledarna, Företagarna, Vision, Close, SRAT, Sveriges Ingenjörer, Chef.se, Kompetensgruppen, RFOP, KFS, and Arbetsterapeuterna. Hereinafter, these networks that are coordinated knowledge-based networks for leaders, will be referred to as "leadership networks". Leadership networks arrange in-person meetings with the members for a given amount of times every year. In these meetings, the members, for instance, discuss problems they face in their firms, ideas they have, concepts they want to try, to get recommendations in practical matters and make business deals (BNI, 2018; Företagarna, 2018; EGN, 2018).

Along with the rise in leadership networks, and the popularization of other kinds of professional networks, there has also been a rapid rise of network studies in the field of management (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Moreover, the increase in leadership networks is particularly easy to comprehend since research (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010; Hickson, Stacks, & Padgett-Greely, 1998; Barge, 1994; Kaplan, 1984; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2006; Ryan, M, & Deci, 2000) have shown a
correlation between leaders’ participation in such networks and the positive effects on individual outcomes such as pay raises, job promotions, personal power, reputation, influence, and knowledge exchange. Studies have also shown that social capital that leaders gain from participating in networks has noteworthy individual outcomes such as power (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994), team performance (Hansen, 1999; Tsai, 2001), mobility (Boxman, De Graaf, & Flap, 1991; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Seidel, Polzer, & Stewart, 2000) and creativity (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003).

Considering this, it is obvious that the effects of networks in terms of individual outcomes have been widely studied. Research into the effects of networks in terms of organizational outcomes is not as common (Moran, 2005). However, recent studies have illustrated that the more diverse networks the leaders have, the more likely they are to increase their firm's value (Fang, Francis, & Hasan, 2018). Additionally, if leaders are well connected through large networks their firms are more probable to get cheap financing (Engelberg, Pengije, & Parsons, 2012), and to have better overall performance (Larcker, So, & Wang, 2013). Some research also shows that leaders' external and informal networking escapades promote creativity and innovation in their firms (Granovetter, 1983). Furthermore, in practice, the leadership networks maintain that one of their main purposes is to help firms grow and reach their goals (BNI, 2018; Styrelseakademin, 2018; EGN, 2018; Kompetensgruppen, 2018). The overall outcomes from the networks, whether it be individual or organizational outcomes, could be defined as network outcomes (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012).

Since the organizational outcomes are communicated from the leadership networks to their members, it could be assumed that the members have developed expectations and ensuing attitudes that are in line with those stated purposes. Especially since research indicates that an individual's attitude and behavior is chiefly affected and stipulated by his or her expectations (Bandura, 1986; Compeau & Higgins, 1995). In leadership networks, performance expectancy (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) becomes especially pertinent regarding a member’s attitude. Performance expectancy is best defined as the extent to which an individual think that participating in a given activity, like a leadership network, will contribute to his or her professional job performance (Shih-Wei, Hui-Tzu, Yu-Chieh, & Chun-Tung, 2009). There are many expectation factors, such as perceived value, extrinsic motivation, salary raise, career mobility, which are imperative to an individual’s attitude and behavior. Amid these factors, performance expectancy demands the most impact.
and is vital for measuring attitudes, regardless of the context is mandatory or voluntary (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). This is relevant to note since the participation in leadership networks can be both voluntary and mandatory depending on the member.

Even if the expectation is one essential aspect, there is complementary research (Butler, 2001; Oliver, 1980; Bhattacherjee, 2001) which suggests that the experience and ongoing participation, of the network meetings, in this case, is to be accounted for when examining the attitudes of network members. For services, like leadership networks, wherein content vary and change over time, it is important to note that the experience affects the pre-consumption expectations, thus creating post-consumption expectations (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Bhattacherjee & Premkumar, 2004). The post-consumption expectations, in turn, denotes a member’s aggregate of beliefs that are of importance to said member’s attitude toward a social network (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003; Ma & Agarwal, 2007), i.e. the leadership network. Moreover, the attitude is also, to some degree, determined by the contrast between the user’s expectation and the actual experience of the service or product, i.e. the leadership network (Veale & Quester, 2009).

1.2 Problem Statement

The majority of studies, e.g. Burt (2004), Perry-Smith & Shalley (2003) and Seibert, Kraimer & Liden (2001), in the area of networks, focus on individual outcomes. Nevertheless, there are some studies, e.g. Fang, Francis & Hasan (2018) and Shipilov, Galunic & Clement (2018), which have shown that the effects of networks could have impacts on organizational outcomes. In practice, leadership networks, e.g. BNI (2018), EGN (2018) and Kompetensgruppen (2018), maintain that their core business is centered around organizational outcomes. The component in this spectrum of perspectives on leadership networks is, however, the perspective of the member – their attitudes toward the leadership networks. The members' expectations and experiences, which research illustrates, e.g. Veale & Quester (2009), Ma & Agarwal (2007) and Bhattacherjee & Premkumar (2004), are crucial in explaining their attitudes. These expectations and experiences are, however, undocumented and unclear. This entails the problem that the study investigates further. Note that the content of the attitude itself is not covered in this study, it is rather the basis and underlying reasons for the attitude that is examined in order to investigate the problem.
1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this study is to clarify and document the member perspective of leadership networks in terms of how members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks can be explained.

1.4 Research Question
How can members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks be explained?

1.5 Theoretical and Practical Relevance

1.5.1 Theoretical relevance.
Some researchers’ (Brown & Duguid, 2000; Davenport & Prusak, 1998) train of thought is that knowledge creation, for instance in a leadership network, is superior to any social process, such as the phenomena of networking. That might be the case, but even if it is not, this study will help to better understand what the members value the highest in, and most expect from, networks. Consequently, this study is theoretically relevant in the sense that it will give insight into the perspective of the members of networks. In addition, this study will, as Hoppe & Reinelt (2010) agrees with, help future research to explain the evolution and functionality of networks in different contexts. This is simply because the members produce the demand, and if the members are understood better, the predictions about the things that the members affect in the networks become more evident. It could be everything from function and structure to content and context.

1.5.2 Practical relevance.
Leaders already see the individual value in participating in leadership networks (Khan, 2018). However, they do not seem to do it for the sake of their firms directly (ibid). Comparatively, the leadership networks convey that they do, indeed, impact change and growth in the leaders’ firms (BNI, 2018; EGN, 2018; Kompetensgruppen, 2018). This might seem contradictory and ambiguous. The practical relevance of this study is that it will elucidate this ambiguity. This is because the study will assist all actors involved in leadership networks – the network organizations, the members, and the members’ respective firms, with getting insights into the basis of the attitudes toward leadership networks. This is relevant since it can potentially enable an increase in member retention as the network organizations and the member’s respective firm
all get a better sense of the members’ purpose. Based on this, they can minimize the gap between expectation and experience, and thus retain and attract more members.

1.6 Disposition

The disposition of the study is as follows: literature review, method, empirical findings, analysis, discussion, and closing remarks. In the literature review section, the relevant research for the study is presented— a specific theory is not utilized. Additionally, the literature review section illustrates the analytical framework and the critique of the literature. In the method section, the motives for the choices of the study's design, participants, materials, and procedure is demonstrated. In addition, the operationalization and the critique of the method is described. In the empirical findings section, the findings from the pre-research, the interviews, and other noteworthy discoveries are presented. In the analysis section, the themes and tendencies in the results is connected with the presented literature in the literature review based on the analytical framework. In the discussion section, an elaboration on potential variables, outside of the analytical framework, that could affect the analyzed themes and tendencies, is elucidated— previous research on these potential variables is presented in the literature review section. Finally, some closing remarks are presented along with the study’s conclusions, theoretical contributions, practical implications, critique of the study, and suggestions for future research.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The literature review is eclectic in its approach. The reason for the eclecticism is to be able to grasp the full complexity (Hofmokl, 2009) of the problem statement, and thus fulfill the intended purpose of the study. The most significant research areas worthy of note for this study, as earlier implied in the problem statement, are network outcomes – the network position, the ego network structure, the whole network structure, individual outcomes and organizational outcomes, and member attitudes – pre-consumption expectation, experience, and post-consumption expectation. In this literature review, the existing and relevant research in these two areas will be systematically presented.

2.2 Network Outcomes

There is a lot of research on how social relationships, and the networks they collectively comprise, contribute to knowledge creation, diffusion, absorption, and use (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012). These are, of course, important outcomes of leadership networks, although they can be defined both as individual and organizational outcomes depending on the purpose of the knowledge creation and the subsequent use of it (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012; Teigland, 2003; Degenne & Forsé, 1999). As is the case with many network outcomes. This is an effect of the fact that research on network outcomes are multi-leveled and studied in many different fields, such as psychology, sociology, economics, organizational behavior, and management (ibid). This review will, therefore, in illustration of some outcomes, include, explain and elaborate on those outcomes in both sections, i.e. organizational outcomes and individual outcomes. What is more, the research is split between intraorganizational and interorganizational networks (ibid). This study is focused on interorganizational networks, e.g. leadership networks, and this review will, therefore, center around that research. Additionally, the network outcomes are affected by three aspects, that are noteworthy to review. These are the network position, the ego network structure, and the whole network structure (ibid).

2.2.1 The network position.

There is research (Davis & Greve, 1997; Kraatz, 1998; Still & Strang, 2009) suggesting that the position that an individual has in a leadership network increases the probability of adopting new knowledge from the network. The position is based on the social proximity between participating members in terms of intensity and number of encounters (Phelps, Heidl, &
Additionally, the network position of one member can have a profound influence on the decisions of other members regarding network outcomes such as their potential adoption, creation, and use of knowledge (Davis & Greve, 1997). This has to do with the aspect of centrality. The higher degree of centrality of the network position, the higher social status will be associated with that individual (Podolny, 1993). That higher social status, in turn, will most likely result in a perception from other members that this member’s knowledge has higher quality and they will think he or she is more well informed (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

### 2.2.2 The ego network structure.

The ego network structure concerns the way in which each member's respective networks, besides the network in question, is constructed (Arnaboldi, Conti, La gala, & Passarella, 2016). There are two contradictory views on how this construction affects the network outcomes (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012). The first view depends on research that illustrates that members with ego networks that are far apart and not integrated to a large extent are more likely to have enhanced network outcomes (Baum, Calabrese, & Silverman, 2000; McEvily & Zaheer, 1999). The other view is contingent on studies that show the opposite – high integration of each member’s ego networks will result in better network outcomes (Ahuja, 2000; Schilling & Phelps, 2007). The latter view is supported by research that exemplifies that close ego networks result in higher diversity in content discussed in the network (Lawrence, Hardy, & Phillips, 2002), and transfer of implicit knowledge that is beneficial for the network outcomes (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000).

### 2.2.3 The whole network structure.

There is not a redundancy of research examining the effects of the whole network structure on the network outcomes (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012). There is, nonetheless, some research. For instance, one study (Lazer & Friedman, 2007) has demonstrated that a whole network structure that increases the speed and extent of information diffusion will have a lower degree of diversity with regard to discussed content in their network meetings. This typically leads to worse network outcomes (ibid). Furthermore, whole network structures that are excessively clustered reduces the likelihood of innovative network outcomes since the clustering can result in “dysfunctional levels of social cohesion” and reduce the diversity of information (Uzzi & Spiro, 2005).
2.2.4 Individual outcomes.

Individual outcomes from participating in a leadership network can most aptly be described as those outcomes that come from activities or discussions that are not explicitly related to the job, knowledge or problem at hand (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). This includes outcomes such as pay raises, job promotions, reputation and influence (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010; Hickson, Stacks, & Padgett-Greely, 1998; Barge, 1994; Kaplan, 1984). Moreover, these outcomes are enhanced by the social capital, potentially gained from participating in the leadership network (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010). It could be said that it works like an iterative enlargement of a circle since increased social capital will result in more individual outcomes such as power (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994), increased personal performance (Hansen, 1999; Tsai, 2001), the ability to change career path easily (Boxman, De Graaf, & Flap, 1991; Burt, 1997; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Seidel, Polzer, & Stewart, 2000), and even being able to produce more creative ideas (Burt, 2004; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). There is even research that shows that leaders that are active in participating in leadership networks have a better ability to interpret situations and make effective and productive decisions that those specific situations call for (Hosking & Morley, 1988). The earlier mentioned network position that affects network outcomes, affect individual outcomes, for instance, in terms of giving those with a higher degree of centrality the ability to control and regulate information and resource flows and with that gain more personal power (Barge, 1994).

2.2.5 Organizational outcomes.

Organizational outcomes are, in contrast to individual ones, the ones that are, indeed, explicitly related to, or a direct result of, the job, knowledge or problem at hand (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Even though research into organizational outcomes are not as common as individual ones (Moran, 2005), there are still a few that are worth mentioning. These are, for example, the correlation between participation in leadership networks and increased firm value (Fang, Francis, & Hasan, 2018), better financing alternatives (Engelberg, Pengije, & Parsons, 2012), increased innovation and creativity in the firms of the network members (Granovetter, 1983), leadership development (Brungardt, 1995), and even overall performance through more business development (Larcker, So, & Wang, 2013). The primary organizational outcome, nevertheless, that some of the other organizational and individual outcomes may well stem from, is the knowledge, trend and experience exchange that occur in the network meetings (Gilsing & Nooteboom, 2005). It is significant to note that this outcome can, surely, be defined as organizational since it is explicitly related to, and a direct result of, the job, knowledge or
problem at hand in these leadership networks, as the aforementioned definition stipulates. The exchange of knowledge, trends, and experience is also an especially important organizational outcome since absorption of new knowledge, trends and experience have been proved to lead to organizational growth and competitive advantages for the firm of the member (Miller & Shamsie, 1996). It is important to emphasize on that note that this is particularly the case for firms that compete in uncertain environments (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

### 2.3 Member Attitudes

The definition of attitudes utilized in this study is “the general evaluation people hold in regard to themselves, other people, objects, and issues” (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The attitude of people in general and members in particular in the context of the research at hand affects the intentions (Kolekofski & Heminger, 2003) and therefore the behavior (Ajzen, 1991) of the members of the leadership networks. According to Bandura (1986) as well as Compeau & Higgins (1995), the expectation stipulates the attitudes, which creates room for further reasoning regarding the initial expectation from the members, and the following intentions towards the leadership network. The attitude is, therefore, a crucial aspect in understanding the intentions of why the members join and stay in the leadership networks, as well as their behavior.

#### 2.3.1 Pre-consumption expectation.

The pre-consumption expectation is used to understand consumer expectations toward a service or a product (Bhattacherjee, 2001). The resulting confirmation or disconfirmation of the usage will result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which will affect a potential repurchase of the service or product (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Andersson & Sullivan, 1993; Oliver, 1980). The pre-consumption expectation takes into consideration the fact that the experience after the pre-consumption phase of a product or a service changes our expectation (Bhattacherjee, 2001). This creates a shift in the view of the expectation from a constant to a variable, constantly affected by the experience of the service or product (ibid).

#### 2.3.2 Post-consumption expectation.

The post-consumption phase is shaped by the experience of the product or service that the consumer has. There have been several approaches to conceptualizing the post-consumption phase comparison to the pre-consumption phase, including “equitable performance” derived from equity theory (Adams, 1963), “expected product performance”, originating from
expectancy theory (Tolman, 1932), “ideal product performance”, from the ideal point models of consumer preference and choice (Holbrook, 1984), the “subtractive disconfirmation” approach (LaTour & Peat, 1979), as well as “subjective disconfirmation” by Churchill & Supreant (1982) and Oliver (1980). These approaches to the post-consumption phase all have a comparison to a set of standards in common. This is that they create explanatory means for consumer satisfaction and repurchase of the services or products.

The last two approaches mentioned, namely subtractive disconfirmation and subjective disconfirmation, offer insights into the immediate comparison of the perceived performance as well as the processing comparison of the perceived performance respectively. Oliver (1980) suggests that the subjective disconfirmation offers more explanatory grounds than subtractive disconfirmation, in relation to the richness and deepness that consumer satisfaction in product or service usage means. Especially since consumers perceived performance of products and services is an ongoing process during the timeframe of the consumption (ibid). The processing comparison is what is used in this study to understand the post-consumption expectations.
2.4 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of the study is illustrated in exhibit 1. The emphasis and purpose of the study, as exhibit 1 demonstrates by the framed part, is to examine the explanation for the members’ attitudes. The emphasis is not on what the actual attitudes are. That is why the member’s attitude is transparent in exhibit 1. Moreover, the framework is derived from the concepts in the literature review. The analytical framework can, therefore, be understood in the following way: The aggregate of the pre- and post-consumption expectations constitute the member’s attitude. The pre- and post-consumption expectations, in turn, is described in terms of network outcomes – either mainly individual outcomes or mainly organizational outcomes. In other words, the pre- and post-consumption expectations are either that the member expects mainly individual outcomes or mainly organizational outcomes from participating in the network. The post-consumption expectation is created when the member has participated and gotten an experience of the network. Hence, according to exhibit 1, the explanation of the member’s attitude depends on the expected network outcomes pre- and post-consumption. Consequently, by examining the members’ attitudes through this analytical framework, the purpose of the study can be fulfilled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The framed part of emphasis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly individual outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly organizational outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-consumption expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly individual outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly organizational outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member's attitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 1 – A graphic presentation of the study’s analytical framework.
2.5 Critique of Literature

Through the eclectic character of the literature review, the concepts covered have limitations in regard to the relevance and accuracy of the purpose of the study. These limitations are briefly presented in the following two sections with regard to literature about network outcomes and member attitudes.

2.5.1 Network outcomes.

In the study, “network outcomes” is the only factor that accounts for and describes the members’ expectations and thereby attitudes. There are some inherent limitations from this approach since other factors could play a role in what the expectations actually are. For instance, it could be factors such as leisure and enjoyment, that are not accounted for by network outcomes as described in the literature. These are factors that are not implicitly or explicitly related to the job, knowledge or problem at hand as the definitions by Ibarra & Hunter (2007) stipulates. Hence, there is a risk that the study is unable to properly identify the full extent of the content of the expectations. This risk is, however, interpreted as low because of two reasons. Firstly, no one of the respondents described any significant factors that lie outside of the parameters of the factors covered in the literature review. Secondly, the purpose of the study is to examine how members’ attitudes toward leadership networks can be explained in terms of tendencies, not necessarily what the expectations are to their full extent and detail.

2.5.2 Member attitudes.

The way in which the literature of member attitudes is presented in this review, it is limited in the sense that it neglects the processes between attitude and action, as most consumer attitude studies do (Bagozzi, 1993). For instance, these processes are volitions, intention, and choice (ibid). There are two key motives for the neglection. The first motive is that the volition, intention, and choice are not relevant for the purpose of the study since they do not help to explain the members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, the leadership networks. They are merely instruments to describe how the attitudes lead to certain actions, and this study focus on the explanation for the attitudes. The explanation can, though, be helped by what the actions are. For instance, if the member leaves or stays in the network. The second motive is more simplistic than the first one. It is that there is no need to account for the processes between attitude and action since most consumer attitude studies also neglect it as Bagozzi (1993) suggest – it is widely deemed as relatively unnecessary.
3 Method

3.1 Design

The research design is a cross-sectional multiple case study, where the focus is on general findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015, pp. 71-72). Leadership networks can be understood as bounded systems with a common purpose and functioning parts, a definition that is in line with Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 68). The purpose of the multiple case study approach is to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective perceptions of the individual outcomes, organizational outcomes, pre-consumption expectation and post-consumption expectation, from and for the leadership networks in general. To gain a deeper understanding of the subjective perception of the respondents, the design of the study is qualitative (Sofaer, 1999). To make a solid foundation for an easier generalization for theory generation as well as testing (Bryman & Bell, 2015, pp. 71-72), the study investigates three leadership networks wherein network groups are composed dependent on the members’ roles in their respective firm. The research method is triangulated through a survey, shadowing of network meetings as well as interviews. The reason for conducting the triangulation is to enhance the validity of the research findings (Mathison, 1988).

3.2 Participants

The levels of analysis in the research is individual, partly through interviewing network members themselves but also by interviewing a network leader and a network CEO about the network members’ perspective, see exhibit 2 and 3. The focus is on the members’ perspective to create a meaningful analysis about the pre- and post-consumption expectations in regard to the leadership networks. The network leader, as well as the CEO, is interviewed to gain a wider insight of what the members perceive and expect from the networks. The wider insight is reached through storytelling and examples about network members from the CEO and the network leader. Note that the CEO is also responsible for network meetings as well as the network leader. The respondents in the pre-research and the main research are collected through purposive sampling since the study is qualitative in nature, and in order to generate meaning for the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 429). The interviewed members in the main research are anonymous by their own request. No exclusion criteria are utilized in the sampling since no particular exclusion criteria can improve the analytical foundation or the conclusion. An exclusion criterion would only be relevant for the study if we had an analytical foundation.
that was based on certain participant variables, which it is not. Information about the interviews, the respondents, the network they belong to, the date, location, and the procedure (phone interview or in-person interview) is presented in exhibit 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BNI</td>
<td>Anonymous member one</td>
<td>2018-05-14</td>
<td>Phone interview – Nacka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BNI</td>
<td>Anonymous member two</td>
<td>2018-05-14</td>
<td>Phone interview – Nacka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BNI</td>
<td>Anonymous member three</td>
<td>2018-05-14</td>
<td>Phone interview – Nacka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BNI</td>
<td>Anonymous member four</td>
<td>2018-05-15</td>
<td>Phone interview – Uppsala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>EGN</td>
<td>Daniel Stenmark, Network CEO</td>
<td>2018-05-17</td>
<td>In-person interview - Hägersten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EGN</td>
<td>Jonas Friberg, Network leader</td>
<td>2018-05-17</td>
<td>In-Person interview - Solna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 2 – Information about the interviews of the study.

### 3.3 Materials

In the pre-research on the first network organization, a survey is given to the members of the leadership network, consisting of five questions. These five questions include two questions about the respondent’s role and three questions about the respondent’s expectations and experience related to the network. The questions for the semi-structured interviews have the purpose getting answers to what the pre- and post-consumption expectations mainly focus on – individual or organizational outcomes from participating in the network. The focus is indicated by looking at the total number of times in total that the respondents mention expectations that are either related to individual outcomes or organizational outcomes. The questions are structured in line with Kvale's (1996) suggestions to qualitative interviewing. The two different aspects of the questions, individual and organizational outcomes, are related to the theory of pre- and post-consumption expectations as described in the literature review.
3.4 Procedure

The foundation for the further investigation of the multiple case study is based upon a preliminary survey as well as two shadowing occasions of network meetings with two of the network organizations. Since the study is qualitative, the survey in the pre-research is qualitative, which include that open-ended questions are asked. The shadowing and the survey in the pre-research are made to better understand the nature of the work of network organizations as well as understanding expectations in the pre- and post-consumption phase. The network organization where the pre-study is conducted consists of nine separate network groups. The pre-study is conducted on one network meeting consisting of 15 HR-members, where the shadowing of the meeting gives a clear picture of how information and knowledge are shared. There are 13 respondents to the pre-research survey. The answers give insight into recurring wording categories of expectations on leadership networks, which are coded as either individual or organizational outcomes, and color-coded to create a better overview of the general themes and tendencies. This is based on methodology from Bryman & Bell (2015, pp. 587-591).

As mentioned, the wording of the answers to the survey is coded, based on either individual outcomes or organizational outcomes. The coding results in three words for each of these concepts. The organizational outcome coded words are “trends”, “exchange of experience” and “business development”. The individual outcome coded words are “networking”, “inspiration” and “individual competence development”. The coded words are counted in the number of words in total, to give an insight into the tendencies of the concepts for the interviews. The findings are attached in Appendix A. The purpose of the pre-research survey is to create an understanding of what pre- and post-consumption expectations members have with regard to leadership networks. The semi-structured interviews have the purpose of picking up themes and tendencies between the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2015, pp.481), which creates a solid base for the analytical aspects related to the purpose of the study. The foundation for the semi-structured questions for the interviews are described in the operationalization section, see exhibit 3 below.

3.5 Operationalization

The operationalization of the interview questions is presented in exhibit 3. The operationalization is based on the analytical framework, see exhibit 1, with the intention of generating data that can fulfill the purpose of the study – explaining the basis of network
members’ attitudes toward leadership networks. For a further understanding of the explanations behind the questions and the related literature, see exhibit 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Keywords from literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which expectations did you have initially when you decided to join the leadership network? (to network member)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the member’s pre-consumption expectations in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the main utility and value in participating in the network? (to network member)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the member’s experience and the ensuing post-consumption expectations in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Experience; post-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you practically, and concretely, take away from your participation in the network? (to network member)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the member’s experience in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Experience; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you stay in the network? (to network member)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the member’s satisfaction – the discrepancy between the pre-consumption expectation and experience, and the ensuing post-consumption expectation in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; experience; post-consumption expectations; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you still a member or have you left the leadership network? If so, why? (to network member)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the member’s dissatisfaction – the discrepancy between the pre-consumption expectation and experience, and the ensuing post-consumption expectation in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; experience; post-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Intention of the question</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which expectations do you think the members have initially when they decide to join the network? (to network leader &amp; CEO)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the network leader’s and CEO’s perception of the member’s pre-consumption expectations in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that the members' expectations on the network change after they have participated? If so, in what way? (to network leader &amp; CEO)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the network leader’s and CEO’s perception of the member’s post-consumption expectations in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Experience; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think that the members practically, and concretely, takes away from the participation in the network? (to network leader &amp; CEO)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the network leader’s and CEO’s perception of the member’s experience in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Experience; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think makes members want to stay in the network? (to network leader &amp; CEO)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the network leader’s and CEO’s perception of the member’s satisfaction – the discrepancy between the pre-consumption expectation and experience, and the ensuing post-consumption expectation in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; experience; post-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think makes members leave the network? (to network leader &amp; CEO)</td>
<td>The intention of this question is to get answers about the network leader’s and CEO’s perception of the member’s dissatisfaction – the discrepancy between the pre-consumption expectation and experience, and the ensuing post-consumption expectation in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.</td>
<td>Pre-consumption expectation; experience; post-consumption expectation; organizational outcomes; individual outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pre-consumption expectation and experience, and the ensuing post-consumption expectation in terms of organizational and individual outcomes.

Exhibit 3 – Interview questions, explanations for them and the related literature.

3.6 Critique of Method

Based on the choice of method in the study, there are some risks that are inherent, and thus noteworthy to mention. The two major risks are derived from the choice of respondents and the choice of questions in the interviews.

3.6.1 Choice of respondents

The choice of respondents to include a network CEO and a network leader is to gain wide insights into the perception, through storytelling and examples, of the network members’ expectations and experiences. This choice, however, raises a potential risk of bias toward the interest of the network organization they represent. Since the business focus of the network organization is based mainly on promoting organizational outcomes, the answers from the CEO and the network leader risk being biased toward organizational outcomes. This organizational bias is considered in the presentation of the empirical findings.

In addition, the choice of the CEO and the network leader raises the risk cross-level misattribution (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p.76). The cross-level misattribution simply implies that the perspective of the members risk being misunderstood through the lens of the CEO and the network leader since they are secondary sources. This is taken into consideration, and it is why the main focus is on storytelling from the CEO and network leader. The storytelling is not focusing on subjective perceptions from the member, but rather the actions that can be understood as expectations leading to attitudes.

3.6.2 Choice of questions

The choice of the questions in the interviews raises the risk of creating individual outcome biases since the questions are based on individual aspects. The questions are asked this way since the study is qualitative, where underlying reasons for, and attitudes toward, the leadership networks are to be explained. If questions would have included information about what the members thought that their firms expected, it would be an even more leading way of asking the questions, which raises the risk of organizational outcome biases instead. There is, therefore,
no way to avoid the potential risk of individual bias, even though it is taken into consideration in the empirical findings.
4 Empirical Findings

4.1 Pre-research Findings

The findings from the pre-research showed that the total number of times that the respondents mentioned pre-consumption expectations that were individual or organizational was 14 and 23 respectively. In the post-consumption phase, the total number of times the respondents mentioned expectations from the network that was individual or organizational were 11 and 13 respectively. The experience of the network among the 13 members in the pre-research study ranged from zero to six years. The industries the respondents were working in was spread between information technology, industrial services, real estate, the pharmaceutical industry, recruitment and the public sector.

4.2 Main-research Findings

The findings from the main research interviews are presented below. The members are presented briefly in regard to their experience of the network and their current statuses as members of their respective leadership network. The findings related are to the analytical framework are divided into two main sections, pre-consumption expectations, and post-consumption expectations. Within these sections, the expectations are divided into empirical findings that support either organizational outcomes or individual outcomes.

4.2.1 Member background.

4.2.1.1 Member one.

Member one has been a member of the leadership network in two periods, from 2005 to 2006, and from 2008 to 2010. Member one is not a member of the leadership network today.

4.2.1.2 Member two.

Member two was a member of the network for two years, and the founder of the actual local network branch. The member was very active in the network when he was active. He is not a member anymore in the network since it was members of the same network that had conflicting interests with member two.

4.2.1.3 Member three.

Member three has been a member of the network in four different periods of time, in a total of seven to eight years. Member three is not a member of the network anymore.
4.2.1.4 Member four. 
Member has been a member in two periods, one that lasted six years, and last one for seven months. Member four is still a member of the network, but since she started for seven months ago, it was in a new geographical location.

4.2.2 Pre-consumption expectations. 
4.2.2.1 Organizational outcomes. 
Member one said, “my expectations were to be a part of a network that was action-oriented”, where the active principle was important as this would give “results”. Member two reflected upon the same orientation “I entered the network for the givers gain-mentality”, otherwise “the member would get kicked out”. Furthermore, member two saw the network as shallow, but that it had good content, for instance in the one-on-one meetings. Members that had an organizational issue he or she had to deal with, could get help from other members that had experiences from a similar case, according to member two. Member three mentioned that “my only expectation before entering the network was that I would be in meetings that would result in business deals in the end”. Member four had the same expectations as the other three members, mentioning that the leadership network “would result in better results for my firm”.

The CEO of one of the network organizations thought that the most important factor for the members was the content of the network meetings. The network organization where the CEO operates has implemented onboarding meetings in connection with the pre-consumption phase in order to synchronize the pre-consumption expectations of the members to the potential outcomes the network will give the members. The synchronization is mainly based on realizing the specific network organization’s focus on gaining by sharing content as a member. Furthermore, the network leader had the same thoughts seen from his experience as the CEO had, seeing the sharing of content as a necessary tool for success, and that those expectations were widely in line with what the network organization had in focus.

4.2.2.2 Individual outcomes. 
Before entering the different network groups, the interviews showed reflections upon individual aspects of the pre-consumption expectations from one of the network members, member four. According to her, the only expectation she had initially, except making business deals, was to “create relationships” with other network members. Likewise, the network leader saw members that entered the network for various reasons, thus both to get inputs for their respective firm as well as for their individual cause.
4.2.3 Post-consumption expectations.

4.2.3.1 Organizational outcomes.

Related to the post-consumption expectations, member one thought the benefits from the network were to some extent business related, meaning he received benefits in terms of business opportunities for his firm. Member one’s example of this was “the benefit of participating is that it gave some business deals”. Member two saw the network as a shallow type of network when he compared to another type of network he currently participates in, but that he “saw members bringing organizational problems to the table” in the network meetings. Member three said that the expectations from the network had not been changed after consumption of the network service, meaning that she saw the network as purely business opportunity related. Member four thought that the expectations related to the organizational outcomes had been met after using the network, by gaining business deals that originated from the network. The CEO gave concrete examples of challenges that members of his network had overcome by taking part in the network. Examples from this were a leader that wanted to implement a new enterprise resource planning system (ERP-system) and got help from another leader in the same network group. The network leader also emphasized that members that still were in the network had understood the importance of content sharing in relation to an organizational context.

4.2.3.2 Individual outcomes.

Member one saw that he gained relations with others in the network that were not purely business related. He also thought that the benefit of participating in the network was mostly individual, and to a less extent organizational. An example of this was given by member one: “The benefit was mostly mine, but to some extent for my firm”. Member two saw that the participation in the network gave him individual leadership training, as well as presentation skills: “I got individual leadership training”, and “you had to present yourself every week, you presented your message in a short period of time”. As earlier mentioned in regard to member three seeing the leadership network as shallow, he saw that he helped others to gain business opportunities. Member four saw the main reason for still participating in the network as being able to meet new people, mentioning that "it was to create relationships with others”.

The CEO said that a big factor for the members, along with several examples, was that they appreciated the personal connection that the network gave them. Although the focus was to create organizational outcomes for the members’ respective firm in the form of content-driven problems and solutions, the CEO saw that members brought personal aspects to the table in the network groups. One example of this was a member that had shared personal problems with the
CEO and the member's network group. He mentioned, according to the CEO, that “this is what the network is all about, to be able to share this kind of information in the groups”. In the specific case, the network member referred to personal challenges related to his work situation.

The earlier mentioned mixture between organizational and individual outcomes that the network leader saw, was developed further when members had participated in the network. The network leader saw that some members were becoming more active in the network when their intentions leaned towards opportunities for themselves in the form of new positions, career mobility, etc.
5 Analysis

5.1 Pre-research

The findings from the pre-research regarding the pre- and post-consumption expectations showed a tendency towards more individual outcome expectations in the post-consumption phase, regardless of industry or amount of years in the network. At the same time, the theme was that the pre-consumption expectations were predominantly centered around organizational outcomes. The themes and tendencies are interpreted from the tables in Appendix A, wherein the number of times that the members mention individual and organizational outcomes to describe their pre- and post-expectations are presented.

5.2 Interviews

5.2.1 Pre-consumption phase.

The findings in the study showed explicitly and recurrently in the pre-consumption phase that the expectations leaned toward organizational outcomes regarding the leadership networks. The members, as well as the CEO and the network leader, were all indicating the importance of content driven and concrete outcomes that were to be expected from the network. As understood from the perspective of the four members, they all gave indications that they had joined the network for explicit reasons – as Ibarra & Hunter (2007) defines organizational outcomes. Examples from this are member one that said that his expectations were to be part of an action-oriented network that would give results, member two’s positive attitude towards the “givers-gain”-mentality understood as gaining business deals, member three’s only focus on business deals and member four’s business result focus. These reasons were all related to the job, knowledge or problem at hand. The expectation of gaining organizational outcomes in advance of joining the network indicates that what the network organizations communicated as their main focus, which is to help the leaders’ firms with growth and development (EGN, 2018; Kompetensgruppen, 2018; Styrelseakademin, 2018), could have an effect.

Moreover, the CEO gave indications that members had a mindset of sharing content in the pre-consumption phase, where a focus on sharing of content was one of the main aspects of the network that the members took part of. The content itself is understood to be focused on experiences and challenges related to organizational aspects in the members’ respective firms. The network organization made it more probable that the member would have the sharing of organizational outcome content as an expectation, via onboarding meetings that took place
before the members entered their intended network group within the network organization. The pre-consumption expectations were therefore understood to be mainly based upon organizational outcomes in the pre-consumption phase since the network organization focuses on the organizational outcomes. The pre-consumption expectations were therefore understood to be mainly based upon organizational outcomes in the pre-consumption phase. Even though much research shows that there are many individual outcomes to be gained from joining these kinds of leadership networks (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010; Hickson, Stacks, & Padgett-Greely, 1998; Barge, 1994), this study shows that the members did not have the individual outcomes as the main expectation before participating.

5.2.2 Post-consumption phase.

After experiencing the networks, the tendency to expect organizational outcomes from the network meetings became less pertinent, and expectations about what to be gained in the aspect of individual outcomes became more pertinent. There were tendencies from the members, mentioning implicit outcomes such as gaining “relationships with others”, “individual benefits”, “individual leadership training”, and “discussions about the individuals future”. The examples of the individual outcomes align with what Oliver (1980) argues. This is also in accordance with Bhattacherjee (2001) who says that the post-consumption expectation is dependent upon the experience of the product or service. The experience for the members is understood to have shaped the expectation to become more focused upon the individual outcomes from the networks.

The expectation that was mediated by the experience, did give different results in the confirmation of the expectation that the members felt that they got. The confirmation was understood to differentiate between the members that were still participating in the networks, in relation to those that were not. Network member four had an aligned post-consumption expectation with regards to the focus of the network organization in comparison to the other three members. Examples from this were shown when network member four gave insights of her pre-consumption expectations being mixed between individual outcomes as well as organizational outcomes; "I had expectations to create personal relationships and to make business deals" when talking about why she entered the network.
6 Discussion

6.1 Overview

It is pertinent to discuss some potential variables outside of the analytical framework of the study that additionally could affect the members’ attitudes. As mentioned in the literature review, the network outcomes are affected by the network position, the ego network structure and the whole network structure. Since the expectations, both pre- and post-consumption, are based on network outcomes, it is not farfetched to reason that the network position, the ego network structure and the whole network structure indirectly affect the expectations. What is more, the expectations lead to a certain attitude. Bearing that in mind, it can be deduced that these three variables could play a vital role in how member attitudes can be explained. The instances where this deduction can be the case is discussed below.

6.2 The Network Position

The position members have in the network could affect the experience they have. If they are members with a high degree of centrality (Podolny, 1993), as a founder of the network like member two was most likely has or a member who has participated many more times than another (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012), they will experience the network in a certain manner. This manor could differ from the way in which another member with a lower degree of centrality would experience the network. As previously ascertained in line with Bhattacherjee (2001), the post-consumption expectations are a result of the experience. If the experience is vastly different between members as a consequence of their network position, it could result in dissimilar post-consumption expectations. This could, in turn, lead to attitudes that are unlike between members in the same network. Bearing this in mind, it is notable that the network position of a member of the leadership network could be a variable that affects the member attitudes.

6.3 The Ego Network Structure

The member’s ego network structure could also have effects on the way in which members experience the network and therefore could construct different expectations on the network outcomes. It does, nevertheless, depend on which of the two views (Phelps, Heidl, & Wadhwa, 2012) on ego network structure that is chosen to see the issue from. If the first view is assumed (Baum, Calabrese, & Silverman, 2000; McEvily & Zaheer, 1999), a member with an ego
network structure that is vastly unrelated to the network in question will get more benefit in terms of network outcomes. The second view (Ahuja, 2000; Schilling & Phelps, 2007) would entail that the more integrated the member’s ego network structure is with the network at hand, the better the network outcomes will be. For instance, member two is probably more likely to have a highly integrated ego network structure since he had to use his previous networks to lay the foundation for the new network. As opposed to member four who just moved to the geographic location in which the network is active. Hence, it can be assumed that she has no strong connections between her ego network structure and the network in question. This could mean that their expectations are in a certain way as a result of the integration of their ego network structures. To be explicit, the post-consumption expectations, after experience and participation – a realization of actual network outcomes, could become either lower and less according to the first view or higher and more according to the second view.

6.4 The Whole Network Structure

A network with a whole network structure that enhances the speed of information diffusion could get negative consequences on the network outcomes (Lazer & Friedman, 2007). Such a network would have members with different expectations, and consequently different attitudes, in comparison with members in a network with a whole network structure that focuses more on content. This seems to be the circumstance to some extent in the case of the four members’ network in relation to the network of the network leader and network CEO. The network of the four members seems to have a structure that encourages speed and fast exchange – you only get a limited time to present yourself at the beginning of the network meetings and all members emphasize the importance of “givers gain” or you get kicked out of the network. The network of the CEO and the network leader seems to have a structure that is less focused on speed – both the network leader and the network CEO emphasizes the importance of content. What is more, the former network seems to be more bounded to a geographic location and could thus be understood to be more clustered. A higher degree of cluster can lead to less innovation network outcomes and diversified content (Uzzi & Spiro, 2005). Therefore, the four members’ experiences, and thus post-consumption expectations and attitudes, could be affected. The whole network structure can in these aspects play a role in the member’s experience, expectations and attitude.
7 Closing remarks

7.1 Conclusions

The pièce de résistance of something can be defined as the most important component of something. The realization of this study is that the pièce de résistance of leadership networks is that no one but the members are in the room when it happens – when knowledge is given and gained, when social connections are made, when deals are struck, when inspiration is had, when a career is about to change course, when a business development of crucial importance takes flight, etc. Consequently, the members, and their perspective, are the most important component of leadership networks. Their perspective was, as the problem statement suggest, unclear and undocumented. The purpose was therefore to clarify and document their perspective by asking and answering the question of how members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks can be explained. The purpose is answered given the results of this study by asserting the following conclusions:

• The members that are in the room when it happens have profound underlying reasons for why they participate in leadership networks. These reasons have several explanatory variables that affect the network outcomes that the members expect, such as the network position, the ego network structure, and the whole network structure.
• The pre- and post-consumption expectations, and how they change over time, affect the member’s attitude.
• Additionally, it can be concluded that the pre-consumption expectations are mainly focused on organizational outcomes, whereas the post-consumption expectations tend to be mainly focused on individual outcomes. This illustrates that a shift in member attitude, whatever which way, most likely will occur if the initial expectations are not properly aligned with the leadership network’s business focus.
• Consequently, members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks could be explained as a function of their pre- and post-consumption expectations and the content of those expectations – be it mainly individual or organizational outcomes.
7.2 Theoretical contributions

The theoretical contribution of this study is chiefly that it has provided the network field of research with further explanations and understandings with regard to the member perspective. It has illustrated that there are tendencies that network outcome variables, such as the network position, the ego network structure, and the whole network structure, affect the way in which member attitudes are formed. The study has also contributed theoretically by documenting and clarifying network members’ expectations and experiences, which was previously, as aforementioned, undocumented and unclear. It can, with this study, be added to the area of research at hand that there is a tendency toward a shift from expectations on organizational outcomes to individual outcomes after network members have experienced the network. Additionally, this study has illustrated that combing and integrating the field of consumer behavior and networking could be a viable option for investigating networks.

7.3 Practical implications

This study has given insights into the practical implications of using services in social contexts, where the content that is shared through the consumers shapes the expectation for further usage of the service. The practical outcome from the study indicates that firms that give their leaders the opportunity to participate in the kinds of networks that were studied, could expect their employees to be more interconnected to employees of other firms. This practical implication has been pertinent in the research, where the respondents recurrently have mentioned the relational aspect as one of the main effects they have received from the network, and that the expectations on the network have shifted towards this individual outcome. The respective firms that the leaders represent could, based on the shift to expectations on individual outcomes, likely assume that their firms could be affected. For instance, in a manner that earlier research has proved to be some of the individual outcomes from network participation. This includes job promotions, pay raises, increased personal performance in the tasks the member has in the firm and increased proficiency to think creatively and utilize that in firm activities.

7.4 Critique of the study

The most notable critique of the study is that the explanation for member attitudes is partly based on what members say that they remember about their initial expectations – the pre-consumption expectations. There are three main issues with that. The first issue is that they can remember wrongly, especially in case of some of the members who have participated for many
years. The second issue, which is a consequence of the first issue, is that their pre-consumption expectations can be skewed by their experience of the network which would make it a post-consumption expectation, all the while it will be noted in the study as a pre-consumption expectation. The third issue is that the members may want to change their presentation of what they expect if they were wildly mistaken about what they expected that they would gain from the network initially. These three issues and the critique as a whole would be eliminated if the study would have been longitudinal. It would then be possible to ask potential members that had not yet had an experience of the network about their pre-consumption expectations, and then ask them again later after they had participated in a couple of network meetings about their post-consumption expectation. This would increase the likelihood of getting an accurate explanation of the members’ attitudes toward, and underlying reasons for participating in, leadership networks.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

There are four research directions that would be relevant to pursue as a result of this study’s conclusions, contributions, and critique.

Firstly, even though this study contains insights on member attitudes and how they can be explained, it does not explore what the attitudes actually are. Future research could investigate what member and non-member, attitudes to leadership networks are over time and how that can relate to the basis and explanations from this study. Such a study would benefit from being quantitative since it would entail looking at as many attitude statements as possible in order to make it significant. It would also benefit from being constructed longitudinally to get an even more accurate explanation of member attitudes, as the critique of this study suggest could be the case when studying this phenomenon longitudinally.

Secondly, based on the practical implications that the firms could expect from their leaders participating in leadership networks, it is suggested that future research also looks upon the attitudes from the perspective of the firms. Since the trend is evident of the boom in leadership networks, does this trend get discouraged or encouraged, when firms are aware of the apparent effects that are both negative and positive from their perspective?

Thirdly, it would be of interest to add to the second research direction by furthering the research on organizational outcomes – the trade-off for firms would become easier to estimate. Moreover, as has been stated in this study in accordance with Hoppe & Reinelt (2010), there
exists an abundance of research on individual outcomes in relation to organizational outcomes. For this reason alone, it would be a worthwhile research direction to pursue. Research could use this not only for the firm perspective but also from the member perspective as it would help to describe the expectations presented in this study with more elements.

*Lastly,* with regard to the theoretical contribution, this study demonstrated that there is a tendency toward a shift in expectations from organizational to individual outcomes after the member’s experience. Future research could look for the answer to why that might be the case – why do members tend to be more focused on themselves, their utility and individual outcomes than they are initially?
Bibliography


Appendix A

Survey from pre-research

EN ÅKÄTUNDERSÖKNING OM NÄTVERKANDE

Namn: 
Nummer: 
E-mail: 

OBS! Du och Kompetensgruppen kommer att vara helt anonyma i undersökningen. Ett konto med pass och passord kommer hos den använda (fyll i här kompletterande frågor i efterhand.

1. Hur länge har du varit med i ett nätverk som du, eller ditt företag, har betalt för (exempelvis Kompetensgruppen)?

2. Vilken bransch är du verksam i?

3. Vilka huvudsakliga förväntningar har du på nätverk som du, eller ditt företag, betalar för att vara med i (exempelvis Kompetensgruppen)?

4. Vilka är dina främsta anledningar till att delta i nätverk som du, eller ditt företag, betalar för att vara med i (exempelvis Kompetensgruppen)?

5. Vilka detaljer av att delta i nätverk som du betalar för att vara med i (exempelvis Kompetensgruppen) är, i din erfarenhet, mest betydelsefulla för dig och/eller ditt företag?
Results from pre-research

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<th>0-1 years</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-expectations</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-expectation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Expectation/Experience of networking</th>
<th>0-1 year</th>
<th>2-3 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>6+ years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-expectation/Experience of networking</th>
<th>0-1 year</th>
<th>2-3 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>6+ years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
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**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical IT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public as Recruit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-expectation/Industry</th>
<th>Pharma</th>
<th>Public as</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8**