

**Factors affecting the ability of Client Relationship Partners
to influence peers when leading key client relationships in
City law firms**

by

Gregory Bott

August 2020

HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor of Business Administration

School of Leadership, Organisations and Behaviour

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Signed:

Gregory Bott

Date: August 2020

Certificate of readiness to be included in library

I grant powers of discretion to the University Librarian to allow this thesis to be copied in whole or in part without further reference to me. This permission covers only single copies made for study purposes, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.

Acknowledgements

This work could not have been completed without the help of a number of people and to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

Firstly I wish to thank the 31 participants in the study who gave their time generously and their ideas honestly and forthrightly. Many did so while under substantial work pressures.

Secondly, I wish to thank my supervisors Professors Vic Dulewicz and Bernd Vogel. At all times they were pragmatic and empathetic in their understanding of the challenges associated with accommodating doctoral study alongside full-time employment and family life. Their encouragement, honesty, professionalism and humour were a much-needed constant throughout this epic doctoral journey.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for motivating and supporting me throughout. I am truly blessed to have received such unconditional, unfailing support from my beloved wife, Alice, and I extend my enormous gratitude to my son, Theodore, for his patience with my absences at weekends and holidays. Both of you make me proud beyond words!

Abstract

City law firms are responding to commercial pressures by attempting to establish a competitive advantage through the effective management of their key client relationships. This places great emphasis on the leadership role performed by the Client Relationship Partners who lead these often complex, boundary spanning relationships; acting as an interface between internal and external facing activity. In this context, there is specific interest in alignment at the peer level (partner to partner influence) where conventional hierarchical relationships between leaders and followers are replaced in law firms by more ambiguous relationships among professionals. Extant literature suggests that alignment at the peer level can be problematic as partners place a high value on autonomy, eschew interference by management and often operate in a culture that appears to actively reward individualistic behaviour. How a Client Relationship Partner operates effectively in this environment to influence the activities of peers is unexplored by academe. This study aims to address this gap by identifying what factors affect the ability of a Client Relationship Partners to influence the activities of peers.

The study reviews the extant literature on law firm structures, systems and culture before considering the fields of key account management, leadership and paradox theory. The characteristics of City law firms therefore provides the critical context for this research; key account management the core theory; and leadership and paradox theory the theoretical lenses.

Having positioned the research in the literature, justification is given for why the study adopts a qualitative research design that inductively builds and extends theory from the data. A case is made for an interpretivist research paradigm with a phenomenological research methodology. Careful consideration is given to the specific research methods and the data analysis techniques employed to ensure methodological congruence.

The study adheres to the fundamental principles of doctoral research by making a contribution both to theory and practice. Contribution to theory includes the introduction of a Client Relationship Partner centred model that, in addition to providing consilience between the literature, helps both to surface and attend to the tensions that enable or hinder Client Relationship Partners in their efforts to influence the activities of peers. Contribution to practice includes the identification of eight paradox-based principles that provide much needed guidance to Client Relationship Partners and positional leaders in City law firms that are looking to address the research aim that frames this study.

Contents

Declaration	ii
Certificate of readiness to be included in library	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Contents	vi
List of figures	x
List of tables	xi
List of abbreviations.....	xii
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Overview	13
1.1.1 Defining the role of the Client Relationship Partner.....	14
1.2 Rationale	15
1.3 The research in context.....	17
1.4 Making a contribution	19
1.5 Structure of the thesis	20
2 Literature review	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Characteristics of law firms: a critical context	24
2.3 Key account management	28
2.3.1 In search of a definition	28
2.3.2 Core theories and concepts.....	32
2.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of KAM and the central role of the Key Account Manager	33
2.4 Leadership	36
2.4.1 What is leadership?.....	37
2.4.2 The loci and mechanisms of leadership	37
2.4.3 Transformational and transactional leadership.....	40

2.4.4	Collective leadership	42
2.4.5	Leadership versus management	44
2.5	Paradox theory	46
2.5.1	The evolution of paradox theory	48
2.5.2	Paradox theory and the dynamic equilibrium model (DEM)	54
2.6	Summary	60
3	Methodology and methods	64
3.1	Introduction	64
3.2	Research paradigm	64
3.3	Research design	70
3.4	Sampling	77
3.5	Ethics	79
3.6	Interview protocol	80
3.7	Data collection	84
3.7.1	Critical incident technique	85
3.7.2	Personal construct psychology (PCP) and the repertory grid	88
3.7.3	Semi-structured questions	91
3.8	Data analysis	92
3.8.1	Incident level analysis	92
3.8.2	Repertory grid analysis	95
3.8.3	Thematic analysis of interview transcripts	102
3.9	Summary	104
4	Results	107
4.1	Introduction	107
4.2	Organisational and individual participant characteristics	107
4.2.1	Organisational sample descriptive characteristics	107
4.2.2	Individual participants' descriptive statistics	110
4.3	Findings	114

4.3.1	Research Question One: how do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms?.....	114
4.3.2	Research Question Two: How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?	125
4.3.3	Research Question Three: How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?.....	140
4.3.4	Research Question Four: What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account?	147
4.3.5	Research Question Five: How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?	162
4.3.6	Research Question Six: How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities?	177
4.3.7	Research Question Seven: What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?	182
4.4	Summary: SIRCLp - the integrative framework.....	186
5	Discussion	191
5.1	Introduction	191
5.2	Focal Area One of SIRCLp: Systems and Structure	194
5.3	Focal Area Two of SIRCLp: Identity and Role	206
5.4	Focal Area Three of SIRCLp: Competencies.....	216
5.5	Focal Area Four of SIRCLp: Leader (CRP) development.....	223
5.6	Summary.....	231
6	Conclusion	233
6.1	Introduction	233
6.2	Contributions to theory	235
6.3	Contributions to practice	242
6.4	Limitations and areas for further research	250
6.5	Personal reflexivity	254

References	256
Appendix A	272
Appendix B	276
Appendix C	278
Appendix D	283
Appendix E	284

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Typical structure of a Client Service Team.....	15
Figure 1.2: Theoretical framework.....	19
Figure 2.1: A portfolio of customers.....	30
Figure 2.2: Key Account Manager as nexus.....	35
Figure 2.3: Categorization of organizational tensions	50
Figure 2.4: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing.....	53
Figure 3.1: The research onion	71
Figure 3.2: Nine stages of data analysis	93
Figure 3.3: Focus cluster analysis for Rachel.....	98
Figure 3.4: Principal component analysis for Rachel	100
Figure 3.5: Application of coding framework. An example from respondent Kevin	106
Figure 4.1: Summary of individual participants' primary area of legal practice	114
Figure 4.2: Number of references by Parent code	116
Figure 4.3: Child codes under Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms.....	118
Figure 4.4: Number of references by CRP Responsibilities Parent code.....	129
Figure 4.5: Number of references by Parent code CRP Characteristics	133
Figure 4.6: Child codes under Parent code CRP Characteristics.....	133
Figure 4.7: Sub-Child codes under Child code 'Behaviours'	135
Figure 4.8: Child codes under Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms.....	165
Figure 4.9: Sub-Child codes for Training and Development Child code.....	179
Figure 4.10: SIRCLp: the four focal areas	190

List of tables

Table 2.1: Characteristics of professional service firms	26
Table 2.2: The evolution of key account management.....	31
Table 2.3: Core theories and concepts in the field of leadership.....	38
Table 2.4: The transformational leadership model	41
Table 2.5: Leadership versus management	45
Table 2.6: Alternative approaches to managing organizational tensions	48
Table 2.7: Conceptual framework.....	63
Table 3.1: Comparison of positivism, constructivism and critical realism.....	65
Table 3.2: Research approaches: deduction, induction and abduction.....	68
Table 3.3: Summary of research design.....	71
Table 3.4: Main research strategies for qualitative research.....	73
Table 3.5: Summary of key data analysis techniques	76
Table 3.6: Research aim, research questions and primary research methods	83
Table 3.7: Critical incidents	94
Table 3.8: Repertory grid for Rachel	97
Table 4.1: Participating organisations by total partner numbers and revenue	108
Table 4.2: Summary of individual participants' demographic information and application of data collection methods.....	111
Table 4.3: Age of individual participants.....	113
Table 4.4: Age of partners in UK law firms	113
Table 4.5: Repertory grid: core themes	149
Table 5.1: Focal Area One of SIRCLp: Systems and Structure	196
Table 5.2: Focal Area Two of SIRCLp: Identity and Role.....	208
Table 5.3: Focal Area Three of SIRCLp: Competencies	218
Table 5.4: Focal Area Four of SIRCLp: Leader (CRP) development	225
Table 6.1: Paradox-based principles	244

List of abbreviations

- ABS Alternative Business Structures: introduced by the Legal Services Act 2007, an entity that, while providing regulated reserved legal activities, allows non-lawyers to own or invest
- CIT Critical Incident Technique: a research framework put forward by Flanagan (1954). See definition and usage of this technique in Chapter 3.4
- CRP Client Relationship Partner: those identified within a firm as leading the firm's relationship with a particular client
- CST Client Service Team: the term given to those working on a specific client account and supporting the activities of the CRP. CST can range from a small number of people to many hundreds on larger accounts
- KAM Key Account Management: an approach to managing customers in a business-to-business environment. See Chapter 2.3
- MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: is the most commonly used questionnaire when examining transformational leadership behaviours (Avolio and Bass, 1999)
- PCP Personal Construct Psychology: theory of personality and cognition developed by George Kelly (1955). See Chapter 3.5
- PSF Professional Service Firm: an organization or profession that offers customized, knowledge-based services to clients (Von Nordenflycht, 2010)
- SSQ Semi-Structured Question: used in the interview process. See Chapter 3.7.3

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The **Research Problem** that frames this study is:

How City law firms can respond to commercial pressures by establishing a competitive advantage through the effective management of their relationships with key clients?

City law firms are based in London, typically with other offices elsewhere in the UK or overseas. They are characterised by their large and renowned commercial, corporate and finance departments, with a client base that includes large companies and financial institutions, such as investment banks. The work of City law firms regularly involves providing legal advice in relation to high-level transactions and disputes (Mayson 1997).

A focus on key client relationships in City law firms places great emphasis on the leadership role performed by the Client Relationship Partners (see 1.1.1 for a definition) who lead these often complex, boundary spanning relationships; acting as an interface between internal and external facing activity. When done effectively, these activities deliver synergistic value creation. However, the time these Client Relationship Partners (CRPs) spend on internally focused activities can be greater than the time they spend with the fee-paying client. In this context, there is value in understanding what enables or impedes a CRP when attempting to align the activities of their key account team. Of specific interest is alignment at the peer level (partner to partner influence) where conventional hierarchical relationships between leaders and followers are replaced in law firms by more ambiguous relationships amongst professionals (Lorsch, 2008; Higgs, 2003; Empson, 2007; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). Alignment at the peer level can be problematic due to what Mayson (2012) identifies as resistance by partners to perceived managerial control and a culture in City law firms that often condones or actively rewards the behavior of those who operate individually or in silos.

Therefore, the **Research Aim** of this study is:

To identify what factors affect the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of peers on a key account in a City law firm

The following section provides context on the role performed by CRPs before then explaining the rationale for the research.

1.1.1 Defining the role of the Client Relationship Partner

CRPs are, typically, senior-level partners with responsibility for leading the relationship with one or more of a firm's most important clients. While recognised as a formal leadership role, the vast majority of CRPs continue to service high levels of legal work for a range of clients. This gives rise to the Producing Manager role referred to by Lorsch and Mathias (1988) and Lorsch and Tierney (2002) in which CRPs are both *producers* who sell business and serve clients and *managers* who deliver legal work.

The role of the CRP requires a high degree of competency in a broad range of external (client facing) and internal activities. These activities include, but are not limited to: ensuring a high quality of service delivery; developing a deep understanding of a client's business; the setting of a vision for the relationship with a client; developing a robust strategy to deliver the vision; and ensuring the fulfilment of specific activities in line with the strategy.

Figure 1.1 is an example of a way in which a City law firm will typically structure its resources around a key client. A Client Service Team (CST) supports the CRP(s) in their client development efforts. Other members of the CST often comprise another partner or a senior-level associate and an Account Driver who is a member of the firm's Business Development function. In the development and execution of their client relationship strategy, the CRP and CST will access a number of the firm's support functions, such as marketing and finance. The delivery of the firm's primary offering i.e. its legal advice, will then be executed through partners and associates who are specialized in practising different areas of law. Often these specialists will have long-established relationships with contacts in specific areas of the client's business, while at times lacking the 'helicopter view' of the wider relationship held by the CRP and CST. Often referred to as fee-earners, specialists will be grouped together in legal service lines, frequently known as practice areas.

For a large client with complex legal needs, the team servicing it can extend to hundreds of fee earners and support staff across different geographical and regulatory jurisdictions.

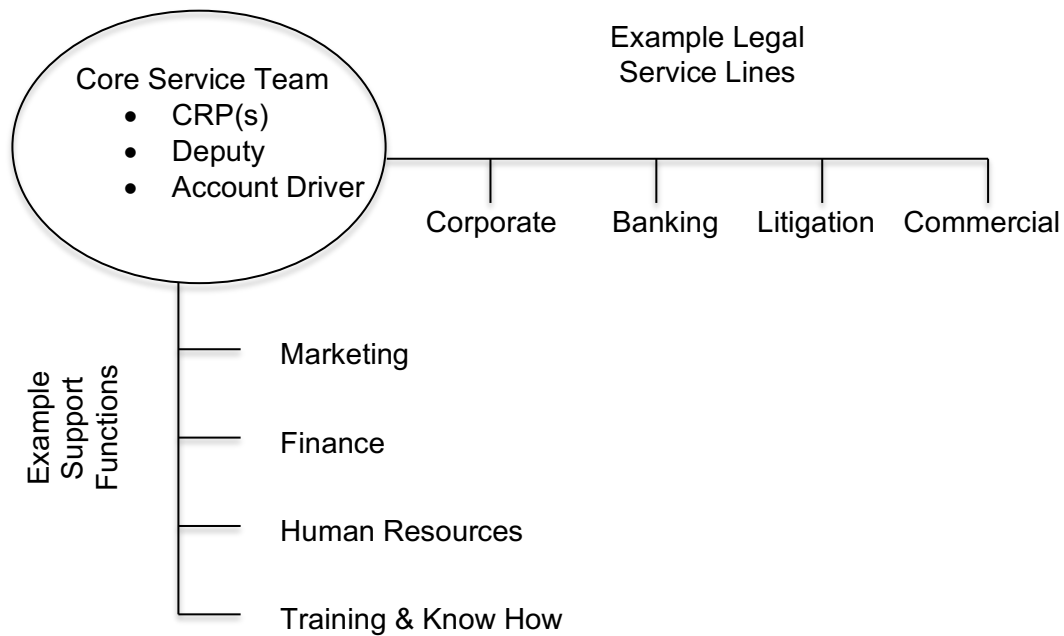


Figure 1.1: Typical structure of a Client Service Team

1.2 Rationale

The UK legal services market is worthy of consideration as it is an important part of the UK economy. According to the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2020), legal services accounted for around 1.6% of UK GDP or £37.1 billion in 2019

Not only are legal services a direct contributor to UK economic activity, but they also have an important enabling function for other enterprise and are an important and growing source of professional service exports. Since the turn of the last century, the market has developed significantly and London is a leading international centre for legal services activity (The Legal Services Board, 2011).

City law firms frequently advise on high-value corporate and commercial work, often with an international dimension, for organizations (clients) that are listed on the world's leading stock exchanges. The work of these City law firms accounts for a disproportionately large share of the UK legal market with turnover from the top 100 amounting to £26.4 billion in 2019 (up from £14 billion a decade earlier) or 71% of the total (TheCityUK).

City law firms face growing threats to their share of the global legal market over the next decade, with likely challenges from Chinese firms, future market crashes and protectionism high on the agenda. A report by Williams (2012), former Managing Partner of Clifford

Chance, one of the world's largest law firms, and now principal consultant at Jomati Consultants, identified a number of factors that have changed in the UK legal market in recent years:

1. Revenue and profit growth can no longer be assumed. The UK is now a mature market. For firms to grow both their revenue and profitability they need a very compelling offering and to be able to take work from other law firms. A firm not managing this will find other firms taking work from them.
2. Clients have finally realised that if they spend a significant amount in legal fees they have buying power. They are using it, not just because they can but because if the General Counsel is not able to control and preferably reduce his external legal spend, his job is in jeopardy.
3. Above inflation increases in hourly rates are now a thing of the past. Furthermore, the use of fixed fees and portfolio fees is becoming common.
4. The classic law firm model is being reconsidered. Firms are considering how many trainees they need, how to use non-qualified lawyers and the extent to which legal work can be sent to lower cost centres either in the UK or abroad.
5. Partners are not immune. Until relatively recently, an equity partnership position was seen as a job for life. Firms are being increasingly clear as to what they expect from a partner and actively reviewing partner performance. Partner de-equitisation and exits are increasingly normal. Indeed, it is almost considered best practice for a firm to 'prune' a few percent of its partners every year.
6. Cost of sales is increasing. In the past, law firms had no concept of the costs of getting and keeping a new client. Now serious effort needs to be invested in first developing, and then maintaining, a client relationship. Clients expect their lawyers to invest non-chargeable time in getting to know them and their business and in proactively helping the client. This takes time but also a fundamentally different approach to the service most lawyers have given to their clients.
7. Technology is getting real. In many ways in the past, technology was used to speed up production or for back-office purposes. Now it is central to the delivery of a cost-effective service.

Source: Williams (2012)

City law firms face regulatory change too. In the UK the Legal Services Act 2007 ("the Act") has ushered in a new regulatory framework and is being compared to the Big Bang that liberalized the UK financial services industry in 1986. Part of the Act allows for the formation

of Alternative Business Structures (ABS) that, coming into force in 2012, were intended to remove unnecessary restrictions to doing business in the legal services market. ABS allows non-lawyers to own and manage law firms and law firms are able to accept external investment. There remains uncertainty as to the long-term impact ABS will have on different groups in the market, including City law firms.

The author's interest in this topic stems from his direct experience of working in or consulting to City law firms for over 20 years. While working in the sector, the author has been struck by the profound change effecting the profession due to the challenging global economic environment, a changing regulatory landscape and continued consolidation. The author is motivated by a personal interest in better understanding how CRPs respond to these challenges and tensions. The author has observed both effective and ineffective ways in which CRPs have reacted to an evolving legal market and is keen to explore what role-related and organisational level factors are at play and how these shape CRP behaviour.

1.3 The research in context

This section briefly introduces the main areas of literature that frame the research.

The literature on law firms (and wider professional service firms) is reviewed and issues identified with respect to the appropriateness of simply importing into the unique structure and culture of City law firms theories that have been developed largely based on traditional corporate settings. Compared to their corporate counterparts, City law firms remain essentially democracies; with ultimate power remaining in the hands of the individual partners (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). Indeed there is widespread agreement in the literature that among the most significant challenges facing leaders in Professional Service Firms (PSFs) is the design and implementation of strategy and securing the alignment of other partners (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Maister, 2003; Malhotra and Morris, 2009; Mayson, 2012). The literature on the characteristics of law firms therefore provides the context for this research.

The literature on key account management (KAM) is then reviewed as a core theoretical pillar for this research. In pursuit of ways to institutionalise relationships with large customers and deliver a sustained competitive advantage, increasing numbers of City law firms have turned to the field of KAM in recent years. However, despite the professionalization of the field over a 30-year period (from its 'Genesis' in the 1970s to a period of 'Specialization' from 2000 onwards: see Table 2.2), there remains a paucity of literature on the specific behaviours CRPs should adopt if they are to effectively align peers behind an effective and

coherent client strategy. Nevertheless, due to its broad suitability in helping to address the Research Aim, the field of KAM is relevant to this research.

This study also explores the field of leadership to see whether extensive research in this area can help to empirically identify a range of behaviours that may be relevant to CRPs in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account. After a review of the core theories, transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Bass, 1990; Avolio and Bass, 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1993) and collective leadership (Denis *et al.*, 2012; Empson and Langley, 2013; Gronn, 2002) emerge as showing the most promise. The literature on leadership therefore provides a theoretical lens to this research.

Finally, the field of paradox theory shows great promise helping CRPs to operate as a nexus across multiple boundaries and address a range of organizational tensions and competing demands. Paradox theory therefore provides a further theoretical lens with which to surface tensions in City law firms and then propose strategies for attending to those tensions (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

As a result of a review of the literature on PSFs, KAM, leadership, and paradox theory, the author identified two core Areas for Research that provide a sharper focus with which to investigate the Research Aim:

1. Individual: how CRPs perceive their role and an identification of the behaviours, practices or approaches on the part of the CRP that affect their ability to influence the activities of peers on a key account; and
2. Structural: the effect that the structure, systems, culture and characteristics of a City law firm have on the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in City law firms.

The interplay between the fields of literature and how they inform the areas of research is captured in the theoretical framework for this study in Figure 1.2. A theoretical framework is the blueprint or guide for research (Osanloo and Grant, 2016) based on an existing theory or theories in a field or fields relevant to the inquiry. Sinclair (2007) compares the role of the theoretical framework to that of a map. Thus, when travelling to a particular location, the map guides the path and assists the researcher in ensuring the study makes a contribution to extending the frontiers of knowledge.

Though the terms seem similar, the theoretical framework is different to the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2.6 (which presents an integrated way of looking at a problem under study (Liehr and Smith, 1999)). That said, the overall aim of both frameworks is to make the findings of the research more meaningful to the theoretical constructs while

enhancing the empiricism and rigor of the research. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks therefore play a crucial role in framing and providing context to this research.

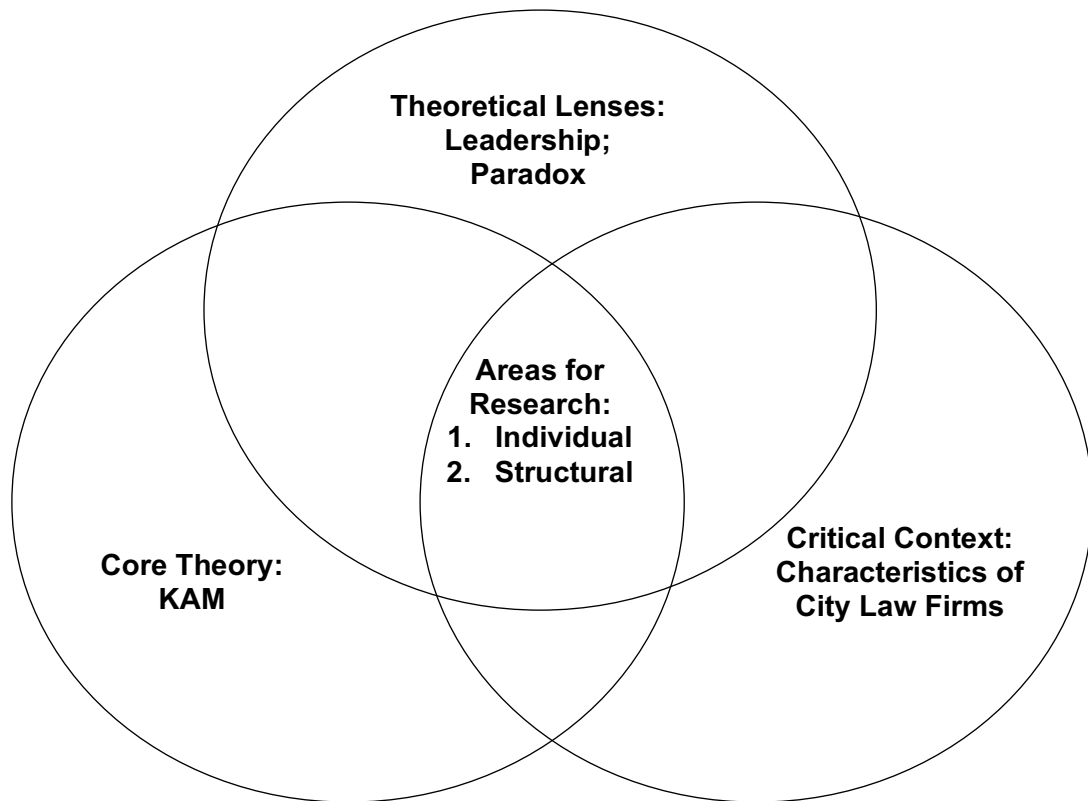


Figure 1.2: Theoretical framework

1.4 Making a contribution

This research is justified on both theoretical and practical grounds.

Theoretical justification pivots on three main themes:

1. This study addresses a gap in the literature on the factors that enable or hinder CRPs in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account. While there has been much published research in the fields of KAM and leadership, it has been, for the most part, based on corporate-type organizations. By providing empirical data on how CRPs perceive their leadership role, this study is intended to be the beginning of systematic research on the behavioural, situational and contextual factors that impact the ability of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on key accounts in City law firms
2. A review of the literature (Chapter 2) demonstrated that no single academic domain provided satisfactory answers to the Research Problem or Research Aim of this study. As a consequence, a multi-disciplinary, multi method approach to address the phenomenon

under study was adopted (Chapter 3). This convergence, or consilience of academic disciplines, enabled the development of a CRP centred framework (known as SIRCLp: see Chapter 4.4) in direct response to the findings and the literature and provides new insights that broaden the theoretical perspective regarding leadership in complex, dynamic environments such as City law firms. In turn, the framework also enriches and makes a theoretical contribution to each of the main academic domains on which it is built (see Chapter 6.2)

3. From a research methodology perspective, this study makes a contribution to theory by adopting a multi-method, qualitative methodology that goes some way to redressing the weighting in the field of leadership research toward the positivist, questionnaire based method of data collection. This study therefore responds to the call by (Gardner *et al.*, 2010, p.943) and others for more qualitative studies on leadership in order to deliver more “meaningful insights and enhance our understanding of leadership processes”.

The justification of this research for practice centres on a clear need to help CRPs and positional leaders in City law firms navigate the new competitive landscape in which they operate, make sense of complexity and in so doing to add even more value to their firms. This study provides a flexible framework (SIRCLp) for practitioners to surface and then address a myriad of tensions that, as a result, can be considered both a philosophy (a way of thinking) and a set of specific tools to be employed by CRPs and positional leaders in City law firms to affect change. This includes the identification of eight paradox-based principles (see Table 6.1) that are intended to help CRPs and City law firms reimagine how they respond to the Research Problem and Research Aim that frame this study (see Chapter 6.3). Taken together, these outputs represent a significant contribution to practice.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The thesis comprises six chapters. This chapter provides the context for the research problem and how the development of key client relationships in City law firms places a great emphasis on the leadership role performed by CRPs.

Chapter two reviews the literature on: the characteristics of City law firms; key account management (KAM); leadership; and paradox theory to establish the theoretical grounding of the research. Chapter two also identifies gaps in the literature and, consistent with the advice of Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), seven Research Questions are then developed to further frame and find solutions to the phenomenon under study.

The philosophical paradigm that informs the research is described in Chapter three, followed by a discussion of the methodology, the research design and the process of the analysis.

These findings are presented in Chapter four by reference to the seven research questions

Chapter five develops a framework, designed for this study, that serves as a purposeful way of presenting a discussion between the myriad findings and the extant literature to develop further explanatory insights; and in so doing identifies a number of conceptual and empirical shortcomings in the literature

Finally, Chapter six summarises the key findings in relation to the research questions, pinpoints the contributions of the research to theory, methodology and practice, and suggests areas for future research.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

A review of the literature did not follow a linear path in which a discrete body of research was identified and engaged with. Rather, the literature review evolved and became more expansive over time as it became apparent that no single field of research would, on its own, provide the necessary insights to help address the Research Problem and Research Aim. Accordingly, this chapter begins by considering how the structure, characteristics and culture of law firms provide critical context for why it is problematic to import into the legal profession theory that has largely been developed with reference to corporate entities. Notwithstanding this, the review of the literature on the characteristics of law firms identified, in turn, the field of key account management as worthy of exploration due to a number of similarities between the role of the CRP in City law firms and the role of the Key Account Manager in non-professional service firms. The literature on key account management is therefore reviewed in this chapter in the context of helping CRPs and City law firms deliver a competitive advantage. While providing some insights to help address the Research Problem and Research Aim, the literature on key account management raised new and interesting questions regarding the behaviours necessary on the part of the CRP if they are to align peers behind a key client strategy. As a consequence, it became clear, important and necessary to engage with the literature in the field of leadership in search of insights that might help CRPs in their attempts to influence the activities of peers. The literature on leadership is therefore an integral component of this chapter. In addition to providing a number of material insights to assist CRPs in their efforts, the literature on leadership also introduced paradox theory as a potentially useful theoretical lens to address the Research Problem and Research Aim. As a result, paradox theory therefore concludes this chapter and the literature review. It is however important to note that the literature on paradox theory became more prominent as this study evolved. Specifically, a more thorough examination of paradox theory (and in particular the Dynamic Equilibrium Model (DEM)) took place after the data for this study had been collected. Therefore, unlike the literature on the characteristics of law firms, key account management and leadership, paradox theory does not directly inform the seven Research Questions that frame this study (see Section 2.6). Rather, the data itself demonstrated a central role for paradox theory in helping to interpret the findings of this study. As a consequence, the literature on paradox theory plays a prominent role in the discussion chapter to this study (Chapter 5) in order to make sense of the myriad tensions evident in the data. This approach is consistent with the direction given by Smith *et*

al. (2009) who support the (re)introduction of new literature at this stage as a way to help to uncover and interpret unanticipated territory.

The author undertook a critical review, analysing and synthesising the literature from across the various fields that inform this study (Grant and Booth, 2009). Published studies were identified through searches of electronic databases accessible through the author's university library system, including EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest, Sage and Wiley. The author specified that articles must:

1. Be published in a 3 or 4 star peer-reviewed journal as determined by the Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide
2. Be in the English language
3. Use a combination of keywords including law firms, leader, leadership, professional services and key account management

No restriction was placed on year of publication. The Abstract and Conclusions of relevant articles were reviewed to assess their suitability to address the phenomenon under investigation. Those papers considered relevant were analysed in full and the following information, where available, was abstracted from each into an Excel spread sheet:

1. Date reviewed, title of paper, author(s) and journal
2. Stated objectives of the paper
3. Methodological approach
4. Key themes or theories referenced
5. Assessment of the key strengths / weaknesses and the relevance of the paper to the Research Aim of this study
6. Identification of any opportunities for further research

Additional articles meeting the inclusion criteria were found by examining the bibliographies of the papers analysed in full. In turn, these additional papers were then also analysed in full. Due to the paucity of academic studies on City law firms, it was necessary to also review books and articles written by practitioners that did not necessarily meet the standard of 3 or 4 star journals. These were analysed in the same way as the academic papers; with relevant articles stored in Endnote and the key findings recorded in Excel. In total, 493 papers from across the relevant fields of literature were reviewed and recorded in Endnote and Excel.

2.2 Characteristics of law firms: a critical context

The partnership structure is the preferred business vehicle of the great majority of City law firms. It has generally been viewed as particularly well suited to organizing professionals and has long been the prevailing form of governance within the wider professional services sector (Hinings *et al.*, 1991). The partnership structure provides a legal context in which it is possible to reconcile the competing claims of three sets of stakeholders: *professionals* seeking to self actualize, *owners* (typically the partners) seeking to maximize shareholder value, and *clients* seeking high quality service and value for money (Empson, 2007).

As firms increase in size and complexity over time, they have tended to delegate authority to an elected management group who start to introduce more explicit management systems and structures to control their activities (Cooper *et al.*, 1996). However, there are many forms of governance prevalent in the professional service firm sector and firms may adopt multiple forms over time.

Empson (2010) puts forward a line of enquiry that suggests the literature on the structure of professional service firms has become too dichotomized. She argues that existing models do not adequately recognize the variety of forms of governance prevalent within the professional service firm sector. Adapting Greiner (1998) model of the stages of organizational growth to the distinctive context of professional service firms, Empson illustrates their complex and messy reality in the evolution of their governance.

The key differences between Greiner's generic model and the professional service firm model developed by Empson relate to the distinctive nature of power dependencies in a professional service firm. Empson highlights the central questions of power, benefit and accountability in a professional service firm and the locus of each as a firm moves through different models of governance based on their size and maturity. In a 'founder focused' firm governance is relatively simple: the power, benefit and accountability reside exclusively and unambiguously with the founders. Towards the other end of the spectrum, which is more typical of a City law firm, a firm moves to a more 'corporate' phase. This leads to the establishment of more centralized systems and structures of governance.

Faulconbridge and Muzio (2008) state that law firm professionals have therefore absorbed and adopted the practices and language of management but in ways that allow such models to be applied in a format sensitive to professional preferences, value and priorities. The author finds Faulconbridge and Muzio to be generous in their praise for the interpretative nature of law firm professionals, preferring instead to subscribe to the alternative view of law firms put forward by Mayson (2012) and others. Mayson argues that law firms in particular often promote the collegiate advantages of their partnership structure while at the same time

condoning the behavior of those who operate individually or in silos. Often the environment encourages internal competition for clients, ineffective cross selling, a lack of mutual respect and an unwillingness to be accountable (Mayson, 2012). The work of Mayson is supported by Allan *et al.* (2019, p.114) that suggest “a shift in ‘archetype’ from a professional partnership to a managed and financialized business “erodes the distinctive ability of professionals, and partners in PSFs in particular, to define the means, ends and assessment criteria for their work.” Furthermore, Allan *et al.* (2019, p.112) note that the financialized archetype can lead to “a sense of fear and anxiety as partners experience the scrutiny and pressure of financialized performance management” and that this leads partners to face “contradictory demands as they are pushed to meet financial and ‘citizen’ objectives within the firm.” The result is a career as a ‘project of the self’ that relies on various protection strategies and which results in professionals captured by ‘financialization’ and unable to assimilate its demands in ways that protect traditional professional values. Allan *et al.* (2019, p.126) conclude that in the managed and financialized archetype “the outcome is prioritization of individual financial performance over good citizenship and professional collegiality, and the success of one’s career project over the performance of the partnership.” Moreover, whilst professionals typically lack the risk-seeking propensities of entrepreneurs, they share certain important qualities: namely, their resistance to managerial control, their expectation of building their own business, and their ambitions for ownership. Table 2.1 sets out the key characteristics of professional service firms.

Compared to their corporate counterparts, law firms remain essentially democracies; with ultimate power remaining in the hand of the partners. Lorsch and Tierney (2002) demonstrate how this power is born of the three distinct roles that partners perform and how this can create a culture that disposes the individual to resist control and to conflict with the firm’s leadership:

- They are *producers* who sell business and serve clients;
- They are *managers*, in that they must help to run the firm; and
- They are *owners* with a long-term interest in the firm.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of professional service firms

Organizational Characteristics	
Highly knowledge intensive	Services are normally centred around non-substitutable individuals
A high degree of customization of services to clients is essential	Revenue is generated through the selling of professionals' time, most often in terms of hourly billing
A high degree of discretionary effort and personal judgment is required of experts in each service encounter	Developing and sustaining personal relationships with clients is essential for repeat business
Substantial interaction with the client organization's representatives is required	

Source: adapted from Lorsch and Tierney (2002)

What PSFs have in common is that they sell high-priced time and services by building client relationships and delivering client value (Lorsch & Tierney 2002). The service provided relies heavily on the expertise of individual top professionals, rather than on the capabilities of the organization to which he or she belongs (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Løwendahl, 2005). The professional is wholly responsible for the level of client satisfaction and, unlike those in corporate organizations, cannot point to anybody else or another department for failing to satisfy the client (Lorsch & Tierney 2002). As a result, the strategic resources of the firm consist in the technical expertise of individuals, their skills in building client relationships, their professional reputation, their individual networks of professional peer contacts and their established relationships with past, present and potential clients (Løwendahl, 2005).

The individual professional is therefore centre stage. How these highly paid individuals relate to their clients is critical to the business, but how they relate to one another and their organization or firm determines the strength of the business, its ability to attract and retain high calibre professionals and the extent to which it can devise and execute a successful strategy (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Maister, 2003). Grant (1996) suggests that knowledge is *the* most critical competitive asset for a firm. A view supported by Hitt *et al.* (2001) when they state that the human capital embodied in the partners is a professional service firm's most important resource.

The successful management, motivation, development, rewarding and retention of these talented individuals is therefore critical to the success of the business and a crucial

leadership role for CRPs. They must be sensitive to the prevailing archetype of governance within their firm; controlling and coordinating the entrepreneurialism of individual professionals to ensure that they serve the interests of both the firm and client. This is, however, no easy task. Greenwood and Empson (2005) discuss how PSFs are characterized by contingent and contested power relations among an extended group of professional peers; in the largest firms this group may comprise several hundred partners. These senior professionals claim extensive autonomy and grant leadership authority to their colleagues on a contingent basis (Empson & Langley, 2015), resulting in highly politicized internal competitions for power, protracted processes of consensus-based decision making, and failures to execute decisions once they have been agreed (Hinings, Brown, & Greenwood, 1991; Lawrence, Malhotra, & Morris, 2012; Morris, Greenwood, & Fairclough, 2010). Indeed there is widespread agreement in the literature that among the most significant challenges facing leaders in professional service firms is the design and implementation of strategy and securing alignment by a majority of the partners (Malhotra and Morris, 2009; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Maister, 2003; Mayson, 2012).

Conventional studies (whether they be in key account management, leadership, paradox theory or some other field) are often predicated on clearly defined roles and hierarchical relationships between leaders and followers and therefore fail to capture the complex power relations and collective nature of leadership that is characteristic of PSFs (Empson, 2017). It is therefore essential that the fields of literature that inform this research are tested for their appropriateness and relevance to the unique context of a City law firm. This is due to the potential for the characteristics of a City law firm to moderate or render completely insufficient any theory modelled on traditional corporate entities.

A review of the literature concerning the characteristics of professional service firms therefore identifies the following questions that are relevant to this research:

1. How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account? (Graeff, 1997; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Empson, 2007; Empson, 2010b; Mayson, 2012; Løwendahl, 2005; (Von Nordenflycht, 2010; Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008)
2. What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms? (Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Cooper *et al.*, 1996; Empson, 2010; Alvehus and Empson, 2014; Greenwood *et al.*, 2007)

2.3 Key account management

According to Porter (1996), competitive advantage grows out of the entire system of a firm's activities. Understanding the sources of sustained competitive advantage has become a major research field in the discipline of strategic management. Barney (1991) argues that to generate a competitive advantage a firm's resources must be aligned in such a way that they are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. In turn, these competitive advantages produce positive returns (Peteraf, 1993).

For CRPs in City law firms this means aligning teams behind a sound and coherent client relationship strategy for, as was advocated by Itami and Roehl (1991), the knowledge that individuals possess is the core offering of any law firm. In pursuit of ways to align fee earners and deliver a sustained competitive advantage, increasing numbers of City law firms have turned to the field of KAM.

Reviewing the extant literature, particularly around the role performed by Key Account Managers, which is analogous to the role performed by CRPs, helps develop an understanding of how a CRP can maximise their effectiveness in influencing the activities of peers.

2.3.1 In search of a definition

KAM has become an increasingly important approach to managing customers for companies and organisations operating in a business-to-business marketing environment (Millman and Wilson, 1995; McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Abratt and Kelly, 2002; Homburg *et al.*, 2002; Zupancic, 2008; Davies and Ryals, 2009).

Pegram (1972) first referred to KAM in 1972. Zupancic (2008) charts the progress of the field from its 'Genesis' in the 1970s to 'Professionalization' in the 1980s, 'Internationalization' in the 1990s and 'Specialization' from 2000 onwards. Writing in 2008, Zupancic refers to the idea of KAM being over 30 years old and that the degree of professionalization both in research and practice has risen over time. The author has synthesised these key developments in Table 2.2

Despite now 40 years of research in the area, there is still no agreed definition of KAM. In an attempt to represent the main views held in the field, the author has identified key constructs around which definitions are clustered. The first cluster emphasises the central role of the customer at the heart of KAM and therefore takes a customer-centric approach. An example is a definition put forward by Zupancic (2008), incorporating the work of Homburg *et al.* (2002) in which he defines key accounts as the most valuable customers for a company. To

put it simply: a company cannot afford to lose these customers without getting into serious difficulties (Zupancic, 2008).

A second cluster highlights the importance of taking a strategic, portfolio-centred approach to managing key accounts in order to ensure that appropriate strategies can be applied to individual customers (McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Woodburn and McDonald, 2011). As such, Woodburn and McDonald (2011) define KAM as an approach adopted by selling companies aimed at building a portfolio of loyal accounts by offering them a product or service package tailored to their needs. They state that a “key customer portfolio should be managed like a share portfolio... the portfolio should be varied and well balanced, and the portfolio overall should perform to expectations, not necessarily any particular customer” (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011, p.382). Figure 2.1 displays how, according to Woodburn and McDonald (2011) a portfolio of customers might be categorised. This portfolio-centred approach also emphasises that key customers differ in their attractiveness to the supplier and in their strength of preference for the supplier, demanding, as a result, different approaches to managing the accounts within the portfolio.

The final cluster identified by the author specifically focuses on the role performed by the Key Account Manager (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011). McDonald *et al.* (2000) emphasise the need for internal coordination and integration on the supplier side to manage these complex client relationships, and for monitoring to ensure that they are delivered profitably. Recognising the coordinating role performed by the Key Account Manager, McDonald *et al.*, 2000, p.183 put forward a definition of KAM as “an integrated process for managing key accounts profitably”. Even when not the specific focus of investigation, the role performed by the Key Account Manger remains a critical component throughout the literature. It too is therefore worth considering, particularly given it appears synonymous to the role performed by CRPs.

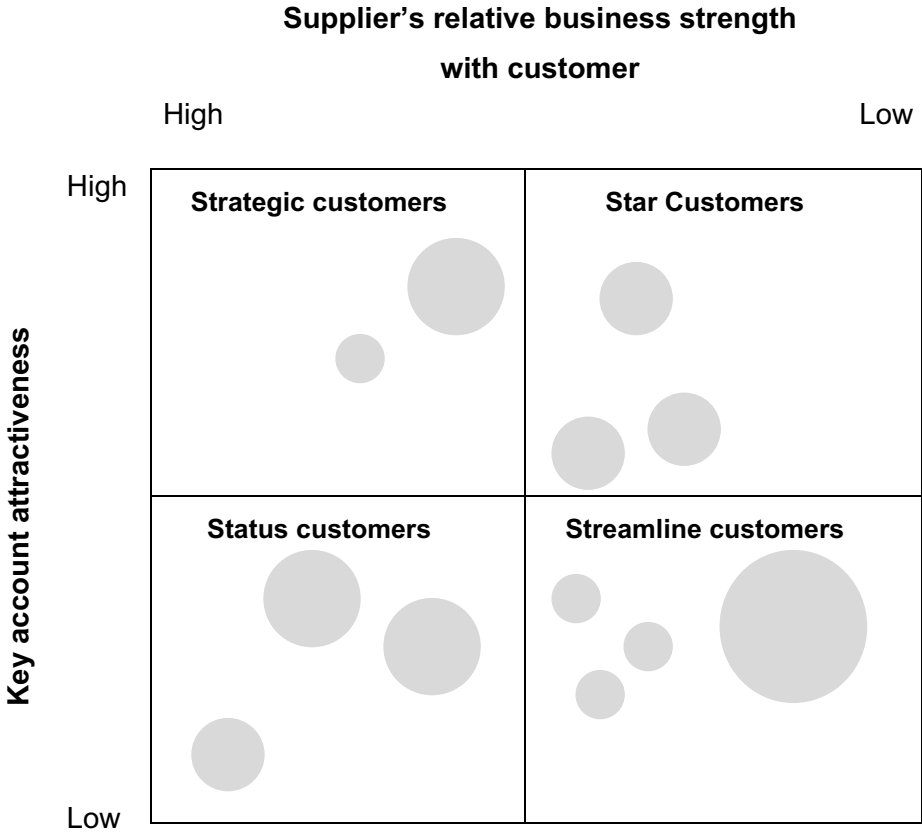


Figure 2.1: A portfolio of customers

Chapter 2: Literature review

Table 2.2: The evolution of key account management

	Genesis	Professionalisation	Specialisation	Customer Centric	Co-creative
What happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining large customers Operational and intentional focus Slowly understanding what processes are required Lack of data Revenue focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting customers who would benefit and telling customers they are key accounts Accounts manager selection and development Early understanding of 80/20 rule Attempts to track ROI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic interest balloons Major break through in understanding strategic relevance of key clients Early adoption of portfolio strategy Focus on profit not revenue Differentiation recognised as possible in this field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Products and services presented in the context of clients' business objectives Team selling to deliver above Account leadership as opposed to management as an issue Multiple portfolios Client listening emerges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated programmes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing deep client insight Leadership development in the context of strategic clients How networks effectively collaborate to create better business solutions
Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amex IBM Hewlett Packard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amex IBM Hewlett Packard Wells Fargo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amex Hewlett Packard IBM Rolls Royce British Telecommunications Aviva BNP Paribas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amex Hewlett Packard IBM Rolls Royce Astra Zeneca BP Pfizer Merck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KPMG Herbert Smith Freehills Cisco Microsoft Siemens British Telecom Xerox Motorola
Results / Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in revenue Emerging operational understanding of capability needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit and retain talent Growth in revenue Detailed processes and data to manage selected clients Early stages of differential client investment decisions being made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profit performance of portfolio improves KAM used to take market share Service differentiation possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients really begin to see powerful differences in solution design Rapid penetration into clients business possible Strategic investments in key clients improves ROI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue, profit and service line growth ahead of competition Improved talent retention Innovation Improved moral and ethical business model Clear competitive advantage
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010

2.3.2 Core theories and concepts

The benefits to suppliers of KAM are not automatic and require careful management (Davies and Ryals, 2009), but evidence exists that long-term relationships with larger customers can pay off for suppliers through higher revenues and faster growth rates (Bolen and Davis, 1997).

Indeed, alongside challenges in producing a universally agreed definition, there is strong evidence that despite years of research, organisations do still struggle with the implementation of KAM (Ivens and Pardo, 2008).

Attempts in academe to find a solution and move the field forward have produced several seminal frameworks that offer support for the realization of KAM programmes:

1. Ojasalo (2001) identified four important elements of KAM:
 - I. Identifying key accounts: developing criteria against which organisations can assess the strategic importance of their clients to their business. Ojasalo refers to the work of Campbell and Cunningham (1983) and their identification of criteria such as: sales volume; use of strategic resources; the age of the relationship; and the profitability of the customer to the supplier.
 - II. Analysing the basic characteristics of key accounts: which includes assessing the client's internal value chain; the client's volume of sales; and market factors impacting the client's business. Identification of goal congruence, or commonality of interests between the buyer and seller is also emphasised due to its effect on the degree of cooperation between both parties at strategic and operational levels.
 - III. Selecting suitable strategies for key accounts: which includes an assessment of the power-balance in the buyer-supplier relationship.
 - IV. Developing operational capabilities to build, grow, and maintain profitable and long-lasting relationships with key accounts: this refers to customization and development of capabilities related to products and services, organizational structure, information exchange and individuals.
2. Ivens and Pardo (2008) divide the existing KAM literature into three groups: the dyadic relationships between key accounts and their suppliers; the role of individual managers and their tasks; and the overall design and management of key account programmes from the organisation's point of view. Based on this review of the field, Homburg et al., (2002) differentiated the elements of KAM according to: Activities; Resources; Actors; and Formalization.

- I. Activities: things which suppliers can carry out for their key accounts e.g. special pricing, customisation of products, information sharing.
 - II. Actors: the special actors that participate in key account activities. Within this category, Homburg *et al.* (2002, p.44) define the use of teams as “the extent to which teams are formed to coordinate activities for key accounts”.
 - III. Resources: drawing on the KAM literature and team-selling literature, Homburg *et al.* all identify the need for support within the supplier organisation from such diverse functional groups as marketing and sales, logistics, manufacturing, information technology and finance and accounting.
 - IV. Formalization: the extent to which the treatment of the most important customers is governed by formal rules and standard procedures.
3. Zupancic (2008) builds on the work of Homburg *et al.*, (2002) and Ojasalo (2001) in looking at how successful KAM requires consideration at both the Corporate and Operational levels. Zupancic aligned to these two areas the following five ‘Dimensions of KAM’:
- I. Strategy: which covers specific strategies for the selected key accounts and the strategic focus on KAM within the overall corporate strategy.
 - II. Solution: how to fulfil the individual needs of each customer and across the portfolio of key accounts.
 - III. People: a critical dimension in KAM that deals with skills, personal development and career paths.
 - IV. Management: under which we subsume aspects like structures, processes and procedures.
 - V. Screening: which deals with knowledge, information and data.

Despite its practical importance and the field of research being in its fourth decade, the KAM literature has produced few generalizable empirical insights. The majority of the extant literature is conceptual (Ojasalo, 2001; Shi *et al.*, 2004) and with the empirical work preferring case studies or interviews (McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Zupancic, 2008).

2.3.3 Strengths and weaknesses of KAM and the central role of the Key Account Manager

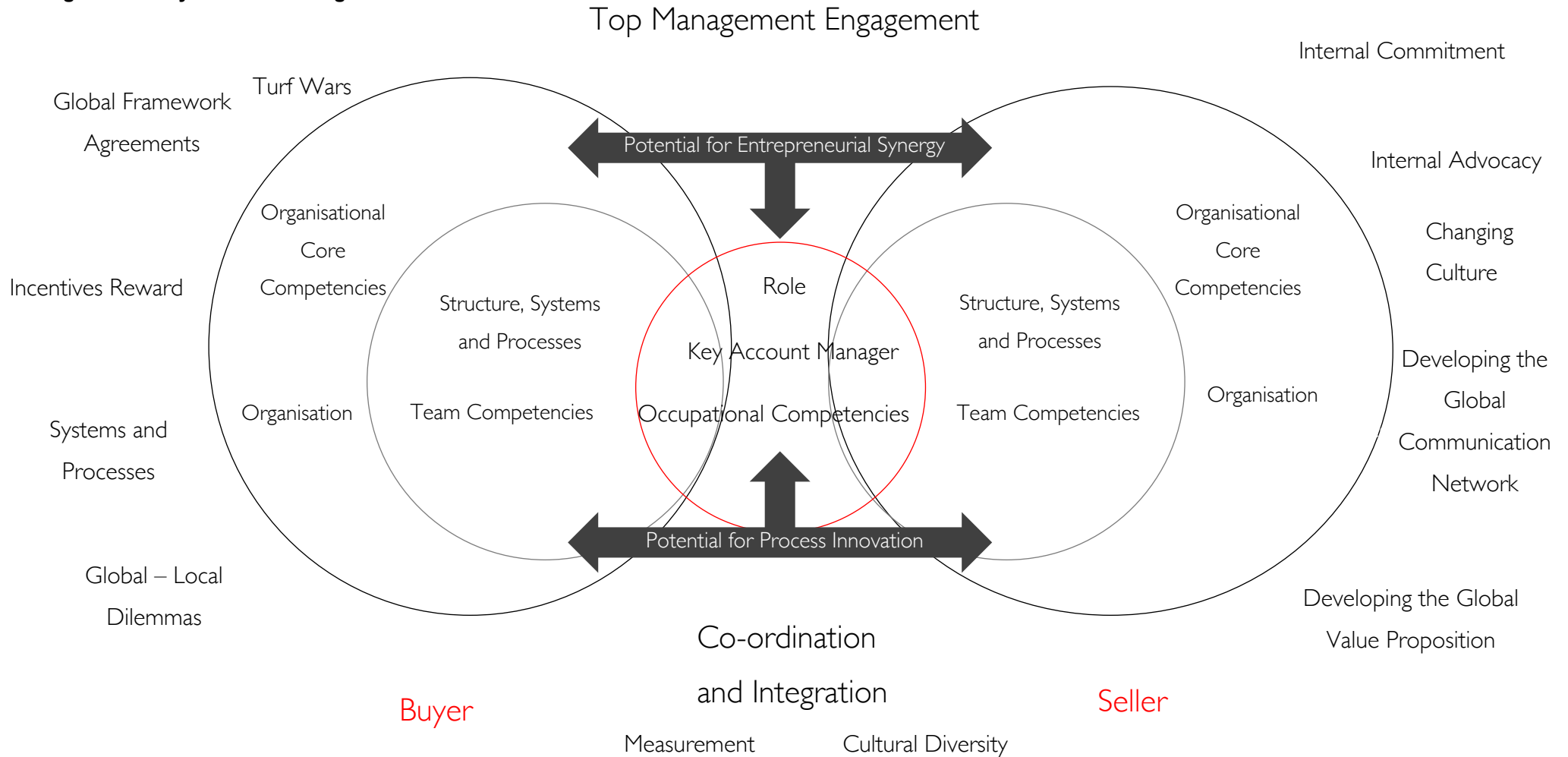
Common to all theories advanced in the field of KAM is the central role of the Key Account Manager. The literature suggests that the success of KAM is fundamentally reliant on the

skills, capabilities and behaviours of the Key Account Managers (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1996; Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009). Figure 2.2 highlights the strategic importance of the KAM as the nexus between internal and external facing activity. When done effectively, these competencies can lead to synergistic value creation. Pardo *et al.* (2020) elaborate on this by identifying the additional challenge of the KAM being not just a boundary-spanner between their firm and the client, but at the same time needing to also span hierarchies both within their firm and the client. Pardo *et al.* (2020) comment that “in fact, the levels of contact key account managers have, both internally and externally, often encompass the whole hierarchical range inside the respective organisations, that is, it reaches from the top management teams inside their own firm and inside the key account firm all the way down to numerous operative units in both firms.”

Although there has been considerable discussion around the desired skills and capabilities of a Key Account Manager (Wotruba and Castleberry, 1993; Sengupta *et al.*, 2000; Ryals and McDonald, 2008), with a few notable exceptions, such research has largely overlooked the attitudes and behaviours of individual Key Account Managers when it comes to managing internal teams (Ulaga and Sharma, 2001; Wilson and Millman, 2003; Guenzi *et al.*, 2007). Indeed as pointed out by Guenzi *et al.*, (2009:300) “individual-level behaviours that should be adopted by those who are in charge of managing relationships with strategic accounts remain an under-developed topic in academic research”.

In their extensive review of the existing literature in KAM, Guesalaga and Johnston (2010) found, somewhat surprisingly, only nine papers focusing on the characteristics and behaviours of key account managers. Out of this small number of empirical investigations, the overwhelming attention was the assessment of Key Account Manager attitudes and behaviours in relation to the customer.

Figure 2.2: Key Account Manager as nexus



Source: Adapted from Wilson and Millman (2003)

What emerges then is a gap in the KAM literature around how Key Account Managers interact with and align the internal team behind their client strategy. The case has been made for Key Account Managers to progress beyond the traditional lone wolf sales orientation, learn to manage teams and co-ordinate cross-functional activities (Weitz and Bradford, 1999). Authors such as Wotruba and Castleberry (1993); Moon and Gupta (1997); Weitz and Bradford (1999); and Ahmed and Rafiq (2003) similarly identify a need for Key Account Managers to be characterized by team management activities. In spite of these calls, the field offers little empirical support for how Client Relationship Partners make the transition from lone-wolf to the leader of an effectively aligned team.

Recognising this gap in his own framework and the theories of others, Zupancic (2008, p.329) states:

“...at an operational level there is a solid fundament and a consensus about the tools and practice for managing key accounts. On the other hand one has to accept that managing key accounts also has to do with managing relations as human beings. Therefore we see a great demand for research with a focus on the soft factors like trust, harmony, sympathy, etc. These aspects cannot replace all the systematic customer management work. They complement them.”

A review of the literature in the field of KAM therefore identifies the following areas for investigation that are relevant to this study:

1. What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1996; Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009)
2. How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011; Ryals and McDonald, 2008; Brehmer and Rehme, 2009; Chuang *et al.*, 2013; Davies *et al.*, 2010; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009; Georges and Eggert, 2003; Guesalaga and Johnston, 2010)

2.4 Leadership

In search of the behaviours or other insights that may help CRPs in their attempts to align peers behind a key client strategy, the author then turned to the extensive literature in the field of leadership. The field of leadership was considered relevant due to its exploration of how individuals engage in a process of social influence to maximise the efforts of themselves and others towards the achievement of a goal (Cyert, 1990; Plsek and Wilson, 2001).

2.4.1 What is leadership?

Leadership is a concept that many take for granted but the difficulties of defining it speak to a variety of issues in the social sciences. Bennis and Nanus (1997, p.4) state that: "...no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders and effective organizations from ineffective organizations". Given the vast array of articles and texts that exist on the subject of leadership, this lack of understanding may be a surprise to those outside of the field (Goffee and Jones, 2000). Indeed many academics suggest that in recent times the area has been studied more extensively than almost any other aspect of human behaviour (Goffee and Jones, 2000; Higgs, 2003; Bennis and Nanus, 1997).

Yet it is precisely due to this focus by academics that the field of leadership offers such exciting potential for advancing our understanding of how Client Relationship Partners might effectively influence the activities of peers on a key account.

2.4.2 The loci and mechanisms of leadership

For some time a core debate in the field has been whether there should be a focus on leadership in relation to specific traits or on leadership as a process (Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lord *et al.*, 1986; Yukl, 1989). A similarly enduring debate concerns whether there should be a focus on the leader as an individual in an organization (Kotter, 2001; Collins, 2001; Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Kets De Vries *et al.*, 2004) or leadership arising within a group or system (Collier and Esteban, 2000; Senge *et al.*, 1999). Questions have also arisen as to whether different situations and circumstances call for different kinds of leadership (Graeff, 1997) and the difference between management and leadership (Kotter, 1990; Kotter, 2001; Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Young and Dulewicz, 2007).

More recently a debate has emerged on how to measure the success or effectiveness of leadership, with a particular theoretical lens suggesting a shift from hard, financial performance to the impact of leaders on their followers (Weick, 1995; Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Several attempts have been made to bring order to these seemingly often-contradictory concepts. Particularly noteworthy are papers by Higgs (2003); Hernandez *et al.* (2011) and Batistič *et al.* (2017). Alongside other studies, these papers provide an overview of the key leadership theories set out in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Core theories and concepts in the field of leadership

Theory	Core concepts	Proponents and commentators
Trait	'Great Man' approach; Intended to aid personnel selection; No single group of characteristics distinguishing all leaders identified	Mann (1959); Stogdill (1974); Lord <i>et al.</i> (1986)
Skills	Emphasises the competencies of leaders; Leaders can be developed; Weak in predictive value	Katz (1974); Mumford <i>et al.</i> (2000)
Situational	Adaptation of leadership style; Widely recognised; Prescriptive	Graeff (1997)
Contingency	Focus on leader in conjunction with situation; Least Preferred Coworker scale; Leader-member relations, task structure, position power	Strube and Garcia (1981); Peters <i>et al.</i> (1985); Fiedler (1967)
Path-Goal	Leadership style matches characteristics of subordinates and work setting; Integrates expectancy theory; Numerous sets of assumptions	House (1996); Northouse (2010)
Leader-Member Exchange	Centred on interactions between leaders and followers; In-group members and out-group members	Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995); Harris <i>et al.</i> (2009)
Transformational	Broad set of generalizations; Incorporates Charismatic and Affective elements; Holistic model	Burns (1978); Bass (1985); Bennis and Nanus (1997); Hunt and Conger (1999); Yukl (1999)
Shared	Group-level phenomenon; Leadership occurs within networks and is enacted through practices	Pearce and Conger (2003); Carson <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Leaderplex	Cognitive, social and behavioural dimensions	Hooijberg <i>et al.</i> (1997)

Having reviewed the field one cannot help but agree with the view of Higgs (2003) quoting Higgs and Rowland (2001) that the extensive literature on leadership, and changing schools of thought and models, contain much re-working of earlier concepts.

Though Hernandez *et al.* (2011, p.1165) take a more generous view: "...the diverse range of perspectives developed within the leadership literature all represent legitimate ways of conceptualizing leadership; with each having contributed to furthering our understanding of what constitutes leadership in terms of its breadth and depth".

The paper by Hernandez *et al.* (2011) is particularly useful in identifying fundamental principles for codifying the leadership theory that has emerged over the last 100 years. Based on their qualitative review of a number of core theories, they put forward a two-dimensional framework that analyzes each theory according to two questions: "where does leadership come from (the locus)?" and "how is leadership transmitted (the mechanism)?"

When identifying the locus of leadership, a key consideration is whether the leader is the sole initiator of leadership or if other loci initiate leadership. In so doing they were able to identify the following five loci that form the first dimension of their framework:

1. Leader: theories that state that leadership either totally or partially arises from the leader
2. Follower: unique aspects of followers which by themselves (i.e. independent of the leader) would make leadership possible
3. Leader-follower dyad: theories that place leadership origins within the leader-follower relationship, with an emphasis on leadership arising from specific features of the relationship rather than unique partners in the relationship
4. Collective: theories where leadership is presumed to arise from the interconnected relationships of people within a specific group of individuals
5. Context: theories that describe features of the environment as giving rise to leadership and/or which recognize the power of context such as culture

Source: adapted from Hernandez *et al.* (2011)

The second dimension, the mechanism of leadership (the means by which leadership is enacted), is categorized as follows:

1. Traits: the theory that certain personality characteristics help differentiate leaders from other individuals
2. Behaviours: the types of behaviours that make leadership possible, which one can examine independently of whether they are consistent with any specific traits

3. Cognition: theories that focus on the thoughts and sense-making process related to leadership
4. Affect: the emotions and moods involved in leadership

Source: adapted from Hernandez et al. (2011)

To help further explain their two dimensional concept, Hernandez *et al.* (2011, p.1168) usefully draw an analogy to grammar: "...the locus of leadership is the subject of the sentence (that which acts) and the mechanism is the verb (the action). It follows that combining the two will result in a complete sentence such as "The leader behaves" or "The follower feels".

Hernandez *et al.* (2011) advocate the benefits of taking as wide an interpretation as possible of their model over a narrow focus on just one dimension of each of locus and mechanism. If we are to heed the advice of Hernandez et al. and take a more holistic approach to the research question that is the focus of this study, then transformational leadership theory comes to the fore as one of the most promising lines of inquiry. Hernandez *et al.* (2011, p.1181) comment:

"It is probably no coincidence that one of the most effective leadership theories, transformational leadership, encompasses all four mechanisms of leadership with its dyadic focus in the foundational theory, and can explain additional variance above and beyond other theories, which may only capture one or two mechanisms (e.g. transactional leadership, the early behavioural studies)".

2.4.3 Transformational and transactional leadership

Researchers since the mid-eighties have attempted to differentiate between transformational and transactional leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Hunt and Conger, 1999; Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership is based on an exchange of rewards for meeting objectives and goals (Bass and Avolio, 1993). Transactional leaders are described in terms similar to those used to describe traditional managerial roles such as planning and budgeting, controlling, and providing tangible rewards to meet lower level needs (Bass, 1996). Hunt (1996) sees the leadership behaviour typologies of Mintzberg (1979) and Yukl (1998) as representing transactional leadership. The fundamental task is the effective and efficient management of the organization in conditions of stability and predictability (Yukl, 1998).

Transactional leadership, like management, is seen as an essential capability for all leaders and a requirement in all organizations (Bass, 1996; Hunt, 1996). By itself, however, transactional leadership is not sufficient if organizations are to succeed in conditions marked by turbulence, chaos, complexity, discontinuity and competitiveness. For organizations, such

conditions demand from their people enthusiasm, dedication, long term commitment, flexibility and adaptability. Qualities that, in turn, require a different type and quality of leadership (Bennis, 2001; Kotter, 2001; Avolio and Bass, 1999; Bass, 1996).

The term ‘transformational leadership’ is used to describe leadership characterized by a focus on a vision for the future of the organization which mobilizes a sense of purpose and enthusiasm in employees, proposing both new meaning and related values which can become the basis for culture change (Yukl, 1998; Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Hunt, 1996).

Bass (1985) proposes a model for the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership (see Table 2.4) by suggesting that transformational leadership augments transactional leadership in that the former, because of its inspirational quality, results in raising followers’ performance above and beyond that accounted for by transactional leadership. However, Burns (2003) argues that the relationship between the leader and follower is not simply a case of the leader choosing to lead and the follower electing to follow. On the contrary, he suggests that this relationship is a complex multi-dimensional concept and that a number of positions that individuals, be they potential leaders or followers, may find themselves in will ultimately affect this relationship.

In summary, in contrast to other leadership theories, it is argued that the transformational leader inspires, has the ability to intellectually stimulate and is individually considerate of his or her followers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2003). In support of transformational leadership there is also substantial evidence, resulting from research using a variety of methodological approaches, that the approach is an effective form of leadership (Yukl, 1998).

Table 2.4: The transformational leadership model

Transformational Leadership Factors	Transactional Leadership Factors
• Idealised attributes	• Contingent reward
• Idealised behaviours	• Management by exception (active and passive)
• Inspirational motivation	
• Intellectual stimulation	
• Individualised consideration	

Source: Bass (1985)

However, while transformational leadership shows some relevance in terms of addressing the Research Aim of this study, its follower centred perspective is problematic when attempting to transpose it into a City law firm where few partners would consider themselves

a 'follower' of a peer. Given this and other limitations of transformational leadership (van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013), the author next turned his attention to the research on collective leadership.

2.4.4 Collective leadership

Conventional leadership studies, predicated as they are on clearly defined roles and hierarchical relationships between leaders and followers, fail to capture the complex power relations and collective nature of leadership that is characteristic of PSFs (Empson, 2017). However, the emerging literature on collective leadership and leader–follower relations do represent useful lenses through which to develop a more nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics among professional peers and in so doing help to address the research aim of this study.

Empson and Alvehus (2019) reflect on how in the past decade the study of leadership has moved beyond heroic, trait-based studies of individuals in conventional hierarchical organizations (Bligh *et al.*, 2011; Collinson *et al.*, 2018) to explore the phenomenon of collective leadership. According to Empson (p. 4):

“scholars within this emerging field view leadership ‘not as a property of individuals ... but as a collective phenomenon that is distributed or shared among different people, potentially fluid, and constructed in interaction’ (Denis *et al.*, 2012), therefore emphasizing leadership processes and interactions”.

Empson (2019) goes on to reference how “a variety of overlapping terms have proliferated to describe this broad phenomenon, including collective (Ospina *et al.*, 2020), plural (Denis *et al.*, 2012) and relational (Uhl-Bien and Ospina, 2012), as well as related concepts such as shared (Pearce & Conger, 2003), distributed (Gronn, 2002) and complexity leadership (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).”

Pearce and Conger (2003, p.286) describe collective leadership as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group goals" and in which interpersonal influence includes lateral networks as well as the traditional hierarchical view. Karp (2013) takes the view that this process mirrors the patterning of power in organisations and also argues that leaders are identifiable, not by their formal role, but by the social effects and social acceptance of their acts, meaning that leadership is a 'right to act' bestowed by others. Thus a leader can be anyone who is situationally able to influence a group and leadership can be understood as a series of interaction processes where people influence one another.

In her 2019 paper, Empson draws a distinction between scholars who take a processual view of collective leadership and those who adopt a relational view of leader-follower dynamics. She identifies Cullen and Yammarino (2014) and Ospina *et al.* (2020) among those to focus on “the process of leadership as co-constructed among an extended group of colleagues, rather than the actions of individual leaders alone” (p. 2). To Empson, these studies of collective leadership emphasize processual “how” questions, aimed at understanding how leadership is produced and performed.

Empson (2019) goes on to identify Chreim (2015); DeRue and Ashford (2010) and Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2014) as scholars who adopt a relational view of leader–follower relations and whose work “add an important perspective to studies of collective leadership by emphasizing that leadership and followership reflect a ‘relational process co-created by leaders and followers in context’”.

However, Empson’s characterization of the relational stance of leader-follower scholars can be further sub-divided. Uhl-Bien (2006) splits the orientation of relational leadership research into two perspectives, each of which view leadership as a social process but approach it from different directions:

1. Entity. An entity approach to relationship-based leadership focuses on individuals and their sensemaking processes, including their perceptions, intentions, behaviours, personalities, expectations, and evaluations relative to their relationships with one another
2. Relational. A relational based approach views knowledge as socially, rather than as intra-individually, constructed. From an organisational perspective this means that knowledge is created between people through the process of relating and phenomena are understood through inter-subjective meaning. In other words, it is the active relational process that creates common understandings on the basis of discourse and that sensemaking is a fluid, ongoing and interactive process bounded only by socio-cultural context.

Whether adopting a processual, entity or relational view, applying the literature on collective leadership or leader-follower dynamics to City law firms is not without issue. Quoting Chreim, (2015), Empson comments (p. 5) that studies of collective leadership “typically take the formal authority of those in leadership positions for granted, neglecting the extended network of informal power relations that underlie the leadership dynamics”. As noted in Section 2.2, this is problematic in the context of PSFs where senior professionals claim extensive autonomy and grant leadership authority to their colleagues on a contingent basis (Empson and Langley, 2013). Equally, issues arise from within the field of leader-follower relations too.

While acknowledging that the focus has shifted focus from individual leaders to those supposedly under their influence (Bligh et al., 2011), Empson and Alvehus (2019, p.5) comment that it is “still the ‘accepted wisdom that there is no leadership without followers’”. Indeed, many studies of leader–follower relations continue to perpetuate the overly oppositional binaries of leadership and followership common in conventional leadership studies (Collinson, 2005; Fairhurst, 2001).

However, notwithstanding these issues, the field of collective leadership and, within that, leader-follower relations certainly show, more than any other leadership theory, considerable promise in helping to better understand and explain the phenomenon of leadership in City law firms. That being said, rather than subscribing to a processual, entity or relational based view of collective leadership, and in keeping with the stated methodology (see Chapter 3), this study intentionally keeps an open mind as to whether any of these perspectives, alone or in combination, might help address the research aim. Accordingly, the broader processual, relational and context oriented definition of leadership as “the process of influencing people and providing an environment for them to achieve personal, team, or organizational objectives” offered by Klimoski (2013, p. 1) is adopted by this study.

This definition offers a critical perspective that is specifically relevant to this study: namely that it situates leadership within the influence relationship, rather than as a phenomenon that is intrinsic to the leader alone. It emphasizes the influential role of the leader on the behaviour of others, the reciprocal benefit of the relational process and does not constrain leadership to a formal, hierarchically defined position. As such, it appears to better reflect the characteristics of modern City law firms.

2.4.5 Leadership versus management

A number of writers have argued that management is distinct from leadership and that the managerial role has a different remit than that of leadership (Daft, 2006; Kotter, 2001; Barker, 1997). Proponents of this view assign different functions and skills to leaders and managers, as summarized in Table 2.5. In general, managers are charged with maintaining the stability of the organization, while leaders are charged with adapting the organization in response to change in the external environment (Bennis 1998; Conger 1992; Kotter 1990).

Table 2.5: Leadership versus management

Leadership (change focus)	Management (Stability focus)
• Creating a vision for the future	• Planning / budgeting
• Establishing direction	• Organizing / staffing
• Aligning people	• Controlling / problem solving
• Motivating / inspiring	• Produce order, predictability
• Produce change	• Deliver on time and within budget
• Provide potential for the new	

Source: Daft (2002); Kotter (2001); Barker (1997)

Tasks that characterize the managerial function include dealing with complexity, planning, budgeting, structuring, delegating, monitoring, controlling, organizing, staffing, and problem solving (Kotter 2001; Bennis & Nanus 1997; Conger 1992;). To the leaders they assign the tasks of creating and communicating a vision for the future, setting direction, creating and sustaining alignment, inspiring, mobilizing and motivating the work force and building trust. In fact, for Bennis and Nanus the crisis in leadership everywhere can be explained by the fact that 'Leaders have failed to instill vision, meaning and trust in their followers.' Leaders must do the right thing while managers must do the thing right.

The distinction between leadership and management is challenged by Yukl (1998), who sees the distinction as purely arbitrary and serving no real purpose, particularly if there is a pejorative nuance in the use of the term 'manager'. Andrewartha *et al.* (1997) suggest that the basis of the distinction, namely conditions of stability (management) as opposed to conditions of change (leadership), has all but disappeared given the constant turbulence and competitive environment in which most organizations find themselves. Contemporary managers must be able to lead in conditions that are constantly changing with expectations for performance continually escalating (Andrewartha *et al.*, 1997; Quinn *et al.*, 1996). This view suggests that managers who are unable to lead are deficient in one of the functions of management and are, therefore, not very good managers (Lewis 1996). For Mintzberg (1979), leading was traditionally an activity that was integral to the managerial role. For most of these authors the terms 'management' and 'leadership' are interchangeable.

Whether or not there is a distinction between leadership and management and whether one is a subset of the other, most writers agree that given environmental conditions that demand organizational change, a response is called for that is described as 'leadership'. In keeping with how the terms 'management' and 'leadership' are used interchangeably in City firms, this study therefore uses the term leadership to include the wide variety of 'leadership' and 'management' tasks that CRPs and positional leaders are expected to perform.

A review of the literature in the field of leadership therefore identifies the following questions that are relevant to this research:

1. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms? (Kotter, 2001; Graeff, 1997; Higgs, 2003; Hernandez *et al.*, 2011; Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lord *et al.*, 1986; Yukl, 1998; Pearce and Conger, 2003)
2. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account? (Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Goffee and Jones, 2010; Goffee and Jones, 2000); (Kotter, 2001; Collins, 2001; Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Kets De Vries *et al.*, 2004)
3. How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities? (Young and Dulewicz, 2007)

2.5 Paradox theory

As mentioned in Section 2.1, the literature on paradox theory became more prominent as this study evolved. Specifically, a more thorough examination of paradox theory (and in particular the Dynamic Equilibrium Model (DEM)) took place after the data for this study had been collected. As a consequence, the literature on paradox theory does not directly inform the seven Research Questions that frame this study (see Section 2.6) but does play a prominent role in the discussion to this study in order to help interpret the findings. As a consequence the following sections on paradox theory include literature that was reviewed both pre and post data collection. The introduction of new literature after data collection is consistent with the direction given by Smith *et al.* (2009) who support its role in helping to uncover and interpret unanticipated territory.

A central role for paradox theory

The problem this doctoral research aims to address is how City law firms can respond to commercial pressures by establishing a competitive advantage through the effective

management of their relationships with key clients. A focus on key client relationships in City law firms places great emphasis on the leadership role performed by the Client Relationship Partners who lead these complex, boundary spanning relationships. The time these Client Relationship Partners spend on internally focused activities can be greater than the time they spend with the fee-paying client. Indeed a review of the literature on key account management has already identified the key role performed by Client Relationship Partners as the nexus between internal and external (client) facing activity – see Figure 2.2.

Operating as a nexus across multiple boundaries inevitably exposes Client Relationship Partners to a range of organizational tensions and competing demands. Indeed, the systems and cultures within which Client Relationship Partners operate can vary significantly based, as they are, on the past decisions of each firm as they have adapted over time to the circumstances that are unique to them. Leaders must decide the size and shape of their organization, where they should focus their resources and navigate ongoing tensions between investing for the long term versus maximizing profits in the near term.

As noted by Smith (2014, p.1592) “in the context of more complex and global environments, organizations and their leaders face pressures to address multiple, competing strategic demands simultaneously”. City law firms, positional leaders and Client Relationship Partners are not immune to these tensions. Indeed, after many years of operating in a highly regulated and previously highly protected area of industry, in recent years City law firms have faced a challenging global economic environment, a shifting regulatory landscape and continued market consolidation (Cohen, 2019).

Navigating these waters asks questions of, and causes tensions within, City law firms in relation to leadership, identity, roles, structure and values.

Early organizational scholars and a prevailing practitioner paradigm argue that success in the face of competing tensions depends on leaders making consistent choices. However as identified by Smith and Tushman (2005, p.523) “...leaders typically face multiple demands that conflict with one another, and it’s a mistake to assume there are cut-and-dried choices.”

To understand and explain how to address such tensions, academics and practitioners are increasingly adopting a paradox lens.

Smith and Lewis (2011, p.382) define Paradox as:

“...contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time. This definition highlights two components of paradox: (1) underlying tensions — that is, elements that seem logical individually but inconsistent and even absurd when juxtaposed — and (2) responses that embrace tensions simultaneously.”

2.5.1 The evolution of paradox theory

The study of Paradox aims to explore how organizations can attend to competing demands simultaneously. They are seen essentially as dilemmas that cannot be resolved. However addressing tension, dilemmas and paradox in organisational systems is not new. Paradox and Paradox Theory can be positioned in a broader chronology of work on organisational theory as set out in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Alternative approaches to managing organizational tensions

Key Theory / Perspective	Early Organizational Theories	Contingency	Paradox
Foundational research	Fayol (1911); Taylor (1911)	Woodward (1965); Lawrence and Lorsch (1967); Galbraith (1973)	Smith and Berg (1987); Quinn and Cameron (1988); Poole and Van de Ven (1989)
Approach to organizational tension	A or B?	Under what conditions A or B?	How to engage A & B simultaneously?
Research methods	Comparison of alternatives	Mean tendencies, limited variables	Systemic, discursive, contextual methods
Epistemological assumptions	One best way to be successful	Alignment and consistency with internal and external environment enable success	Contradiction is inherent and can be powerful to enable peak performance if harnessed

As identified by Smith and Lewis (2011, p.394):

“...early researchers responded to tensions by seeking the one best way to organize”. In response contingency theory emerged in the 1960s, calling for researchers to consider the conditions under which alternative elements of tensions were most effective”.

Contingency theorists advocate that success depends on the ability of management to recognize and then resolve tensions. Most often this involves ensuring alignment within the internal system and with the external environment.

A paradox lens offers a different view. According to Smith and Lewis (2011, p. 395): “The juxtaposition of coexisting opposites intensifies experiences of tension, challenging actors’ cognitive limits, demanding creative sensemaking, and seeking more fluid, reflexive, and sustainable management strategies.”

However, as noted by Smith *et al.* (2016, p.5):

“Hostility to contradictions is deeply rooted, especially in the Western world. Aristotelian logic treats contradictions and tensions as signals that we need to seek a more accurate, unified truth. If one idea is “right,” its opposite must be wrong; if that seems not to be the case, then we must redefine our idea to eliminate the contradiction. We also struggle to make decisions and take actions that we see as inconsistent with an accepted truth, feeling a discomfort that psychologist Leon Festinger described as “cognitive dissonance.” The same discomfort surfaces when values conflict.”

Applying a paradox perspective to addressing organizational tensions is therefore not without challenge; potentially requiring leaders and practitioners to reflect on their ontological position and fundamental beliefs about their role and what it means to lead.

Set against this challenge, Smith and Lewis (2011) reviewed twenty years of studies across twelve management journals, generating 360 articles with a focus on organizational paradox. In so doing, Smith and Lewis have made a strong contribution to the field of paradox theory through their categorization of the diverse applications of a paradox perspective according to:

1. ‘Learning’ (knowledge);
2. ‘Belonging’ (identity / interpersonal relationships);
3. ‘Organizing’ (processes); and
4. ‘Performing’ (goals).

Figure 2.3 from Smith and Lewis (2011, p.383) shows the exemplars that illustrate each category, as well as tensions at their intersections.

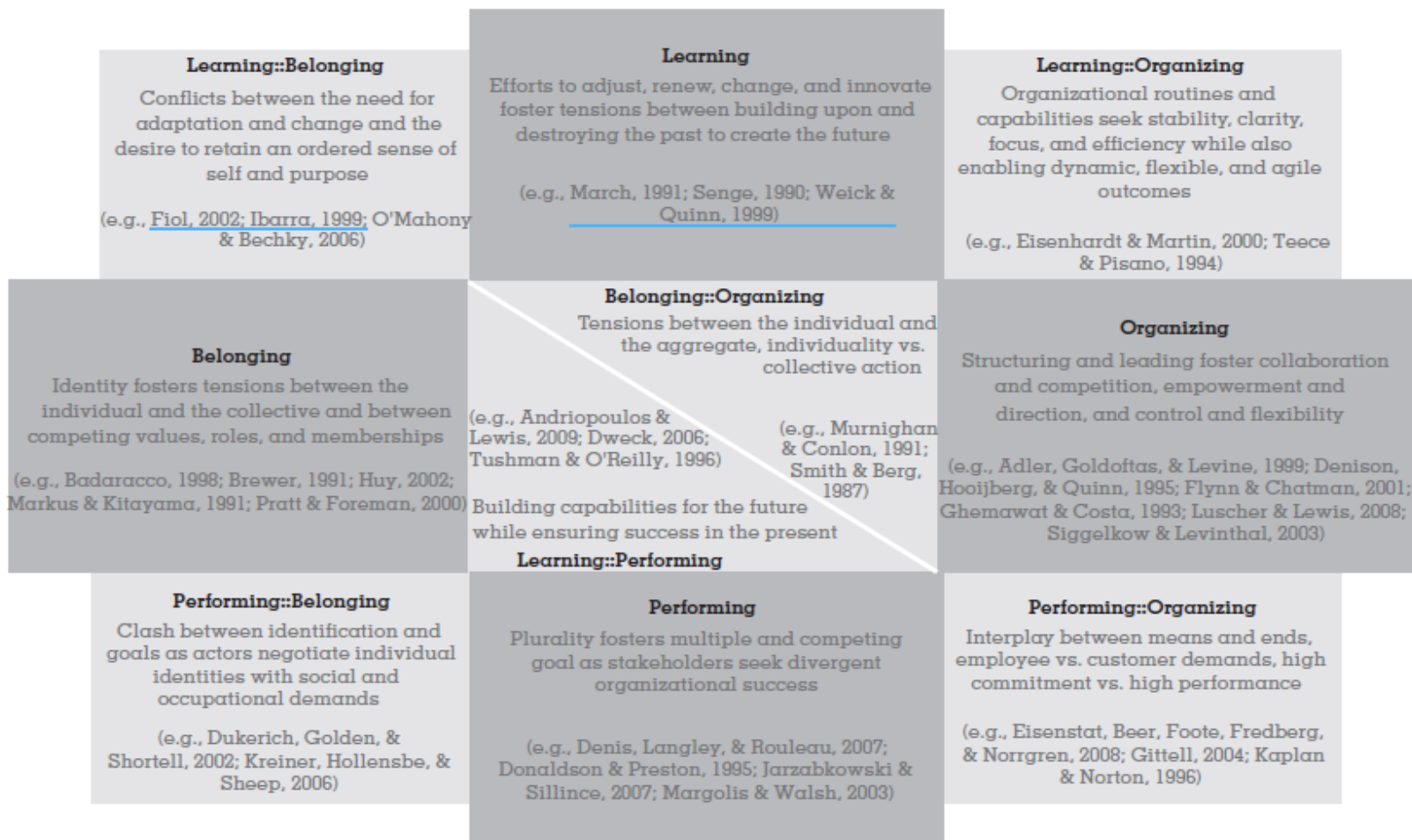


Figure 2.3: Categorization of organizational tensions

With reference to Figure 2.3, according to Smith and Lewis (2011):

Learning paradoxes are apparent as systems change, renew and innovate. Quoting Abernathy and Clark (1985); Ghemawat and Ricart Costa (1993); Weick and Quinn (1999), Smith and Lewis (2011) comment that “such tensions reflect the nature and pace of engaging new ideas, including tensions between radical and incremental innovation or episodic and continuous change.

Complexity and plurality drive **belonging paradoxes**, or tensions of identity. These tensions arise between the individual and the collective, as individuals and groups seek both homogeneity and distinction. At the firm level, opposing yet coexisting roles, memberships, and values highlight tensions of belonging.

Organizing paradoxes surface as complex systems create competing designs and processes to achieve a desired outcome. These include tensions between collaboration and competition (Murnighan and Conlon, 1991), empowerment and direction (Denison *et al.*, 1995), or routine and change (Flynn and Chatman, 2001).

Performing paradoxes stem from the plurality of stakeholders and result in competing strategies and goals. Tensions surface between the differing, and often conflicting, demands of varied internal and external stakeholders (Donaldson and Preston, 1995).

Tensions operate between as well as within these categories. For example Learning and Performing can result in tensions between building capabilities for the future while ensuring success in the present. Moreover, these tensions can also surface at multiple levels as well as in different contexts. For example the tensions between Learning and Performing can apply at the level of the individual as well as at organisational level. A further contribution therefore of the categorisation put forward by Smith and Lewis is to highlight the richness, depth and scope of understanding organizational tension that is afforded by adopting a paradox perspective.

Smith and Lewis (2011) were also able to identify a number of shortcomings in the paradox theory literature as a result of their review. These include:

- A “lack of conceptual clarity”, for which they cite the “multitude of terms used to describe paradoxical tensions”, which include “dilemma”, “dialectic” and “dichotomy” alongside paradox;
- An ontological debate concerning whether paradoxical tensions are an “inherent feature of a system or as social constructions that emerge from actors’ cognition and rhetoric.”; and

- Divergent strategies on how to address paradox in organisations. Referencing Poole and Van de Ven (1989), Smith and Lewis (2011) identify four strategic responses:
 - I. Acceptance - keeping tensions separate and appreciating their differences;
 - II. Spatial separation - allocating opposing forces across different organizational units;
 - III. Temporal separation - choosing one pole of a tension at one point in time and then switching; and
 - IV. Synthesis - seeking a view that accommodates the opposing poles.

The view of Smith and Lewis (2011) is that the first strategy focuses on acceptance, whereas the last three seek to resolve the underlying tensions.

In response to these identified shortcomings, Smith and Lewis (2011) attempt to build a more holistic theoretical model than those which have gone before. The integrative Dynamic Equilibrium Model (DEM) they put forward (see Figure 2.4, Smith and Lewis (2011, p. 389)) is intended to: deliver conceptual clarity; describe both the inherent and socially constructed features of organizational tensions; and integrate management strategies of acceptance and avoidance.

The model has three main features:

1. Paradoxical tensions are both latent and salient;
2. Responses to tensions entail iterating among management strategies; and
3. The outcome or impact of management strategies has a direct impact of an organization's sustainability.

Smith and Lewis (2011, p.388) go on to explain that:

“Researchers have explored paradoxical tensions as either inherent—existing within the system—or socially constructed—created by actors' cognition or rhetoric. We propose that they are both. That is, opposing yet interrelated dualities are embedded in the process of organizing and are brought into juxtaposition via environmental conditions. In this way we focus on forces that render latent tensions salient to organizational actors.”

Key to the model is a shift in perspective in relation to the perceived role of leadership. Smith and Lewis (2011, p.386) propose that in the context of their model “the role of leadership is to support opposing forces and harness the constant tension between them, enabling the system to not only survive but continuously improve.”

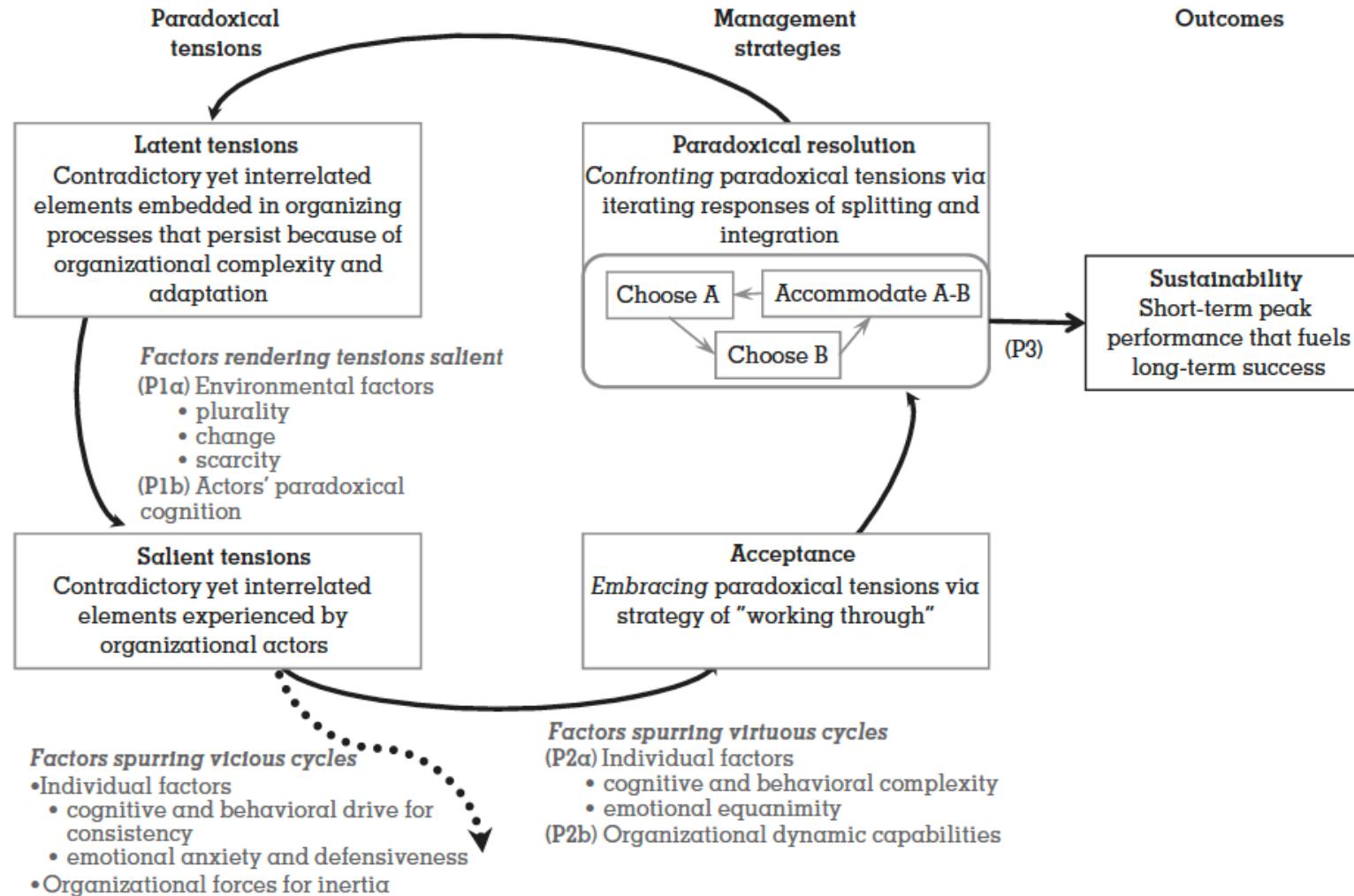


Figure 2.4: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing

2.5.2 Paradox theory and the dynamic equilibrium model (DEM)

2.5.2.1 Latent tensions, plurality, change and scarcity

A key proposition of the Dynamic Equilibrium model put forward by Smith and Lewis (2011, p.390) is that tensions may remain latent (dormant, unperceived, or ignored) “until environmental factors — namely, **plurality, change, and scarcity** —render latent tensions salient.”

According to Smith and Lewis (2011), **plurality** denotes a multiplicity of views in contexts of diffuse power (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2007). Plurality expands uncertainty and surfaces competing goals and inconsistent processes (Cohen and March, 1974) (Cohen & March, 1974).”

Similarly, **change** spurs new opportunities for sensemaking as actors grapple with conflicting short- and long-term needs (Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Lüscher and Lewis, 2008) and with competing yet coexisting roles and emotions (Huy, 2002).

Finally, **Scarcity** involves resource limitations, whether temporal, financial, or human resources. As leaders make choices about how to allocate resources, this exacerbates tensions between opposing and interdependent alternatives (Smith and Tushman, 2005).

When faced with a combination of plurality, change, and scarcity, Smith and Lewis (2011) suggest individuals are likely to look to make **either/or** decisions as they aim to make sense of the interrelatedness. This can lead to a range of unintended consequences, including missing alternative perspectives and promoting unethical behaviors.

In summary, Smith and Lewis (2011, p.390) propose, “Latent paradoxical tensions become salient to organizational actors under environmental conditions of plurality, change, and scarcity.”

2.5.2.2 Paradoxical cognition and identity

In addition to external environmental forces that make latent tensions salient, Smith and Lewis (2011) highlight the role of actors’ cognition and subsequent rhetoric. Their proposition (p. 390) is that “Paradoxical cognition — frames and processes that recognize and juxtapose contradictory demands — make latent tensions more explicit” and that “ These cognitive frames may be spurred by cultural and contextual variables.”

Based on the review of the literature on the characteristics of law firms, a number of interesting questions begin to emerge when juxtaposed with the literature on paradoxical cognition and identity. These include potential lines of enquiry around the opportunity for

CRPs and positional leaders to be more flexible in how they perceive and execute leadership. Questions also arise in relation to the value of equipping leaders with a much greater range of tools, practices, cognitive frames and approaches with which they can address the type of strategic paradoxes suggested by the Dynamic Equilibrium model. Some practitioner literature on the characteristics of law firms also suggests the majority of law firm leaders make what can be interpreted as either/or decisions when faced with salient tensions, thereby potentially limiting the value that can be realized for their firm (Mayson, 2012). These lines of enquiry then lead to further considerations, such as whether there is a potentially fruitful relationship to explore (in the content of addressing the Research Aim) between paradox theory and sensemaking, as defined by Weick (1995).

2.5.2.3 Managing tensions: enabling vicious cycles

The question then arises as to what action organizations and leaders could take once tensions have moved from a latent to salient position. The literature on the DEM (Smith and Lewis, 2011) suggests responses take one of two forms: vicious or virtuous cycles. When faced with contradiction, tension and inconsistencies, some actors may be paralyzed, not knowing how to proceed. Others may employ defence mechanisms such as denial, repression or even humour. The result can be, in the words of Smith and Lewis (2011, p.391), individuals who react by:

“...choosing one agenda, altering their beliefs or actions to enable a consistent response (Cialdini *et al.*, 1995) or maintaining an often mindless commitment to previous behaviors in order to enable consistency between the past and the future. These responses can be reinforced by organizational dynamics and cultures that accept inertia, with the result being that “together, these individual and organizational forces for consistency fuel a reinforcing cycle by becoming increasingly focused on a single choice.”

While appearing to provide resolution in the short term, the implication of these vicious cycles is often a focus on the either/or outcome referred to above (section 2.5.2.1), which can result in missing alternative perspectives that would add greater overall value to the organization.

The literature on enabling vicious cycles also makes a helpful distinction between the concepts of structure and agent. In the context of this research, Structure can be interpreted as a firm’s approach to key account management, incorporating the broader values and policies in place. Agent then relates to CRPs as they perform their role operating within the Structure. This raises interesting questions in relation to the extent to which the structures support, control, enable or inhibit CRPs. Moreover, to what extent does a firm’s leadership use the structures as a strategic tool to direct the behaviour of Client Relationship Partners and partners more generally? What role do reward and recognition mechanisms play and to

what extent do these structures (and agents operating within) enable vicious cycles of decision-making that encourage defensiveness and promote either/or outcomes? The literature on paradox theory therefore shows promise in helping to navigate the tensions between Structure and Agent at play in relation to key account programmes in City law firms.

2.5.2.4 Managing tensions: enabling virtuous cycles

The Dynamic Equilibrium model promotes an alternative to vicious cycles. Virtuous cycles are ones in which an awareness of tensions results in a strategy of acceptance rather than defensiveness. In their action research Lüscher and Lewis (2008) show that helping managers accept tensions as paradoxical enabled their sensemaking and encouraged them to consider both/and possibilities.” Smith and Lewis (2011, p.391) note: “in contrast to factors that lead to defensiveness, we propose that attending to competing demands simultaneously requires **cognitive and behavioral complexity, emotional equanimity, and dynamic organizational capabilities.**”

Smith and Lewis (2011) go on to explain how, at the individual level, cognitive complexity reflects an ability to recognize and accept the interrelated relationship of underlying tensions. It enables actors to host paradoxical cognitions — the cognitive frames that accept contradictions. Emotional equanimity relates to an emotional calm and evenness, which further fosters paradoxical responses by reducing anxiety and fear spurred by inconsistencies.

The result is a proposition advanced by Smith and Lewis (2011, p.392) that “Actors with cognitive and behavioral complexity and emotional equanimity are more likely to accept paradoxical tensions rather than respond defensively.” According to Smith and Lewis (2011), effectively attending to contradictory demands simultaneously has been associated with career success (O'Mahony and Bechky, 2006), exceptional leadership capabilities (Denison *et al.*, 1995), high-performing groups (Murnighan and Conlon, 1991), and organizational performance (Cameron and Lavine, 2006; Tushman *et al.*, 2010).

In their paper, Smith and Lewis (2011, p.393) go on to propose that:

“...a dynamic equilibrium unleashes the power of paradox to foster sustainability. Individuals, groups, and firms achieve short-term excellence while ensuring that such performance fuels adaptation and growth enabling long-term success (Cameron & Lavine, 2006). More specifically, a dynamic equilibrium enables sustainability through three mechanisms: (1) enabling learning and creativity, (2) fostering flexibility and resilience, and (3) unleashing human potential.”

When considered in the context of the literature on the characteristics of law firms, the literature on virtuous cycles raises profound questions about the training and development opportunities provided to lawyers en route to becoming CRPs (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008).

2.5.2.5 Managing tensions: dynamic capabilities

According to Smith and Lewis (2011, p.392):

“...dynamic capabilities allow leaders to seek and integrate new information through distinct structures (Tushman and O'Reilly Iii, 1996), cultures (Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004), learning processes (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Zollo and Winter, 2002) and managerial capabilities (Adner and Helfat, 2003; Smith and Tushman, 2005).”

In effect, dynamic capabilities enable members to be more open and accepting of paradoxical tensions. As such, another core proposition of the model proposed by Smith and Lewis (2011, p.392) is that “Organizations with dynamic capabilities will foster greater acceptance of paradoxical tensions rather than encourage defensiveness.”

Rather than seeking stability and certainty, paradoxical leadership depends on embracing dynamism and change. Leaders must be emotionally and cognitively open to the new, developing a management strategy of coping with, rather than controlling and minimizing, ambiguity.

Key to realizing dynamic capabilities is the action of **separating** and **connecting** simultaneously. **Separating** involves respecting the distinct needs of groups with different agendas. The literature gives examples of how some companies achieve this by separating functions into sub-groups, such as keeping radical innovation teams separate from colleagues working on incremental improvements. **Connecting** involves finding linkages and synergies across goals. The literature suggests one way to do this is to “build an overarching organizational identity and unite people in a higher purpose—which helps employees and executives alike to embrace the interdependence of opposing strategies” (Smith and Tushman, 2005, p.532).

In the context of a dynamic equilibrium model, organizational success is considered to be dependent on being able to both separate and connect simultaneously. Promoting an overarching identity or vision without encouraging deep respect for the distinct value and needs of each stakeholder group can result in a bland compromise or allow one points of view to dominate (Smith and Tushman, 2005).

The literature on dynamic capabilities suggests an important role for CRPs in recognising the contributions of service lines partners on their account while at the same time projecting a

unified and coherent vision for the account overall. This has clear links to the work of Bass (1990) on transformational leadership and the benefits of leaders demonstrating individualised consideration for the activities of followers. In turn, at the firm level, the literature on dynamic capabilities suggests an important role for a firm's leadership in recognising the contributions of the various CRPs (and their teams) while projecting a unified vision for the wider portfolio of key accounts. By taking a paradox based perspective, this research may help to identify ways in which City law firms can refine metrics and rewards that simultaneously recognize the contributions of both the individual and the team.

2.5.2.6 Managing tensions: acceptance and resolution

Central to the dynamic equilibrium model is responding to paradox in a way that involves complementary and interwoven strategies of **acceptance** and **resolution**.

According to Smith and Lewis (2011, p.392), **acceptance** is a fundamental condition for establishing virtuous cycles: "When actors assume that tensions can and should coexist (Peng and Nisbett, 1999; Rothenburg, 1979), they can mindfully explore the dynamic relationship between tensions (Langer, 1989)."

This notion of acceptance can often involve viewing resources as abundant rather than scarce. Accordingly, "those with an abundance orientation assume that resources are adequate (Peach and Dugger, 2006) and that people attend to resources by seeking affirmative possibilities and endless potential (Cameron and Lavine, 2006)."

According to Smith *et al.* (2016, p.5):

"Rather than seeking to slice the pie thinner, people with this value-creating mindset pursue strategies to grow the pie, such as exploring collaborations with new partners, using alternative technologies, or adopting more-flexible time frames for shifting resources for better use."

Resolution involves seeking responses to paradoxical tensions, either through splitting and choosing between tensions or by finding synergies that accommodate opposing poles (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

Smith and Lewis (2011) also refer to how leaders can employ strategies of both acceptance and resolution over time in what they describe as a "consistently inconsistent" pattern of decision-making.

While being 'consistently inconsistent' in their decision-making enables leaders to attend to paradoxes over time, it can cause problems for subordinates who often have a strong preference for consistency (Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995). According to Wang and Pratt (2008) "Inconsistencies raise ambivalence and anxiety" and can lead individuals to respond

by seeking to regain alignments and consistency. Specifically, in the face of inconsistencies, subordinates often judge their leaders as hypocritical (Cha and Edmondson, 2006) or rationalize the decisions of leaders to emphasize only one of the goals (Kunda, 1990).” Based on a review of the literature on the characteristics of law firms, it is likely that consistently inconsistent decision-making will be negatively perceived in City law firms. It is therefore worth exploring through this research the appropriateness of this strand of the DEM to addressing the Research Aim.

The literature on acceptance and resolution also suggests there may be significant advantages in assessing and selecting as CRPs those lawyers who demonstrate the abundant mind-set as described above. An interesting area for research might be to explore whether those who foster such a mind-set are more or less effective in influencing the activities of peers on a key account when compared to those without such a mind-set. There may also be value in exploring the extent to which Client Relationship Partners can be trained in how and when to employ strategies of resolution and acceptance. Can law firms train Client Relationship Partners in how to be more effective at knowing when to ‘Accept’ or ‘Resolve’ in certain situations?

2.5.2.7 Managing tensions: exploration and exploitation

Smith and Lewis (2011) round out their description of ways in which tensions in the DEM can be managed by explaining the role of exploration and exploitation. This refers to the fact that a dynamic strategy may not only reflect inconsistent choices over time but inconsistencies within the same time period. This expands on the work of Smith *et al.* (2010) who found effectively attending to both exploration and exploitation simultaneously involved dynamic decision-making in which senior leaders allocated additional resources both to the existing product and the innovation at the same time. The notion of exploration and exploitation provides an interesting and potential valuable framework for CRPs and positional leaders in their attempts to marshal the finite resources of their firm and speaks to the work of Fiol *et al.* (2009) who described a model of responding to conflicting identities as an iterative dance among subgroup, individual, and blended identities.

2.5.2.8 A summary of the dynamic equilibrium model and paradox theory

The literature on paradox theory advocates that leaders need to shift from an either/or mind-set to a both/and one by seeing the virtues of inconsistency, recognizing that resources are not always finite, and embracing change rather than chasing stability (Smith *et al.*, 2016). In practical terms, this means nurturing the unique aspects of competing constituencies and strategies while finding ways to unite them.

The leader's challenge is not to choose between alternatives but to recognize that both imperatives must be addressed. Making that change from either/or to both/and thinking requires leaders to shift focus frequently in the short term in order to satisfy competing demands in the long term. Rather than swinging wildly between opposing forces, leaders must execute purposeful microshifts that enable growth and sustainability (Smith *et al.*, 2016).

Studies on paradox theory identify how latent tensions become salient and the management approaches that can be utilized by leaders to respond to paradox (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Given the various tensions at play in City law firms, these management approaches are likely to be relevant in helping to address the Research Aim of this study.

2.6 Summary

The overarching Research Aim of this study is to identify what factors affect the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of peers on a key account in a City law firm. A review of the extant literature identified shortcomings in the fields of key account management, leadership and the characteristics of law firms in their ability to address the Research Aim. In response, seven Research Questions were developed to help further frame the Research Aim as the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). As discussed in Section 2.1 and Section 2.5, the literature on paradox theory became more prominent as this study evolved. Accordingly, paradox theory does not directly inform the seven Research Questions that frame this study but is considered in great detail in the discussion chapter (Chapter 5) to help interpret the data.

The seven Research Questions include:

From the literature on key account management:

1. What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1996; Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009)
2. How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011; Ryals and McDonald, 2008; Brehmer and Rehme, 2009; Chuang *et al.*, 2013; Davies *et al.*, 2010; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009; Georges and Eggert, 2003; Guesalaga and Johnston, 2010)

From the literature on leadership:

3. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms? (Kotter, 2001; Graeff, 1997; Higgs, 2003; Hernandez *et al.*, 2011; Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lord *et al.*, 1986; Yukl, 1998; Pearce and Conger, 2003)
4. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account? (Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Goffee and Jones, 2010; Goffee and Jones, 2000); (Kotter, 2001; Collins, 2001; Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Kets De Vries *et al.*, 2004)
5. How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities? (Young and Dulewicz, 2007)

From the literature on professional service firms:

6. How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account? (Graeff, 1997; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Empson, 2007; Empson, 2010b; Mayson, 2012; Løwendahl, 2005; (Von Nordenflycht, 2010; Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008)
7. What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms? (Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Cooper *et al.*, 1996; Empson, 2010; Alvehus and Empson, 2014; Greenwood *et al.*, 2007)

The review of the literature suggests that, in order to address the Research Questions, a Research Design that inductively builds and extends theory from the data will be most appropriate for this study. Moreover, the literature points to an opportunity to build a new, rich understanding of the role organizational actors and organizational context have on the ability of CRPs to influence peers; something that is best served by an inductive, interpretive approach.

Chapter Three sets out in detail how the Research Questions are explored through the development of the Research Design, Methodology and Research Methods. To help ensure congruence between these various parts of the research, the Conceptual Framework in Table 2.7 was developed and is central to this study.

According to Camp (2001), a Conceptual Framework is a structure that the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied. It is linked with the concepts used in promoting and systemizing the knowledge espoused by the researcher (Peshkin, 1993), is the researcher's explanation of how the research problem will

be explored and highlights the series of actions the researcher intends carrying out in a research study (Dixon *et al.*, 2001).

The Conceptual Framework presents an integrated way of looking at a problem under study (Liehr and Smith, 1999) and is intended to frame the relationships between the main concepts of a study. Simply put, the Conceptual Framework is a representation of how the concepts underpinning the study relate to one another.

The Conceptual Framework is different to the Theoretical Framework discussed in Chapter 1.3, the purpose of which is to demonstrate how existing theory or theories across academic fields are relevant to the inquiry. However, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks should be considered alongside one another in terms of the role they play in helping this study to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

Table 2.7: Conceptual framework

Research Aim: <i>To identify what factors affect the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of peers on a key account in a City law firm</i>						
Literature	Areas for Research	Research Issues	Research Questions	Primary Research Method	Findings	Analytic Category in SIRCLp
1. Theoretical lens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership theory; • Paradox theory 2. Critical context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of City law firms 3. Core theory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KAM 	1. Individual 2. Structural	1. How CRPs make sense of leadership	1. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms?	Critical Incident Technique	Section 4.3.1	Level 1 – Systems and Structure
			2. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?	Critical Incident Technique	Section 4.3.2	Level 2 – Identity and Role
		2. The mechanisms and loci of leadership	3. How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?	Critical Incident Technique	Section 4.3.3	Level 2 – Identity and Role
			4. What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account?	Repertory Grid	Section 4.3.4	Level 3 - Competencies
			5. How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?	Semi-Structured Questions	Section 4.3.5	Level 1 – Systemic and Structural
		3. The nature and concept of CRP development in City law firms	6. How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities?	Critical Incident Technique	Section 4.3.6	Level 4 – Leader Development
			7. What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?	Semi-Structured Questions	Section 4.3.7	Level 4 – Leader Development

3 Methodology and methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by discussing the philosophical underpinnings to the research before moving on to consider the Research Design. This includes a discussion of the limitations of a positivist approach in an examination of the leadership process. An interpretivist approach is identified as being more suitable in addressing the research questions following the guidance of Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) that “research approach follows research problem”. Consistent with an interpretivist paradigm, this study used a descriptive qualitative analysis approach whereby the critical incident technique (CIT) (Flanagan, 1954), Repertory Grid (Jankowicz, 2004) and semi-structured interviews were adopted.

The CIT was used to focus on how CRPs perceive their role, identity and develop as leaders. Repertory Grid was used to investigate what behaviours on the part of the CRP are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account. Semi-structured questions were used as the primary method to investigate the characteristics of a City law firm that enable or impede a CRP in their efforts and the implications for CRP development. The responses to the CIT, Rep Grid and semi-structured questions therefore constitute the primary sources of data. Data was collected from 31 participants from 12 City law firms in the UK. All interview data was coded inductively and the results then compared to extant theory for theoretical agreement of the exploratory findings. Coding was data-driven whereby codes were developed through multiple readings of the empirical material (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

3.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm consists of the following components: ontology; epistemology; methodology; and methods:

1. Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998) and assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, in other words what is.
2. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) and epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words what it means to know.
3. Methodology is the strategy or plan of action that lies behind the choice and use of particular methods (Crotty, 1998). Thus, methodology is concerned with why, what, from where, when and how data is collected and analyzed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain

that methodology asks the question: how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known?

4. Methods are the specific techniques and procedures used to collect and analyze data (Crotty, 1998). Research methods can be traced back, through methodology and epistemology, to an ontological position.

The literature on research paradigms as a shared set of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of reality and the conduct of scientific research is generally associated with Kuhn (1970). Kuhn concluded that research conducted within one paradigm cannot rationally be judged according to the criteria of a different paradigm, because each represents inherently conflicting epistemological assumptions: scientists operating in different paradigms are effectively “practising in different worlds” (Kuhn, 1970)

It is impossible to engage in any form of research without committing (often implicitly) to ontological and epistemological positions. Researchers’ differing ontological and epistemological positions often lead to different research approaches towards the same phenomenon (Grix, 2015). As such it is important to position research within a philosophical framework (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008; Silverman, 2005; Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 2009); such as one of the three core paradigms set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Comparison of positivism, constructivism and critical realism

	Positivism	Constructivism	Critical realism
Ontology	Realist. There is one true reality. It may or may not be perfectly apprehended, identified and measured (naïve realism v critical realism)	Relativist. Local and specific constructed realities. Reality is subjective and influenced by context	Critical realist. Reality is stratified and imperfectly apprehendable. There is a virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values
Epistemology	Participant and researcher should be independent (dualism) and rigorous procedure should allow bias free studies (objectivism).	Subjectivist findings are created through interaction among investigator and respondents.	Subjectivist findings offer provisional descriptions and accounts of phenomena. They are subject to critical examination and always

	What can be observed is real; the status of the non-observable is doubtful.		open to revision.
Methodology and methods	Experimental / controlled conditions; verification of precise hypotheses. Deductive approach and quantitative methods.	Focus on natural settings. Inductive approach and qualitative methods	Critical multiplism: Multiple data and contextual information are required. Quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods.
Inquiry aim	Explanation through demonstrating invariable, statistical relationships that lead to universal laws	Understanding and reconstruction of previously held constructions. Extended and accurate description.	Explanation through systematic discovery; identification of causal mechanisms whose operation in given cases will vary

Sources: Ackroyd (2004, p. 150-151), Guba and Lincoln (2000; 1994), Johnson and Duberley (2000).

The sections that follow demonstrate the limitations of adopting a positivist paradigm for the study of leadership in City law firms and discuss alternative positions (such as critical realism). The section concludes with a short summary on why the study adopted a relativist ontological position with a phenomenological epistemology and, consistent with this, a qualitative design.

Positivism

The ontological position of positivism is one of realism. Realism is the view that objects have an existence independent of the knower (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In practice, positivistic research is associated with the use of experiments and quantitative methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008; Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Sometimes referred to as 'the scientific method', the positivist paradigm has been the dominant approach within leadership studies in recent years (Collinson and Grint, 2005). In the context of social science research, the positivist paradigm assumes that social reality is external and objective and that its properties can be measured using objective methods. The positivist epistemology is therefore one of objectivism. The researcher and the researched are independent entities. Meaning solely resides in objects, not in the conscience of the researcher, and it is the aim of the researcher to obtain this meaning (Crotty, 1998). Positivism maintains that all knowledge

can be derived from direct observation and logical inferences based on that observation (Phillips and Burbules, 2000). As a consequence, researchers subscribing to this position place a primacy on logical reasoning, precision, objectivity, and rigor, in an attempt to minimize subjectivity and intuitive interpretation (Collis and Hussey, 2014).

Despite its popularity, criticism of the positivist position has recently emerged, suggesting it is not an approach that will lead to interesting or profound insights into complex problems in the field of business and management studies (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998).

Constructivism

In contrast with positivism, constructivism aims to interpret social phenomena from the individual's subjective perspective, emphasizing understanding rather than causal explanation, and favouring inductive rather than deductive approaches (see Table 3.2). Proponents of constructivism reject the idea of an independent, external reality in favour of multiple, subjectively constructed and potentially conflicting realities, elements of which may be shared between individuals or groups. The ontological position of constructivism is therefore relativism, in which reality is considered to be subjective and differs from person to person (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Reality emerges when consciousness engages with objects that are already pregnant with meaning (Crotty, 1998).

With a concern for in-depth, subjective meanings and naturalistic settings, constructivism regards the researcher as an active participant in the research process rather than detached observer (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). The researcher constructs an interpretation of others' meanings and experience, and the findings reflect the values and prior experiences of the researcher and the social and cultural context of the research.

Critical realism

Critical Realism (CR) emerged in the 1970s and 1980s through the work of Bhaskar (1978). It was further discussed and elaborated by critical realists such as Sayer (1992), Archer (1995) and Collier (1994). CR originated as a scientific alternative to both positivism and constructivism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) and combines the interpretive emphasis of constructivism with positivism's concern for explanation and rigour (Steinmetz, 1998). There is increasing acceptance of CR as a fully-fledged inquiry paradigm (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2005), and numerous examples illustrate its adoption in organisational and leadership research and in other disciplines (Edwards *et al.*, 2014; Mingers *et al.*, 2013; Kempster and Parry, 2011).

Table 3.2: Research approaches: deduction, induction and abduction

	Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Logic	In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true	In an inductive inference, known premises are used to generate untested conclusions	In an abductive inference, known premises are used to generate testable conclusions
Generalisability	Generalising from the general to the specific	Generalising from the specific to the general	Generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general
Use of data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns create a conceptual framework	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection and so forth
Theory	Theory falsification or verification	Theory generation and building	Theory generation or modification; incorporating existing theory where appropriate, to build new theory or modify existing theory

Source: Saunders *et al.* (2012)

Although described in general terms as a post-positivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), CR has distinctive philosophical and methodological implications (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). According to Steinmetz (1998, p.184) “the epistemological relativism of CR allows it to accept the results of much of the recent history and sociology of science in a relaxed way without giving in to judgmental relativism”. It has therefore been proposed as a relaxed alternative to hard positivist positions but shares the positivist belief that the social sciences can still be studied through the same methodological approaches used in the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012). As such Critical Realism “allows us to safely steer between the

Scylla of constricting definitions of science and the Charybdis of solipsistic relativism” (Steinmetz, 1998, p.184).

Interpretivism: the chosen theoretical perspective

Careful consideration was given to selecting the most appropriate and useful paradigm for this study in the light of the research aim, the research questions and the researcher’s basic beliefs and preferences. The need to gain a detailed understanding of organisationally situated, real-life events meant that the positivist paradigm, with its focus on objective measurement, hypothesis testing and experimentation, would not be conducive to the research aims. The literature review had indicated the dominance of positivist assumptions and associated methodologies in the leadership literature. Although these approaches provided useful theoretical and conceptual grounding, there was a need to appreciate CRPs subjective experiences and to explore a wide range of contextual factors associated with CRP behaviours. Furthermore, the research needed scope to explore emergent themes and concepts from multiple fields without the constraints of a fixed design and a priori variables. In addition, the overall aim of the research was to gain insight into CRPs experience and responses to the factors that enable or impede them in their ability to influence the activities of peers on a key account. This broad aim implied certain research imperatives: to gather real-life examples of situations that had generated formative leadership experiences for CRPs; to explore in detail how CRPs influence peers; and to better understand how CRPs perceive their role and the wider organisational context in which they operate. As a consequence, the author took the decision to discount positivist and critical realist perspectives as they are theory-driven and / or insufficiently acknowledge the possibility of rival narratives or a critical evaluation of the empirical material (Smith and Elger, 2014). While the two share “a common intellectual heritage” (Schwandt, 1994), Interpretivism was also favoured over constructivism due to its (interpretivisms) rejection of certain negative characteristics of empiricist thinking while simultaneously holding that the inquirer must avoid the subjectivity and error of naïve inquiry through the judicious use of method. In effect that methods cannot eliminate researcher subjectivity but that they can minimize it (Smith, 1989). The use of methods to mitigate subjectivity and bias was of keen interest to the author and the reason why an interpretivist position was ultimately adopted for this study.

Interpretivism

The basic tenet of interpretivism is that reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, research attempts to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective. Rather than starting with a theory (as in

positivism), researchers pose research questions and generate or inductively develop meaning from the data collected in the field.

Interpretivism, with its emphasis on detailed understanding of human experience and the interpretation of subjective meanings in natural settings had considerable resonance with the aims of the study and therefore became a natural alignment with the research topic.

Additional support for this study adopting an interpretive, inductive approach was also provided by the review of the extant literature in Chapter 2. While the literature covering the domains of leadership, key account management, the characteristics of law firms and paradox theory failed to adequately address the research issue, what did emerge was a promising area of investigation in the overlap between the fields. This interdisciplinary focus pointed to the potential benefits of an inductive, exploratory research design that would add to and extend existing theories, potentially integrating the separate fields.

In summary, these considerations suggested that an interpretivist approach best aligned with the aims of the research, the nature of the research questions, and the researcher's own beliefs. This study therefore adopts an inductive approach, that builds and extends theory from the data, and that is consistent with an interpretive paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2014).

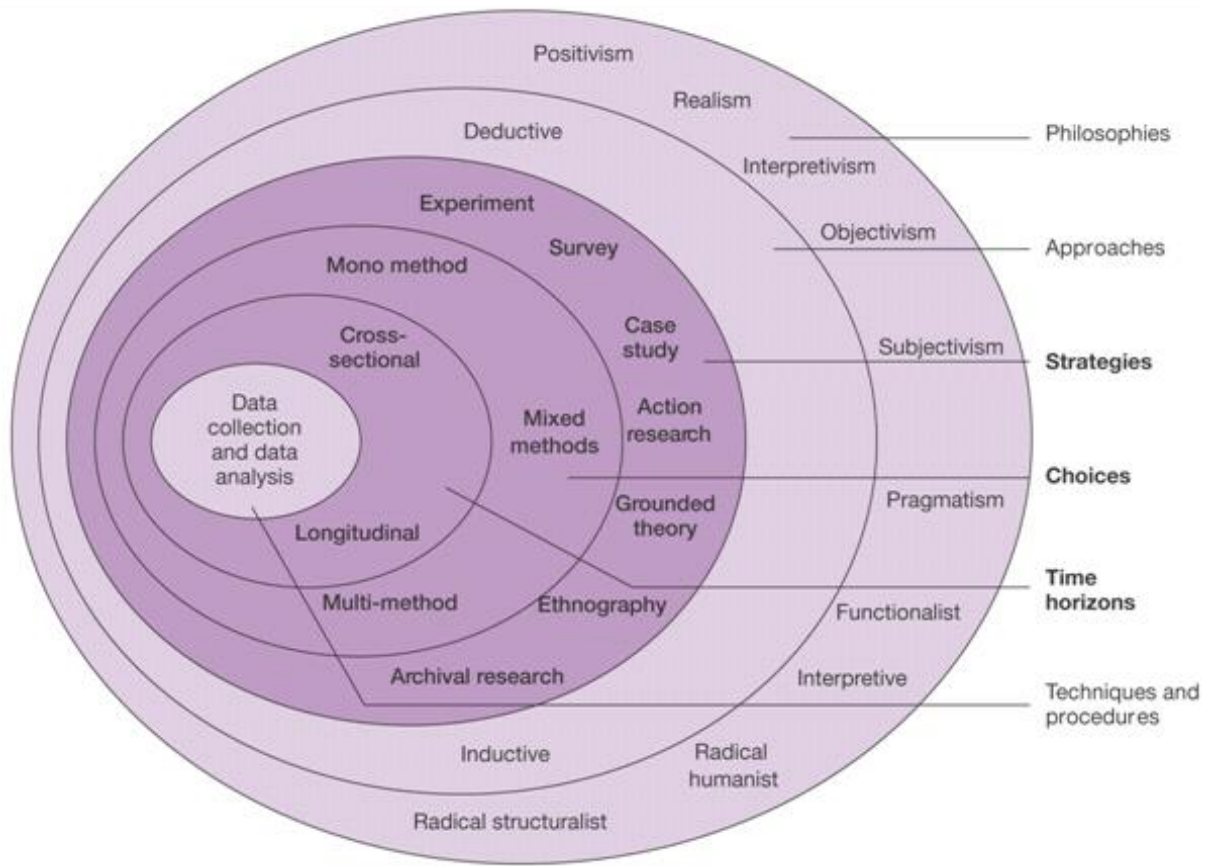
3.3 Research design

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of how the research was designed to ensure methodological congruence (Richards and Morse, 2007). This includes a discussion of the methodology, methods of data collection and method of data analysis and why these choices were considered appropriate in the light of the interpretivist paradigm selected for this study. Ethical and research quality considerations are also addressed.

When developing the research design, the author paid particular attention to the comments of Saunders *et al.* (2012):

“For us, the key to your choice of research strategy or strategies is that you achieve a reasonable level of coherence throughout your research design which will enable you to answer your particular research question(s) and objectives, the coherence with which these link to your philosophy, research action and purpose, and also to more pragmatic concerns including the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time and other resources you have available”.

As discussed below, the framework provided by Saunders *et al.* (2012) in Figure 3.1 was particularly helpful in guiding the research toward methodological congruence and ensuring the integration of data collection, data analysis and theory development. A summary of the research design is provided in Table 3.3



Source: Saunders *et al.* (2012)

Figure 3.1: The research onion

Table 3.3: Summary of research design

Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretivism
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inductive
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenological
Time horizon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sectional
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Incident Technique • Repertory Grid • Semi-structured interviews
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic (template) analysis • Repertory Grid analysis

Philosophy, approach and strategy

For reasons set out in section 3.2, this study adopts an interpretivist paradigm with an inductive approach. The framework of phenomenology, with its emphasis on exploration, discovery and description has been selected as the primary research strategy due to its congruence in addressing the research questions. Based on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1996), phenomenology can be understood as a philosophic attitude and research approach. Its principal position is that the most basic human truths are accessible only through inner subjectivity, and that the person is integral to the environment. Table 3.4 summarises the main qualitative research strategies from which phenomenology was selected.

As a key aim of the study is to understand how CRPs perceive leadership and the behaviours they consider to be most effective when influencing peers, a phenomenological research strategy with its emphasis on investigating the lived experience of participants in relation to particular phenomena was considered most adroit to the task. Given the aims of this research and the ontological paradigm adopted, a number of other research strategies were considered as potentially suitable alternatives. In particular, case studies and grounded theory were of particular interest. Both are deemed broad-based methods because they can be applied in different ways depending on the philosophical perspective adopted (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008).

In grounded theory, theory emerges from empirical data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998): there is no starting hypothesis and the researcher is encouraged to enter the field with as few preconceptions as possible. As Creswell (2009) explains, the researcher zigzags between data collection and analysis in a process called constant comparison, where data are compared to emerging concepts or coding categories. Grounded theory was appealing in that, in common with the research aim, it aims to understand phenomena which are not well defined or understood (Klenke, 2008); it develops theory based on participants' experiences within a particular social context (Kempster and Parry, 2011); and its systematic and demonstrable approach to data collection and analysis helps to address the criticism that qualitative research lacks validity and rigour (Bryman, 2004). However, the researcher decided against a Grounded Theory strategy on the basis that a number of potentially relevant theories, across multiple fields of literature, had been reviewed as part of a review of a systematic literature review and that the highly structured process of data analysis advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) might prove over-restrictive.

Table 3.4: Main research strategies for qualitative research

Ethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data. The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting.
Grounded theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information. Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information.
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.
Narrative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more to provide stories about their lives. This information is then retold or restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a collaborative narrative.
Phenomenological research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning.

Source: Creswell (2009)

A case study based approach also lends itself to the research topic in that “in one sense all research is a case study: there is always some unit, or set of units, in relation to which data are collected and / or analysed” (Gomm *et al.*, 2000, p.2). It is also particularly appropriate

when the problems require an understanding of managerial perceptions or culture where meanings are socially constructed, rather than being value-free (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991). Furthermore, the case study approach also encourages the capture of cases in their uniqueness with each portrayed in its own terms (Gomm *et al.*, 2000), thus consistent with the phenomenological intent for this study. While this research could have adopted a case study based approach, the author was of the view that, given his role within what some participants might perceive as a competing law firm, it might have proven problematic to access the “full variety of evidence” required (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) comments that a full variety of evidence in a case study based approach includes access to “documents, artefacts, interviews and observations”, some of which might contain commercially sensitive information and which may have therefore proven to be an issue in terms of the author being granted access.

Time horizon

A cross-sectional approach to data collection (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008) was selected as the purpose of the study is to provide a rich phenomenological investigation of the Research Aim at a given point in time rather than looking to infer strong causal attributions between variables (Levin, 2006). Furthermore, there is no intention to falsify or verify existing theory but instead to develop insights through an enquiry of a broad range of factors that may in turn contribute to theory generation. In accordance with the guidance of Bono and McNamara (2011) based on their analysis of common design issues that lead to rejected manuscripts at the Academy of Management Journal, careful consideration was therefore given during the research design stage to ensure that the Research Aim and Research Questions can actually be answered with the chosen design.

Choice of data collection: multi method

To ensure methodological congruence (Richards and Morse, 2007), the author gave careful consideration to research methods consistent with an interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological research strategy. This resulted in the selection of the semi-structured interview as part of qualitative methodology in an attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study. Kvale (1983) defines the qualitative interview as “an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena”. For Robson (2002), the strength of the qualitative interview method rests in the “virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions”.

Interestingly, in a review of articles published in *The Leadership Quarterly* between 2000 and 2009, Gardner *et al.* (2010) find only 56 articles using qualitative methods, as opposed to

412 using quantitative methods. This should perhaps come as little surprise given the many behavioural-based questionnaires used in the study of leadership that are designed based on the premise of a top-down influence from a 'leader' to a 'follower'.

As suggested by the work of Gardner *et al.* (2010), the field of leadership studies is dominated by a positivist perspective (Bryman, 2011) that tends to draw heavily on behaviour description questionnaires and methods that have a tendency to replicate existing paradigms rather than discover new possibilities (Shaw, 2010). These methods define a priori the behaviours they intend to examine and these presuppositions deny the exploration of alternative behaviours: an exploration that is particularly necessary in an under-served area such as the study of peer leadership in City law firms where the notion of the leader – follower dyad is problematic. Encouraging more qualitative studies on leadership would therefore provide “meaningful insights and enhance our understanding of leadership processes” (Gardner *et al.*, 2010, p.943).

Helping to add to the canon of qualitative research in leadership studies, this study is executed through the use of multiple qualitative methods: specifically the Critical Incident Technique, Repertory Grid and Semi-Structured Questions. Brewer and Hunter (2006) comment that the social science research community has now adopted the multi method approach as one that “provides increased power of persuasion and strengthened claims to validity.”

The Critical Incident Technique (see section 3.7.1), Repertory Grid (see section 3.7.2) and Semi-Structured Questions (see section 3.7.3) were selected as data collection methods due to their ability to elicit a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). Based on his first hand experience of working in City law firms over a number of years, the author was of the view that a mailed request (by post or email) to complete a survey would result in a poor response rate due to the time (however small) it would take participants to complete a survey and the perceived opportunity costs (in terms of billable work).

From the broad range of data collection methods available, Repertory Grid, Critical Incident Technique and Semi Structured Questions were chosen within a qualitative research methodology due to their:

1. Ability to elicit a deep understanding of phenomena under study from the perspective of the research participants
2. Suitability where the unit of analysis is an individual (i.e. the CRP)

3. Methodological congruence with the interpretivist paradigm under which the study is being undertaken
4. Appropriateness of fit within a semi-structured interview framework
5. Focus on emergent themes; allowing theory to be built from the data
6. Ease in which they can be carried out in the research participants' natural settings during office hours
7. Efficacy in systematising the collection of data and enabling comparisons to be made in the data analysis

Approach to data analysis

Table 3.5 sets out three techniques suitable for the analysis of the interview transcripts in the context of the chosen research paradigm and research methodology.

Table 3.5: Summary of key data analysis techniques

	Description	Strengths in the context of this study	Limitations in the context of this study
<p>Thematic analysis – including template and framework analysis</p> <p>Braun and Clarke (2006); King <i>et al.</i> (2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A varied but related group of techniques for thematically organizing and analysing textual data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used within a wide range of epistemological positions • Encourages the researcher to be explicit about analytical decisions and to ground these in the text • Works well with applied type research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of techniques rather than a distinct methodology • Not considered by some to be as comprehensive as other approaches to data analysis
<p>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)</p> <p>Smith and Osborn (2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on the lived experience of individual participants with a view to identifying common themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to provide an intensive focus on a small number of samples with a view to identifying phenomena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted levels of coding and prescribed idiographic approach to reviewing the data
<p>Grounded analysis</p> <p>Corbin and Strauss (2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A method in which researchers systematically develop a theory from the collected data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for an a priori explanation or theory – the focus is on theory development • The most widely claimed qualitative method in social science research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early iterations of grounded analysis are based on a realist methodology

Thematic template analysis was chosen as the preferred data analysis technique for this study due to it offering a clear, systematic, and yet flexible approach to data analysis. The flexibility of the coding structure in Template Analysis allows an exploration of the richness of the data while simultaneously forcing the researcher to take a systematic and well-structured approach to data handling. Iterative use of the template also encourages careful consideration of how themes are defined and how they relate to one another (Brooks *et al.*, 2015).

IPA and Grounded Theory were considered as data analysis techniques due to the inductive way in which categories evolve through the research process, are not mutually exclusive and emerge from the data (Willig, 2013). However, Template Analysis offers a more flexible technique with fewer specified procedures, allowing the researcher to tailor the approach to the requirements of their own project. The author chose not to adhere to the specific methodology and underpinning philosophical assumptions of IPA and Grounded Theory due to their rejection of the influence of existing knowledge on the analysis of data (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). The author wanted to retain the option to use a priori codes, based on the review of the literature, that allow the researcher to define some themes in advance of the analysis process. At the same time, the author acknowledges that the use of a priori codes in the context of the phenomenological stance underpinning this work also requires the use of bracketing and self-reflection to remain open to participants' accounts. It is recognised that this requires a determined effort to step outside of any personal and taken-for-granted views about the participants or presuppositions about the topic.

In summary, this section (the Research Design) has highlighted the dominance of the positivist approach to leadership research and how an interpretivist paradigm, using an inductive, theory building qualitative approach can address the research aim. The approach will be executed through the employment of CIT interviews, Repertory Grid and Semi-Structured Questions.

3.4 Sampling

Consistent with the research methodology (and most qualitative research), criterion sampling was adopted as a subset of a purposeful sampling strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989). Purposive samples are the most frequently used form of non-probability samples (Saunders *et al.*, 2012) and are appropriate for qualitative studies as their aim is to select particular individuals "for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices" (Maxwell, 2008, p.214).

The sampling strategy addressed the desire to understand what factors affect the ability of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account. Therefore, it was essential to sample CRPs who were able to comment reliably because they:

1. Work in a City law firm; and
2. Are or were a CRP for a key client in the last three years; and
3. Are or were a team member on another key client relationship (other than the one they lead as a CRP) within the last three years

This approach is consistent with the definition of criterion sampling put forward by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012, p.248) in which they describe criterion sampling as “all participants must meet one or more criteria as predetermined by the researcher”.

Access to elites

Researchers commonly find gaining access to elites or the upper echelons to be a challenging process (Pettigrew, 2008). It has been noted that part of the reason board members and top executives are studied less often than mid-level managers (Yukl, 2008) is that of access challenges (De Hoogh *et al.*, 2005). Pettigrew (2008, p.170) notes methodological “difficulties in gaining access for behavioural or interview based studies, or poor response rates from questionnaire based studies, have also contributed to the patchy and often inconclusive findings on boards”.

Equivalent to board members or top executives in a traditional corporate structure, CRPs typically measure their work output in six-minute blocks of chargeable time. As a result, they give very careful consideration to the opportunity costs involved in how they allocate their time. Recognising these potential access issues, the author gave very careful consideration to how the study was structured and the messaging around the approach to potential participants. The author decided to approach participants through his existing professional network and an email setting out the purpose of the study, the sampling criteria and what would be required of each participant was sent to a number of the author’s contacts. The email stated that participants would receive a summary report of the research findings, and noted the confidential nature of the interviews. All those contacted responded positively to the email and agreed to be involved in the research or to help identify others in their organisation that met the sampling criteria.

Sample size and saturation

Most texts on qualitative research are silent on the subject of sample size. In their review Guest *et al.* (2006, p.60) noted: “The literature did a poor job of operationalizing the concept of saturation, providing no description of how saturation might be determined and no

practical guidelines for estimating sample sizes for purposively sampled interviews”. Moreover, De Hoogh *et al.* (2005, p.34) also note in their review that “small sample sizes are due to the amount of work involved in gaining access and conducting, transcribing, and coding the interviews, which is considerable.” According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) it is therefore common for the sample size in qualitative interviews to be around 15, plus or minus ten.

Tan and Hunter (2002, p.50) corroborate the view of Kvale and Brinkmann with specific reference to the use of the Repertory Grid technique and their observation that:

“The intensive nature of the Repertory Grid technique often means a relatively small sample size. A sample size of 15 to 25 within a population will frequently generate sufficient constructs to approximate the “universe of meaning” regarding a given domain of discourse. That is, no new constructs are normally added even if the sample size is increased”.

In relation to the CIT, one of the other primary methods of data collection used in this study, Flanagan (1954) noted that there is no simple answer to the question of sample size. Moreover, when using the CIT, sample size is based on number of incidents, not number of participants (Sharoff, 2008). It was therefore envisaged that a sample of 30 CRPs would be preferable in order to derive sufficient depth and breadth of constructs from the repertory grids, incidents from the CIT and responses to the semi structured questions. Consistent with the wider qualitative approach, the author was prepared to increase this number if new constructs and themes were still emerging in the 30th interview. However, after nineteen interviews the critical incidents and constructs elicited through the repertory grids were falling into a clear pattern. This assumption was checked, rechecked and then confirmed in subsequent interviews. The author therefore deemed that saturation had been achieved and no further interviews were scheduled beyond the 31 already diarized.

3.5 Ethics

To ensure uniformity in the ethical treatment of participants, the following documents were drafted and signed off by the University Ethics Committee as part of a full Research Protocol submission prior to the commencement of both the pilot and full study:

1. Information summarizing the proposed project and research methods that was sent to all participants once an interview had been diarised
2. A consent sheet that was given to each participant at the start of the interview to review and sign

Emails summarizing the proposed project and research methods

At the recruitment stage and again at the point at which interviews were diarized, openness and transparency around the purpose of the research was ensured by outlining, in writing:

1. The nature of the research and the potential time commitment sought
2. That all contributions would be on anonymous basis
3. That their permission would be sought to record the interview
4. That their written consent to be involved in the research would be sought and that they retained the right to withdraw from the process at any time.

The Consent Sheet

At the start of each interview, participants were again reminded of their right to withdraw and were asked to sign a consent sheet to indicate that they:

1. Had been given the chance to ask any questions
2. Understood their right to withdraw or not to answer any questions they did not wish to
3. Were happy to proceed.

3.6 Interview protocol

An interview protocol was developed based on the research paradigm chosen for this study. Consistent with the inductive nature of the research, the interview schedule was used as a framework to guide each interview and ensure that the research objectives were met, but to also be open to iteration and further development. The protocol was pre-tested with the author's supervisors to check its suitability and, in line with the advice of Berg and Lune (2007), the interview schedule was first piloted on six participants. The pilot study provided valuable information on how to position the research, introduce each section of the interview and transition between sections of the interview. The interview protocol was modified several times in response to the pilot study. The final version of the protocol is presented in Appendix A.

Section one: critical incident technique

Table 3.6 shows how the critical incident technique (see section 3.7.1) was used as the primary method to investigate how CRPs perceive their role, identity and develop as leaders. Accordingly the research questions that this method was employed to address are:

- How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms? (Kotter, 2001)
- How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?

- How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?
- How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities? (Graeff, 1997; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002)

The intention was to utilise the CIT to elicit the views of each respondent, fully understand the situations identified by the respondent, as well as develop an in-depth understanding of the associated behaviours. The interview schedule was designed so that the CIT question (as set out in Section 3.7.1) was read verbatim to each participant (as subtle changes in wording have been found to produce different responses from participants) (Flanagan, 1954; Sharoff, 2008).

Section two: repertory grid

Repertory Grid (see section 3.7.2) was used to explore what behaviours participants consider to be most and least effective when attempting to influence the activities of peers on a key account. Accordingly, Repertory Grid was used employed as the primary research method to investigate the following research question (see also Table 3.6):

- What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1996; Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001; Guenzi et al., 2009)

There are many variations on how to apply the Repertory Grid. However, Gammack and Stephens (1994) suggest all approaches should contain three basic stages:

- I. The elicitation of elements, identifying the entities in the area of construing to be investigated
- II. The elicitation of constructs, identifying the distinctions which can be applied amongst these elements; and
- III. The construction of a matrix (grid) of elements and constructs

The literature on the Repertory Grid identifies a number of design alternatives facing the researcher. Principal among these is the issue of whether the elements and/or constructs are elicited from the participants (as suggested by Gammack and Stephens (1994)) or supplied by the researcher. In developing the interview protocol, the author elected to supply the elements and elicit the constructs. Consistent with the literature, the elements can be defined by the researcher as a 'pool' – for example, participants can be asked to 'name six subordinates' or 'name three effective and ineffective managers'. This is in line with advice from Denicolo and Pope (2011). The author therefore chose to ask participants to select six

CRPs (the elements to be investigated) on whom to focus their thoughts. Further direction was given that three of those CRPs should be those they consider to be effective in their ability to influence the activities of peers while the remaining three should be those they consider to be less effective. A copy of the grids used to elicit elements and constructs and to score the same is Appendix B.

Section three: semi-structured questions

Semi-structured questions (see section 3.7.3) were used toward the end of each interview. The purpose was to elicit comments from participants on how the characteristics of City law firms impact their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account. As set out in Table 3.6, the following questions were explored using semi-structured questions:

- How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?
- What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?

Table 3.6: Research aim, research questions and primary research methods

Research Aim: To identify what factors affect the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of peers on a key account in a City law firm			
Research Questions:	Primary Research Method		
	Critical Incident Technique	Repertory Grid	Semi-Structured questions
1. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms?	✓		
2. How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?	✓		
3. How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?	✓		
4. What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account?		✓	
5. How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?			✓
6. How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities?	✓		
7. What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?			✓

3.7 Data collection

Data was collected through 31 semi-structured interviews in two tranches of data collection. 23 interviews were conducted between July 2014 and February 2015; with the remaining eight interviews conducted between July and September 2017. Due to time restrictions, it was not possible to use all three methods of data collection in each of the 31 interviews. As set out in Table 4.2, the critical incident technique was used in 26 of the 31 interviews; the repertory grid technique in 22 of the 31 interviews; and semi structured questions (SSQs) in 27 of the 31 interviews.

In terms of duration, interviews ranged from 42 minutes to 2 hours 24 minutes. The 31 interviews generated a total of 39 hours 9 minutes and 41 seconds of interview time, with the average interview lasting 1 hour 16 minutes and 19 seconds. To assist with the natural setting of the qualitative research, all interviews were carried out in meeting rooms in participants' place of work during office hours. Only the participant and author were present at each interview.

As a way of building rapport and warming up the participants, basic contextual and demographic information was collected at the start of each interview. Participants were then reminded of the purpose of the research and the author sought to alleviate any potential concerns about confidentiality by stating that participants and their firm would not be identifiable when the findings were written up. In addition, assurances were given as to anonymity / confidentiality of their responses, the data they provide and how the data would be handled. Participants were told they had the option to review their transcript and to withdraw from the study at any point. A copy of the findings was also promised to each participant. The author then closely followed the interview protocol developed for the study in order to ensure the same information was conveyed to each participant. Data was collected using the Critical Incident Technique, Repertory Grid and Semi Structured Questions methods as set out in Section 3.6.

All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants to enable the researcher to listen and focus on the interview process rather than taking detailed notes. The audio recordings were transcribed and subsequently uploaded to Nvivo. The transcribing was outsourced to save time and steps were taken to ensure the transcriber had prior experience of transcribing research based interviews to help reduce the occurrence of inaccuracies (Hayes and Mattimoe, 2004). The author checked each of the transcriptions against the audio recording and made amendments to the transcription where necessary. The author acknowledges the potential trade offs with outsourcing the transcription; with some studies suggesting that the process of transcribing enables the author to become

familiar with the data. However, the author spent so long immersed in the transcripts and audio recordings as part of the data analysis that it is difficult to see how more familiar one could become through the act of transcription.

3.7.1 Critical incident technique

The CIT was formally advanced as an acceptable research framework by Flanagan (1954) in his seminal paper, titled *The Critical Incident Technique*, published in the *Psychological Bulletin*. Flanagan (1954) positioned CIT as a scientific procedure for gathering “important facts concerning behaviour in defined situations” and as “a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (Flanagan, 1954, p.10).

Rooted in a positivist paradigm, CIT involved the use of objective evaluation criteria and systematic analysis of multiple critical incidents by independent observers, in order to make predictions about effective behaviour. More recently, CIT has been applied more flexibly as a qualitative interview procedure in organisational and management research (Blenkinsopp and Zdunczyk, 2005; Cope and Watts, 2000; Chell and Pittaway, 1998). The CIT has also been employed with an interpretive paradigm (Symon and Cassell, 1998) and commonly used as an inductive research method (Pina e Cunha *et al.*, 2009) for collecting, analysing, and presenting data. Its strengths lie not only in its utility as an exploratory tool, but also its role in building theories or models (Butterfield *et al.*, 2005).

Chell (2011, p.48) developed an approach that is consistent with a phenomenological research methodology and describes the Critical Incident Technique as:

“...a qualitative interview procedure, which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes or issues), identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account the cognitive, affective and behavioural elements”.

The CIT is a research method that is able to focus the participant onto a limited area of interest (Sharoff, 2008) in order to elicit rich data about that particular area. It therefore allows the researcher to capture much richer details than would be obtained even through the traditional semi-structured interview (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003).

The technique “is a method of research which encourages the natural tendency of people to tell anecdotes but which increases their value as data by focusing them onto a limited area of interest” (Bradley, 1992, p.102). The CIT therefore allows the researcher to uncover

behaviours that may not be identified through other research methods (Keaveney, 1995). It also allows the researcher to further clarify feelings and meanings that may be attached to certain incidents (Sharoff, 2008). The fact that the technique centres on actual events while discouraging hypothetical situations (Collis and Hussey, 2014), whether observed or recalled, ensures the corresponding behavioural data relates to actual behaviours. Similarly, by allowing the respondent to choose the incident elicits events that are important to those who lived them (Pina e Cunha *et al.*, 2009). Using the CIT, after a thorough and thoughtful categorization of how individuals reacted to such incidents is made, the researcher is able to infer generalizations.

Research developing our knowledge of how CRPs influence peers is severely limited. Therefore CIT serves a purpose as an inductive methodological tool to develop an understanding of such behaviours. One major benefit of the CIT for this research is that the researcher does not specify a list of potential incidents or behaviours a priori (Gremier, 2004). Using the CIT in this manner, the researcher and the participants are discovering together an understanding of the participants' behaviours (Keatinge, 2002). Simply stated, the CIT encourages participants to tell their story (Sharoff, 2008), while mitigating for researcher presuppositions. CIT therefore aligns with the research aim, articulated through the research questions, for this study.

Since the CIT was first introduced by Flanagan (1954) it has been used in many disciplines, including studies spanning such disciplines as counselling psychology (Butterfield *et al.*, 2005), healthcare and clinical studies (Kvarnström, 2008), service settings (Keaveney, 1995), marketing (Gremier, 2004) and entrepreneurship (Chell and Pittaway, 1998). Although it has been used in a number of diverse streams within the general management literature, the use of the technique in leadership studies is unfortunately still sparse. Within this positioning, the author argues that the employment of the CIT is, of itself, also a contribution to the leadership literature.

What is a critical incident?

Having a clear definition of a critical incident, suited for the purpose, is important for clarity in the interview. But what is a critical incident? Flanagan (1954, p.327) defined the term as follows:

“By an incident is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects.”

Leadership studies have varied in their definition of a critical incident, which has led to no common definition or terminology of a critical incident, let alone a consensus of a CIT question. Some authors ask the respondent to think about an event with a certain prescribed outcome and then elicit behaviours that led up to that event (Krause *et al.*, 2007). Other authors ask the respondent to describe situations whereby effective or ineffective leadership was displayed (Lewis *et al.*, 2010).

Studies using the CIT vary between not specifying whether the critical incident should be positive or negative (Pina e Cunha *et al.*, 2009) and requiring both negative and positive incidents in their examples of critical incidents (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003). When the researcher does not specify the type of incident to be discussed, the respondent is more likely to recall negative incidents (Dasborough, 2006). However, most studies do request both a negative and a positive incident from the respondent in order to reveal a range of challenges and situations commonly experienced (Wolff *et al.*, 2002).

Applying the critical incident technique

After a thorough review of the literature, the following question was posed to each respondent:

Bring to mind a key client relationship that you have led in the last three years. In the context of leading that relationship, select a specific event where you had either a positive or negative experience of leading your peers.

To overcome potential limitations of recalling past events, participants were asked to bring to mind a key client relationship they had led in just the last three years (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003; Kvarnstrom, 2008; Wolff *et al.*, 2002). In the context of that client relationship, they were then asked to select a specific event where they had either a positive or negative experience of leading peers. Here the author was seeking to distinguish behavioural differences when leading peers, the reasons for these differences and to understand the potential implications for CRPs in how they lead.

The CIT question was crafted to minimize researcher presupposition, allowing for the discovery of alternative explanations to the leadership process. As the technique focuses the respondent onto actual events (Collis and Hussey, 2014), it elicits rich details of specific situations, including background context, which has been called for in leadership research (Lewis *et al.*, 2010).

Taking each critical event in turn, participants were then asked the following questions:

- What was the event?
- When did the event happen?

- What circumstances led up to this event?
- What were you trying to achieve?
- What did your peer(s) say or do?
- What did you say or do?
- What was the outcome?
- How has the experience shaped how you now lead your peers?

Depending on the participant's response, the following probes were used by the author:

- What happened next?
- Why did it happen?
- How did it happen?
- With whom did it happen?
- What did you feel?
- What were the consequences?
- How did you cope?

Techniques such as allowing silence, active listening, echoing responses and avoiding interrupting (Berg and Lune, 2007) were used by the author to encourage respondents to elaborate on their responses. The CIT method was used in 26 of the 31 interviews (see Table 4.2).

3.7.2 Personal construct psychology (PCP) and the repertory grid

The Repertory Grid technique stems from the personal construct psychology (PCP) proposed by Kelly (1955). It is a cognitive mapping technique that allows individuals to identify what they think is important in their own words; therefore not forcing on the participants preconceived dimensions the author may have in mind from a review of the literature. The abstract analytical methods in PCP, such as repertory grids, have been shown to be valuable tools for unearthing peoples' implicit beliefs that are not readily accessible to conscious memory and so have the potential to deliver rich results (Müller and Schyns, 2005).

Kelly (1955) argues that individuals use their own personal constructs to understand and interpret events that occur around them and that these constructs are tempered by the

individual experiences. Individuals come to understand the world in which they live by developing a personally organized system of interpretation based on their experiences. The function of a personal construct system is to interpret the current situation and to anticipate future events. Further, individuals can share and appreciate to varying degrees the personal construct systems of others (Tan and Hunter, 2002).

The fundament of PCP is that a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which they anticipate events (Kelly, 1955). In other words, people are innately governed by a need to make sense of the world in order to make their future encounters more predictable. Within PCP people are seen as being naturally dynamic and motivated, who are defined by constructs about themselves and their world, which in turn are shaped by past experiences. A construct is a representational description of an event, object or person that defines it and differentiates it from others. Constructs are bipolar, discriminative schemas and a person's knowledge and behaviour can only be understood from the relative comparison of both poles (Walker and Winter, 2007), for example, a person's construction of 'good' can only be understood in relation to their construction of 'bad'. Constructs are developed from the internalisation (assimilation) of experiences, whereby the individual creates implicit theories about these experiences to help anticipate future events and give meaning to events that have already happened.

In applying the Repertory Grid to this study, it is the author's intention to develop insight both into the personal constructs each CRP has developed and to understand if there are common constructs across the participants. It is hoped the result will be an enhanced understanding of the behaviours that CRPs consider to be both effective and ineffective when attempting to influence the activities of peers on a key account.

Applying the repertory grid

The repertory grid was primarily used to investigate participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of Client Relationship Partners at influencing the activities of peers on a key account. The Repertory Grid was used in 22 of the 31 interviews (see Table 4.2).

Participants were asked to select six CRPs (the elements to be investigated) on whom to focus their thoughts and were instructed to note their initials on small blank cards provided by the author. Further direction was given that the CRPs selected by the participants must:

- Be someone they have worked with on a key client relationship in the last three years
- Differ in their effectiveness. Respondents were asked to select three CRPs who they consider to be highly effective at influencing the activities of peers on a key account and three they consider to be less effective

Participants were asked to allocate one card to each partner: with the effective performers on cards A, B and C; and the less effective partners on cards D, E and F

Cards were then extracted in sets of three (triadic presentation) and participants were then asked to fix their thoughts on the three partners and to answer the question: "in their ability relation to influence the activities of peers on a key account, which two seem most alike and different from the third?" An A4 print out of the question was placed in a visible position in front of each participant to ensure they remain focused on the question.

Participants were directed to comment on what the pair has in common (the constructs). Guidance was given by the author to comment on just one aspect of their behaviour. When the participant had commented on the pair, they were asked to comment on what makes the third person different. Once again, guidance was given to comment on just one aspect of his or her behaviour and that it must relate to the behaviour identified for the pair; either the opposite of the first behaviour or a difference of degrees.

The procedure was then repeated with different combinations of triads. The author had noted in the pilot study that there was hesitation on the part of some participants in relation to the initial triadic presentation of the elements. When asked to identify for the first time which two elements have something in common in a way that is different to the third (element), participants assumed that whichever two they had categorised as 'effective' or 'less effective' would be grouped together. The author therefore found it necessary to give assurances that this may or may not be the case and that there was not some type of 'trick' being played on them in asking them to consider the triadic presentation in this way. All participants, in both the pilot and full study, then went on to find the Repertory Grid method insightful, if somewhat demanding (insofar as the introspective element of encouraging them to consciously consider their beliefs). All responses were recorded on a template (see Appendix B) and captured by the recording equipment for later transcription and coding. The constructs were freely elicited so as to remain true to the study's purpose of exploring participants' meanings.

Laddering and pyramiding

Laddering and pyramiding were utilised to explore meaning and identify constructs (Jankowicz, 2004). Laddering is a useful technique for dealing with erroneous constructs and for deepening the elicitation process to unearth core or superordinate constructs. It was used extensively across all interviews that involved use of the repertory grid. The participant is asked to choose which side of the construct is preferable and then reasons for this choice are explored using 'why?' based questions to increase the level of abstraction and 'ladder upwards' towards core, value based constructs, or 'example?' based questions to 'ladder down' towards more concrete, operationalised constructs (Bannister and Fransella, 1986).

The approach to laddering and pyramiding was amended as a consequence of experiences in the pilot study. Originally the author adopted a laddering and pyramiding approach as each construct was identified. However, the author formed the view that this may have inhibited the participants from expressing a broad range of constructs in relation to each triadic presentation. Accordingly the author adjusted the approach during the pilot stage to encourage participants to identify as many constructs as they thought relevant and only then to ladder or pyramid each construct in turn, where appropriate. This approach enabled a free flowing conversation and appeared to enable participants to more easily engage with the method and enter a state of flow. In addition, adopting this approach also allowed for reflection on the constructs elicited in relation to each representation to see whether some constructs grouped together or were duplicative in some way

Element scaling (five point Likert scale)

Constructs were then added to the Grid for rating and participants were asked to rate each element in turn with reference to each of the identified constructs using a five point Likert rating scale. Likert's method of 'summated ratings' assumes that each scale statement (construct pole descriptions in this case) is a linear function of the same attitude dimension and the ratings express varying degrees of agreement/disagreement that an individual can express against a given statement (Gregory, 2004). A five-point scale was selected as this gave sufficient breadth to measure relative strength and direction of perceived behaviours, without overcomplicating the response choices while also allowing a balanced mid-point did, unlike a six-point scale that may force a false choice. Subsequent analysis is then able to reveal the research participants' interpretations of the similarities and differences between the elements and constructs.

3.7.3 Semi-structured questions

Semi structured questions were used in 27 of the 31 interviews (see Table 4.2). The semi structured questions were used towards the end of the interviews to investigate participants views on how the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account and the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms. The literature suggests that semi structured questions are deemed appropriate when covering themes that participants may not be used to talking about, such as values, intentions and ideals (Åstedt-Kurki and Heikkinen, 1994). Semi-structured questions also allow a focus on the issues that are meaningful for the participant, allowing diverse perceptions to be expressed (Cridland *et al.*, 2015). The questions were designed to generate answers from participants that were spontaneous, in-depth (Dearnley, 2005), unique (Krauss *et al.*, 2009) and vivid (Dearnley

2005). Descriptive answers were also encouraged by starting the questions with words like 'what', 'who', 'where', 'when' or 'how' (Chenail, 2011).

As with the collection of data relating to Critical Incidents (section 3.7.1), a series of probes were used based on the response of participants (see Appendix A). The probes were used as a spontaneous follow-up to questions; encouraging participants to expand on some particular point that came up in the interview by asking for more information (Whiting, 2008).

3.8 Data analysis

Figure 3.2 displays each stage of analysis in the context of the research paradigm (Section 3.2) and overall Conceptual Framework (Table 2.7).

3.8.1 Incident level analysis

The Critical Incident Technique was used in 26 of the 31 interviews and, as shown in table 3.7, 26 Critical Incidents were elicited. CIT was intentionally not used in five of the interviews due to time restrictions. All of the Critical Incidents elicited were deemed to be useable, as defined by the criteria set out in Section 3.7.1.

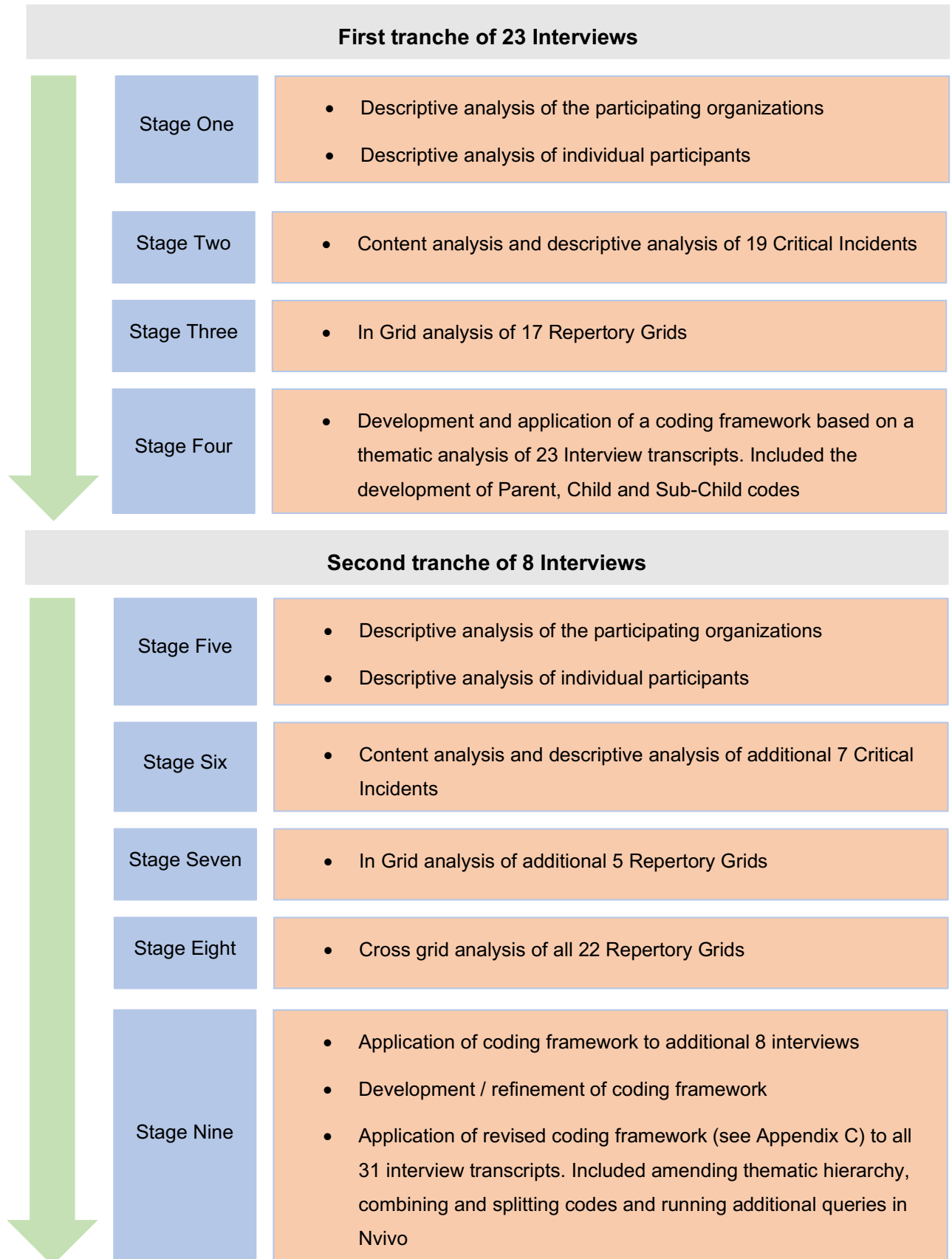


Figure 3.2: Nine stages of data analysis

The critical incidents were read, read again and then reviewed for a third time before the identification of recurring themes through the development of a classification scheme. As set out in Table 3.7, the Incidents were categorised by Critical Incident Type, the number of times each Critical Incident Type was identified by a participant; and whether the Critical Incidents identified were regarded as a positive or negative experience by the CRP.

Table 3.7: Critical incidents

Critical Incident Type	Number of Critical Incidents identified by respondents	Positive and / or negative
Pitch for work (for a specific work opportunity)	9	9 - Positive
Co-ordination (including events)	7	4 - Positive 3 - Negative
Personnel matters	5	4 - Positive 1 - Negative
Specific business development opportunity (not a pitch)	3	2 - Positive 1 - Negative
Setting and managing priorities	1	1 - Negative
Specific piece of legal work / transaction	1	1 - Positive
Total:	26	20 - Positive 6 - Negative

26 Critical Incidents were identified across 6 Critical incident Types. 20 were considered to be positive and 6 to be negative. As discussed in Section 3.8.3, the Critical Incidents were then coded inductively from the incident accounts using template analysis as a subset of thematic data analysis.

3.8.2 Repertory grid analysis

In Grid analysis

To assist with the analytical process, a grid was produced in Excel for each of the 22 CRPs who participated in the Rep Grid method. Table 3.8 displays the Repertory Grid for interview participant Rachel. Following the guidance of Jankowicz (2004), in grid analysis was conducted following steps 1 to 3 below to help develop a basic description of each grid and in particular an analysis of the *content*. The *structure* and *relationships* between elements and between constructs in each grid was then investigated following steps 4 to 7.

The purpose of the in grid analysis is, according to Jankowicz (2004, p.72), twofold: “firstly, to identify the interviewee’s meanings, and, secondly, to draw together whatever implications seem appropriate to you [the author]”.

1. Process analysis: The purpose of process analysis is to reflect on what was actually going on during the interview, as opposed to the constructs captured on the grid e.g. how did the interviewee react to the topic? How easy or difficult did they find it to provide the elements and constructs? How easy was the rating process?
2. Eyeball analysis: Involves stepping back from the detailed elicitation procedure and reading the grid as a whole, familiarising oneself with what’s there. In so doing, reflect on
 - I. What is the interviewee thinking about?
 - II. How has the interviewee represented the topic?
 - III. How does s/he think? Review the constructs. How many constructs were obtained, given the length of the interview?
 - IV. What does s/he think? Review the element ratings. Is there anything obvious about the whole matrix of ratings?
 - V. Draw conclusions and summarise the main points
3. Construct characterisation: The identification of the proportion of constructs that are core versus peripheral to each interviewee and an initial assessment of the extent to which constructs might be Propositional (i.e. constructs that offer simple descriptions of basic and, at first glance, superficial element characteristics) versus Constellatory (i.e. those which imply the position of an element on other constructs very strongly indeed)
4. Simple relationship between elements: The purpose of this analysis is to investigate whether the interviewee thinks of one element in the same way as s/he thinks of another. It is a straightforward process that involves summing differences between elements and comparing the outcomes

5. Simple relationships between constructs: The purpose here is to consider similarities in how the interviewee talks about the elements. Is s/he using the various constructs in similar ways? Do the constructs represent very different aspects of the interviewee's thinking, or are they simply minor flavours of one rather obsessive theme which seems to underlie the way in which the interviewee thinks about that particular topic?
6. Cluster analysis: The purpose of cluster analysis is to highlight the relationships in a grid so that they easily become visible.
7. Principal component analysis: The purpose of principal component analysis is to identify distinct patterns of variability (variance) in the data.

Steps 1 to 3 of the in-grid analysis were concerned with an analysis of the content of each grid. A summation of the process analysis, eyeball analysis and construct characterisation of each grid revealed little discussion over the choice and reasons for the topic. All respondents expressed an interest in the topic that ranged from a mild fascination to outright astonishment that the author should find them and the topic worthy of enquiry. The analysis displays a wide spectrum of prior consideration of the topic by respondents. Some had clearly invested significant amounts of time thinking about their role as CRP, their approach to leadership and issues such as the structure of their firm. Others clearly had not made the same investment; but all found it rewarding, insightful and valuable to have the opportunity to reflect on the subject.

In relation to the identification of the elements, only one of the 22 CRPs who completed the repertory grid was unable to identify all six elements. In this instance the respondent was able to identify three partners in the effective category and only two in the less effective category. This did not inhibit or devalue the data from this grid elicitation due to the triadic presentation of elements; which meant there were a sufficient number of presentations on which to draw conclusions on how the respondent made sense of the research question.

Table 3.8: Repertory grid for Rachel

Emergent Construct		Effective			Less Effective			Implicit Construct
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
1	Open. Receptive to the ideas and ways of doing things of others	1	2	2	3	4	4	Closed
2	Good communicators (Share aims and objectives)	1	1	1	2	3	3	Poor communicators
3	Projects calm and confidence	1	1	1	3	4	4	Not confident
4	Inspiring - conveys passion	1	1	2	4	4	5	Uninspiring
5	Has a clear vision. Is strategic	1	2	1	4	2	3	Tactical
6	Acts as a team player (Focuses on inclusivity and co-operation)	1	1	1	3	3	3	Acts alone / hides behind team (Shirks responsibility / tough decisions)
7	Self aware	1	2	1	1	4	4	Lacking self awareness

Steps 4 to 7 of the in-grid analysis were concerned with the identification of the structure and relationships between elements and constructs in each grid. To assist with this the repertory grids were first analysed individually in the software package WebGrid Plus. Web Grid Plus provided clearer identification of the relationships between constructs by more easily extracting simple structural relationships between elements and constructs that may have remained hidden within the raw data (Denicolo and Pope, 2011) and illustrated these relationships in a series of focus plots. Focus plots (Pope and Keen, 1981) utilise a non-inclusive two-way cluster analysis producing a linear reordering of the elements and constructs to highlight similarities within and between individuals' construct systems. After inputting the data into RepGrid5 a focus plot was produced for each participant. These were then exported as separate JPEGs – see Figure 3.3 for an example cluster analysis for Rachel based on the Repertory Grid in Table 3.8.



Figure 3.3: Focus cluster analysis for Rachel

Each grid was examined to identify the nature, range and relationships between the constructs, particularly highlighting those that appeared core to the participant's inferred values and sense of identity.

Step four – simple relationships between elements

Simple relationships between elements were considered to investigate whether the interviewee thinks of one element in the same way as another. Using the Grid in Table 3.8 and cluster analysis in Figure 3.3 as an example of the process of elements analysis, we can see that elements A and C and elements E and F have very few differences between them (in terms of how they were rated by Rachel). One inference of this is that Rachel construes elements A and C similarly in that they are both 'Good communicators' (1-1) and 'Acts as a team player' (1-1), whereas elements E and F were construed similarly in terms of being

'Closed' (to the ideas and ways of doing things of others) (4-4) and 'lacking self awareness' (4-4).

Step five – simple relationships between constructs

Simple relationships between constructs were then considered for each Grid in an attempt to make tacit knowledge explicit and understand more about how each interviewee construes their experiences. As is evident in Table 3.8, we can see that Rachel has provided near identical scores for Construct Two: 'Good communicators - poor communicators' and Construct Six 'Acts as a team player – acts alone'. In summing up the scores for each construct there is a difference of only one point between the two (a sum total of 11 for Construct Two and a sum total of 12 for Construct Six); which represents the smallest sum of differences between all constructs in the Grid. This invites a number of questions, including: whether the interviewee is using the two constructs as equivalents; if there is a shared meaning between the constructs; or if there is some other relationship between the constructs insofar as how the interviewee construes their experience.

Step six – cluster analysis

A cluster analysis was performed on each Grid following an examination of the relationships between the elements and the constructs. As shown in Figure 3.3, cluster analysis is a useful technique for highlighting the relationships in a grid so that they become visible at a glance. Figure 3.3 shows how both the elements and constructs in Table 3.8 have been reordered with those most similar being positioned next to one another. Very conveniently, the % similarity scores for adjacent elements and the % similarity scores for adjacent constructs are also provided, which can be seen in the form of dendograms.

In relation to each In-Grid analysis, the elements were examined first following the cluster analysis and a note was made on which elements had been reordered. In relation to Figure 3.3, it was noted that elements B and C were reordered to reflect the small sum of differences between elements A and C (first identified in the simple relationships between elements analysis). Similarly, the constructs were also examined to identify which, if any, had been reordered following the cluster analysis to help identify potential relationships between constructs.

The dendograms for each of the elements and constructs were then examined and the key relationships and structures were identified. In relation to the constructs, as shown in Figure 3.3 the dendogram suggests a comparatively strong relationship (of approximately 97%) between the construct 'Good communicators - poor communicators' and the construct 'Acts as a team player – acts alone'. In so doing, the dendogram and cluster analysis confirms the

relationship between the constructs that was first identified in an analysis of the simple relationships between constructs.

Step seven - principal component analysis

Principal component analysis was the last stage of In Grid analysis performed on each Grid. Principal component analysis identifies the variability by working out:

- the extent to which the ratings are similar to each other; and
- the total variability distinct to each pattern, using as few different patterns as possible

According to Jankowicz (2004, p.128) “The process is iterative. Firstly, the pattern that accounts for the largest amount of variability is identified, reported, and removed. The next pattern is identified likewise, and so on, until all of the variability has been accounted for. These patterns of variability are called ‘components’”. The output of the principal component analysis for the Grid in Table 3.8 is shown in Figure 3.4.

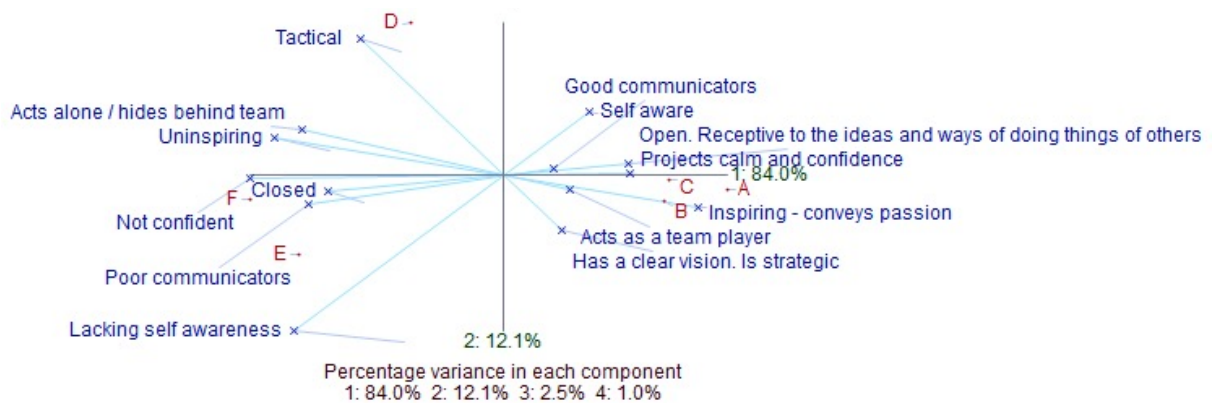


Figure 3.4: Principal component analysis for Rachel

As can be seen, the elements and the constructs are arranged with respect to the principal components. The horizontal and vertical lines represent the two principal components: the horizontal line the first component and the vertical line the second. They are set at right angles to each other as they represent maximally distinct patterns in the data. Constructs are plotted as straight lines whose angle with respect to each component reflects the extent to which the construct is represented by the component, and whose length reflects the amount of variance in the ratings on that construct. According to Jankowicz (2004, p.129) “each component is a statistical invention, whose purpose is to represent, or stand for, as straightforwardly as possible, one of the different patterns in the grid”. In Figure 3.4 component one (the horizontal line) accounts for 84% of the variance and component two (the vertical line) for 12% of the variance.

The angle between a group of construct lines and the lines representing the components reflects the extent to which the component can be taken to represent the grouping of constructs in question (the smaller the angle, the greater the extent). Figure 3.4 displays a strong clustering of constructs around component one with constructs 'Projects calm and confidence v not confident' and 'Open. Receptive to the ideas and ways of doing things of others v closed' being most closely aligned. Similarly, the relationships between elements (that is, the distance between any two elements) reflect the ratings each element received on all constructs. Any two elements that are closer together in the graph received similar ratings; any which are printed far apart would tend to show rather different ratings in the original grid.

What sort of component 'underlies' the constructs? Guidance from Jankowicz (2004) is that this question is often resolved by finding a name for the component: a label that reflects the meaning in common between the constructs. She goes on to say that the act of naming the component reflects one's own judgement and this necessarily requires the researcher to make assumptions in the interpretation of the grid.

Cross grid analysis

Analysing grids and making comparisons among interviewees becomes more complicated the more there are as the amount of information grows exponentially with each new grid. As a consequence it becomes necessary to sacrifice some of the detail in each individual grid if one is to identify themes that are common to many and therefore representative of the sample of interviewee as a whole. To assist with this the following steps were taken in relation to a cross grid analysis in accordance with the process for cross grid analysis prescribed by Jankowicz (2004):

1. Each construct was reviewed and those that are in some way similar were placed together into a theme. The cluster analysis and principal component analysis from each in-grid analysis was used to inform this initial clustering
3. The process continued until all constructs were allocated to a theme. The themes therefore became mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Table 4.5 shows the themes and related constructs
4. Each theme was then defined (labelled) based on the constructs contained within. The number of constructs contained within each theme is calculated in column titled 'constructs' in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 identifies the core themes that account for all of the constructs elicited from respondents. The top six themes account for 76.9% of the constructs and as such became the basis for an analysis of the results in chapter 4.3.4.

3.8.3 Thematic analysis of interview transcripts

In total, the audio recordings from all 31 interviews were transcribed and imported into the Nvivo software package. Nvivo enabled the author to perform word frequency searches, develop a comprehensive coding category based on richly descriptive findings, link codes to memos to help with the analytic process and create visual data displays including word clouds. A coding framework was developed based on a thematic analysis of the first 23 interview transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006; King, 2011). The same framework was then subsequently applied to the second tranche of eight further interviews. The development of the coding framework was an evolving, iterative process in which a thematic hierarchy of codes was produced; combining and splitting codes as dictated by the data. Consistent with the experiences of Brooks *et al.* (2015, p. 218), the “iterative use of the template encourages careful consideration of how themes are defined and how they relate to one another”. Appendix C contains the final coding framework against which all 31 interviews were ultimately coded.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006), whereby a theme captures “something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). In essence, coding involves attaching key words or phrases to text segments, allowing empirical material to be broken down, examined, compared, and categorized into themes. Consistent with the interpretivist research paradigm and phenomenological research methodology of the study, thematic analysis (as a subset of template analysis) provided the author with a high degree of flexibility in deriving meaning from the transcripts.

King *et al.* (2002, p.333) define template analysis as:

“...the construction of a coding template that comprises codes representing themes identified in the data through careful reading and rereading of the text. Codes are organized hierarchically so that the highest level codes represent broad themes in the data, with lower levels indexing more narrowly focused themes within these themes”.

While Template Analysis frequently begins with a set of a priori themes (Brooks *et al.*, 2015), due to the paucity of previous research literature addressing the topic, and also as a reflection of the phenomenological stance underpinning this work, only broad categories were identified at the outset. These broad categories (that would inform the ‘Parent’ codes described below) were based on the review of the literature, the research questions and interview design. Absence the initial broad categories, the coding therefore largely adopted an inductive, data-driven approach in which codes emerged through multiple readings of the empirical material (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Though adopting an interpretive phenomenological approach, this research does not subscribe to the philosophical notion that one can completely suspend presuppositions and judgements of a topic under study, viewing the phenomenon as if for the first time (Husserl 1931). Accordingly, the author used the technique of bracketing and self-reflection (Tufford and Newman, 2012); endeavouring to remain open to participants' accounts and making a determined effort to step outside of any personal and taken-for-granted views about the participants, their experiences and the phenomenon under study more generally.

The coding followed a 'broad to narrow' approach (Patton, 2014) in which broad descriptive categories were identified and then more detailed, in vivo sub-codes were identified from the data within each category. The four main themes / 'Parent' codes identified by following this inductive approach are:

1. Characteristics of law firms: systemic, structural, processual and cultural factors that may affect the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in City law firms
2. Characteristics of CRPs: affective, cognitive, behavioural and trait factors identified as being factors in the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in City law firms
3. CRP responsibilities: the primary responsibilities and activities of CRPs
4. Loci of leadership: how leadership may arise in relation to the role performed by CRPs

As can be seen in Appendix C, following the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) the four 'Parent' codes were then sub divided into multiple 'Child' and 'Sub-Child' codes as appropriate. 'Child' and 'Sub-Child' codes typically denote areas worth analyzing in finer detail.

As additional transcripts were coded, similar phrases and sentiments were allocated to existing codes. Throughout the coding process, codes were also merged and collapsed based on the data. This resulted in 135 codes being reduced over time to a final 46 to reduce overlaps of meaning between the codes and enable the researcher to more easily identify patterns of responses. The Nvivo software enabled the researcher to revise and re-organise codes as required.

The number of categories and subcategories chosen is a trade off between specificity and generality: when too broad themes are chosen there may be a loss of comprehensiveness and specificity; however, when too many themes are used it may become difficult to reliably categorize incidents (Bradley, 1992) to reach saturation or identify generalizations from the

data. Throughout the process, memos, diagrams and annotations were used to capture analytical ideas for reflection and further exploration.

Coding is arguably the stage of thematic analysis that attracts the most controversy, as it is both subjective as well as difficult (Sharoff, 2008). To assist with the coding process, the author followed the guidance of Bernard and Ryan (2010, p.276) that “repetition is the most common theme recognition technique, and is based on the premise that if a concept reoccurs throughout and/or across transcripts, it is likely a theme”. Template Analysis was selected over other forms of thematic analysis, notably Framework Analysis, due to the former providing more detailed guidance on the development of the coding structure (Brooks *et al.*, 2015). While both (Template Analysis and Framework Analysis) are examples of what Crabtree and Miller (1992) refer to as “codebook” approaches (where a coding structure is developed from a mixture of a priori interests and initial engagement with the data), studies using Framework Analysis do not typically show the depth of coding seen in Template Analysis. While the need to modify the framework in the course of analysis is recognized in Framework Analysis, in general the iterative (re-)development of the coding structure is a much more central aspect in Template Analysis (Gale *et al.*, 2013). Conversely, the emphasis in Framework Analysis on reducing the data through “charting” and identifying patterns by “mapping” is not an essential part of Template Analysis. The more detail guidance (for developing a coding structure) provided by Template analysis was attractive to the author. To help provide additional guidance, the author also consulted the checklist for thematic analysis put forward by Braun and Clarke (2006), see Appendix D.

The coding framework in Appendix C served as the basis for the interpretation of the data set and the writing-up of the findings. To give an example of how these broad coding categories were applied to the data, Figure 3.5 takes a single passage of text from an interview transcript (Kevin) and shows how the codes were assigned.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that leadership studies have traditionally been conducted with a positivist paradigm, using behaviour descriptive questionnaires. In the social sciences, it seems erroneous to presume that organizational actors can be separated from the social context, reality is objective and singular, research is unbiased, and that it is possible to capture complex organizational phenomenon in a single measurement (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Collis and Hussey, 2009). Viewing leadership as a socially constructed (Meindl *et al.*, 1985), fluid process (Tourish, 2014), influenced by multiple actors (e.g. distributed

leadership, followership; Gronn, 2002; Shamir, 2007), intertwined with contextual factors (Ford, 2010), suggests that the complexity of leadership (Collinson, 2014) is best served by an interpretive approach. Following this argument, universal laws to the study of leadership are unlikely to be obtained or practically relevant. As a consequence, this study employs the critical incident technique, repertory grid technique and semi-structured questions as primary research methods within an interpretivist paradigm to help develop an inductive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The strengths of the chosen research methods lie not only in their utility as exploratory tools, but also in their capacity to build theories or models (Butterfield et al., 2005; Druskat and Wheeler, 2003; Woolsey, 1986). For example, the CIT allows the researcher to not only understand the extent of, for example, collective leadership, but to also gain a further understanding of the thought processes, attributed meanings, and motivations behind such behaviours. In this research, staying true to an inductive approach, coding was data-driven, whereby codes were developed through multiple readings of the empirical material (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

In deciding on and applying the research methodology and methods, the author was sensitive to the topic of quality in research. Data analysis in qualitative research remains somewhat mysterious (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). The problem lies in the fact that there are few agreed-on canons for qualitative analysis in the sense of shared ground rules. There are no formulas for determining the significance of findings or for interpreting them, and there are no ways of perfectly replicating a researcher's analytical thinking. However, because the issue of generalization in qualitative research is contentious for some researchers (Gummerson, 2000), the author was acutely aware of the need to adhere to good practice concerning issues of trustworthiness. Adopting the terms 'credibility', 'dependability', and 'transferability' used by Guba and Lincoln (1998), and more consistent with more recent discourse in the field of qualitative research, the author therefore sought to ensure:

1. **Credibility:** through use of multiple data sources, methods of data collection and clear methodological congruence between the research design components
2. **Dependability:** via the precise documentation of the stages, processes and procedures followed for data collection and analysis
3. **Transferability:** by acknowledging that, while inferences to a broader population may be possible, gaining meaning and in-depth understanding of each participant's lived experience was a primary focus of the research.

In summary, this chapter describes in detail how the study was designed, iteratively developed and then methodologically undertaken to meet its purpose and answer the seven Research Questions identified in Chapter 2.6. The Results and Findings arising from the analysis are now presented in Chapter Four.

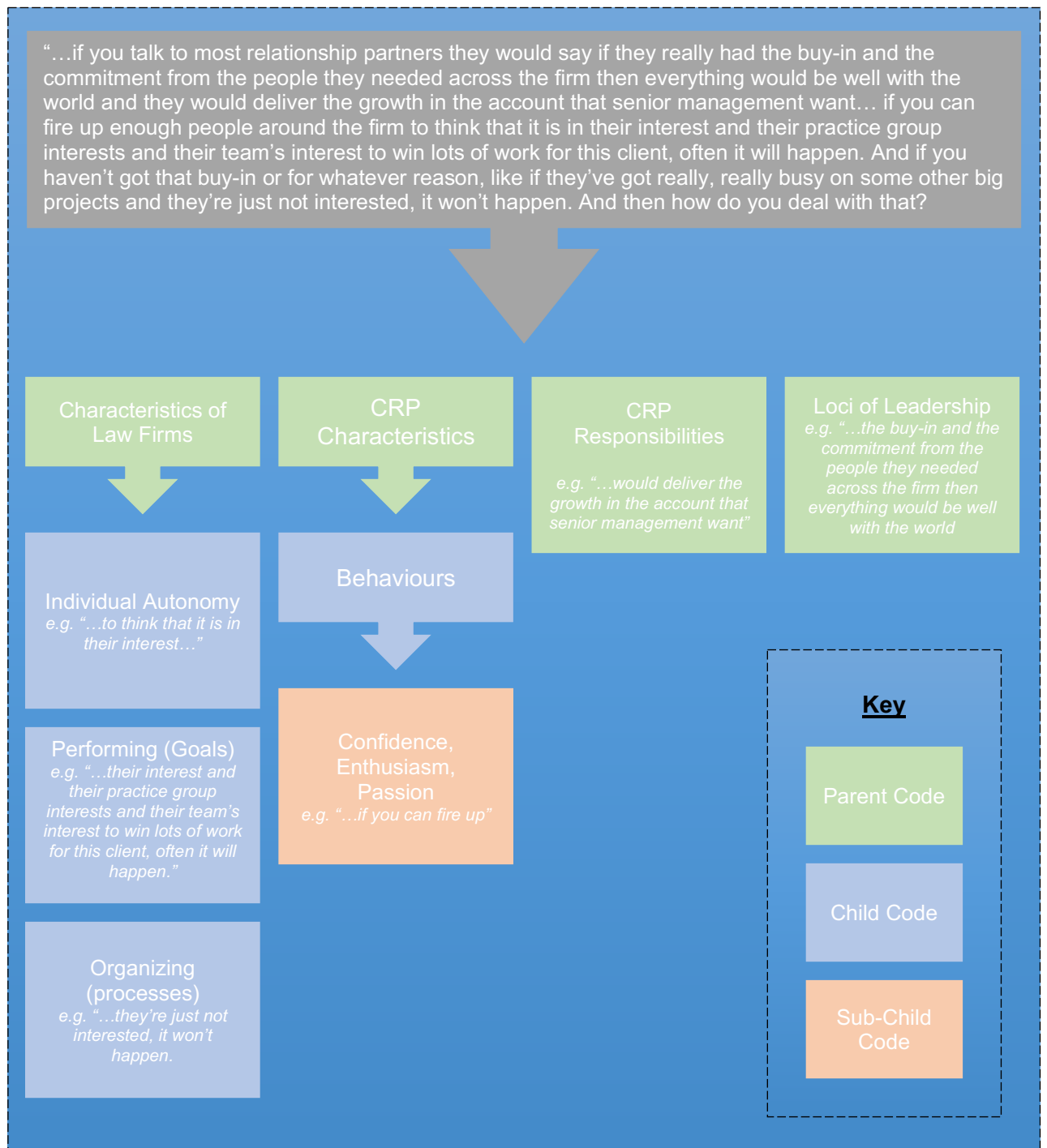


Figure 3.5: Application of coding framework. An example from respondent Kevin

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical material in relation to the seven research questions. The empirical material was thematically coded across all interview material collected for this study. As stated previously, CRPs are the primary unit of analysis. Consistent with the interpretivist paradigm of the research, the stories and perspectives of the CRPs are brought to the fore in the form of direct quotations where they provide context to the identified characteristics.

Numerical data is included to help explore individual responses and themes common across all participants. Whilst this may at first appear to be at odds with a qualitative study, it fits with the interpretivist epistemology of this study and is consistent with thematic analysis, Personal Construct Psychology (which underpins Repertory Grid Theory) and the use of ratings to give meaning to a person's construct system. The use of numerical data is not an attempt at statistical analysis and its inclusion, in the form of cluster analysis and frequency data, is done so within the context of this study's interpretivist paradigm.

In presenting the results, the author draws on the primary research method for each question, with additional insights incorporated from the remaining research methods where they provide confirmatory evidence, an additional perspective, or a divergent point of view. The primary method for each research question is set out in Table 3.6 and in the Interview Guide in Appendix A. The purpose of using multiple methods is to provide as rich an account as possible of the CRPs as individuals and, where appropriate, as a collective (i.e. a group of CRPs) in relation to the research questions. That said, throughout the presentation of the results, the author was conscious of the unique perspective, circumstances and contextual factors of each actor.

4.2 Organisational and individual participant characteristics

4.2.1 Organisational sample descriptive characteristics

Given the exploratory nature of this research, a sample of CRPs from across a number of City law firms was purposefully selected (Eisenhardt, 1989). Studying CRPs from a number of City law firms (as opposed to just one) increases the representativeness (Symon and Cassell, 2012) and generalizability (Maxwell, 2008) of the findings and thereby produces results that can be considered to have broader relevance.

City law firms are defined as “those firms whose clients are mostly, but not exclusively, corporate entities, and where the practice areas of such firms focus largely, but not exclusively, on the commercial sector” (Mayson, 1997, p.61).

To ensure a sample reflective of the target market for this research i.e. City law firms, the threshold for inclusion in this study was City law firms with a turnover in excess of £100m and a total partner population in excess of 100 as at July 2014 according to data provided by The Lawyer (2010). Table 4.1 provides information on the participating firms, updated to reflect reported revenue and partner numbers as at 2016.

Table 4.1: Participating organisations by total partner numbers and revenue

Firm	Total no. of Partners	Revenue £m	Number of CRPs (from total of 31) interviewed
1	0-200	0-250	9
2	801-1000	1001-1250	5
3	201-400	501-750	4
4	1001 +	1251+	1
5	801-1000	751-1000	2
6	401-600	751-1000	3
7	601-800	1251+	1
8	201-400	251-500	2
9	0-200	0-250	1
10	401-600	1001-1250	1
11	0-200	0-250	1
12	0-250	0-250	1

Source: The Lawyer UK 200 Annual Report (2016) with additional adjustments by Legal IT Insider

Firm One is a predominately UK based firm (in terms of total lawyer headcount) with expertise that covers a range of areas, from contractual agreements and IT to payment

systems and data protection. The firm has a particular focus on the retail and consumer, financial services, industrial, and digital sectors.

Firm Two is a multi jurisdictional firm (with significant operations in the UK) that handles high-profile public law issues for international corporate clients, government departments, regulators and other public bodies.

Firm Three has a large Real Estate practice and advises investor clients across Europe, the Middle East, Australia, North America and Asia, particularly South Korea, Japan, China and Singapore.

Firm Four is one of the largest firms in this study (by partner headcount and turnover), has a truly global reach and specialises in complex, high-value contracts and advises the world's leading technology companies.

Firm Five operates in more than 40 countries worldwide and provides advice across all types of commercial law: banking and finance; competition; corporate and M&A; dispute resolution; employment & pensions; environment; immigration; intellectual property; private equity; public procurement; real estate; and tax.

Firm Six has a leading public law team, a widely recognised dispute resolution practice and a client roster of household commercial names, global financial institutions, utilities companies, statutory regulators and government bodies.

Firm Seven has a strong presence in the US (in addition to the UK) and is recognised as a leading adviser to financial institutions, with a presence on many of the largest and most sophisticated mandates for lenders and borrowers across the world.

Firm Eight works with over 50 of the Fortune Top 100 companies, has a particularly strong media and brand management practice and expertise in trademarks, patents, copyright and designs.

The main practice areas of Firm Nine include media, technology, telecommunications, real estate, corporate, intellectual property, commercial litigation and arbitration, finance, leisure, tax, EU and competition, and employment. Within the legal sector it is recognised as being one of the most innovative firms in the UK.

Firm Ten is a global law firm with a long-standing track record of successfully supporting the world's leading national and multinational corporations, financial institutions and governments.

Firm Eleven is the European arm of a Swiss verein. Swiss vereins market themselves as a unified firm brand but have balkanized member finances.

Firm Twelve has more of a UK focus (as opposed to international) than many of the other organisations in the study but still provides a comprehensive legal and advisory service, including commercial contracting, corporate transactions, governance, property, commercial and clinical litigation, regulatory and employment law.

In this section, I have provided the descriptive statistics of the participating organizations. From this it is evident that the organizations range in turnover and partner numbers thereby providing a degree of diversity but within a homogeneous sample. In the next section I provide an overview of the individual participants.

4.2.2 Individual participants' descriptive statistics

31 respondents from 12 City law firms were interviewed for this study. CRPs were asked a range of individual demographic questions at the start of each interview (see Interview Guide in Appendix A), the responses to which are set out in Table 4.2. Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.

Respondents' Gender was categorized on the basis of a) male; b) female or c) prefer not to state. Of the respondent sample, 26 (83.8 %) are Male and 5 (16.2%) are Female. While the gender of the sample is heavily skewed towards Male, this is broadly representative of the gender split in City law firms at the partner level. Data from the Solicitor Regulators Authority¹ on law firm self-reported diversity data for 2015 shows that in firms with more than 50 partners, only 27% of partners are female. In addition, information provided by The Lawyer² magazine UK 200 for 2015 shows that women hold just 19 per cent of the total partnership roles in the UK's top 20 law firms. This is despite a growing number of firms pledging to improve their gender diversity credentials in recent years.

¹ <http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/diversity-toolkit/diverse-law-firms.page>

² <https://www.thelawyer.com/issues/tl-9-march-2015/where-are-the-women-law-firm-leaders/>

Chapter 4: Results

Table 4.2: Summary of individual participants' demographic information and application of data collection methods

Participant	Gender	Age	Years as a Partner	Firm	Practice Area	Data Collection Method		
						CIT	Rep Grid	SSQs
Adam	Male	50-59	16 -20	4	Real Estate	✓	✗	✓
Brian	Male	30-39	11-15	2	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Colin	Male	50-59	21 - 25	1	Employment	✓	✓	✓
Dominic	Male	40-49	Not known	12	CEO	✓	✗	✗
Evan	Male	40-49	16 -20	1	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Flo	Female	40-49	11-15	3	Banking	✗	✗	✓
Garry	Male	30-39	1-5	4	Commercial	✓	✗	✓
Henry	Male	40-49	11-15	2	Corporate	✓	✗	✓
Isaac	Male	50-59	26 - 30	5	Commercial	✓	✓	✓
James	Male	40-49	16 -20	6	Litigation	✓	✓	✗
Kevin	Male	50-59	16 -20	5	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Larry	Male	40-49	11-15	7	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Mike	Male	40-49	16 -20	1	Real Estate	✓	✓	✓
Neil	Male	50-59	30+	3	Litigation	✓	✓	✓
Orphelia	Female	50-59	Not known	2	Banking	✗	✓	✓

Chapter 4: Results

Participant	Gender	Age	Years as a Partner	Firm	Practice Area	Data Collection Method		
						CIT	Rep Grid	SSQs
Paul	Male	40-49	1-5	6	Corporate	✓	✗	✓
Rachel	Female	50-59	21 - 25	1	Banking	✓	✓	✓
Steve	Male	40-49	16 -20	8	Employment	✓	✓	✓
Tina	Female	60+	Not known	2	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Hugo	Male	40-49	11-15	3	Projects	✗	✓	✓
Violet	Female	40-49	11-15	3	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Weston	Male	40-49	6-10	8	Commercial	✓	✓	✓
Arthur	Male	50-59	21 - 25	1	Projects	✓	✗	✗
Bernard	Male	50-59	16 -20	1	Corporate	✓	✗	✓
Callum	Male	50-59	Not known	9	Real Estate	✓	✓	✓
Dave	Male	50-59	Not known	2	Corporate	✗	✓	✓
Ewan	Male	50-59	21 - 25	1	Corporate	✓	✓	✓
Frank	Male	30-39	6-10	6	Corporate	✗	✓	✓
George	Male	50-59	16 -20	1	Corporate	✓	✓	✗
Harry	Male	50-59	16 -20	10	Corporate	✓	✗	✓
Stanley	Male	40-49	11-15	11	Real Estate	✓	✓	✓

Respondents' age was recorded in the categories of a) 20-29; b) 30-39; c) 40-49; d) 50-59; and e) 60+. The age is skewed towards categories c) 40-49 (13 = 42%) and d) 50-59 (14 = 45.2%). As represented in Table 4.3 the remaining categories are a) 20-29 (0 = 0%); b) 30-39 (3 = 9.6%); and e) 60+ (1 = 3.2%)

Table 4.3: Age of individual participants

Category	Age	No. of respondents	% of sample
A	20-29	0	0
B	30-39	3	9.6
C	40-49	13	42
D	50-59	14	45.2
E	60+	1	3.2
	Total:	31	100.0

The skew towards categories c) 40-49 and d) 50-59 is expected when compared to the general population of partners in UK law firms. Table 4.4 displays gender data from the Solicitor Regulators Authority for law firm reported diversity data for 2015.

Table 4.4: Age of partners in UK law firms

Age	No. of partners	% of sample
16-24	40	0.15
25-34	1,524	5.99
35-44	8,107	31.86
45-54	9,127	35.87
55-64	5,487	21.57
64+	1,153	4.53
Total:	25,438	100.0

Source: (Solicitors Regulation Authority)

Years as a partner (see Table 4.2) was also elicited and recorded on the Interview Guide in the categories of a) 1-5; b) 6-10; c) 11-15; d) 16-20; e) 21-25; f) 26-30; and g) 31+.

Identifying their primary area of practice (legal specialism) was the fourth category respondents' were asked to complete. This category was included to enable analysis on whether CRPs are more or less likely to come from a particular practice area and how this may influence their view of the CRP role and their fellow partners. As can be seen from Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1, the results are skewed towards those CRPs who identify as sitting within their firm's Corporate practice and / or practice corporate law (e.g. transactional work such as Mergers and Acquisitions).

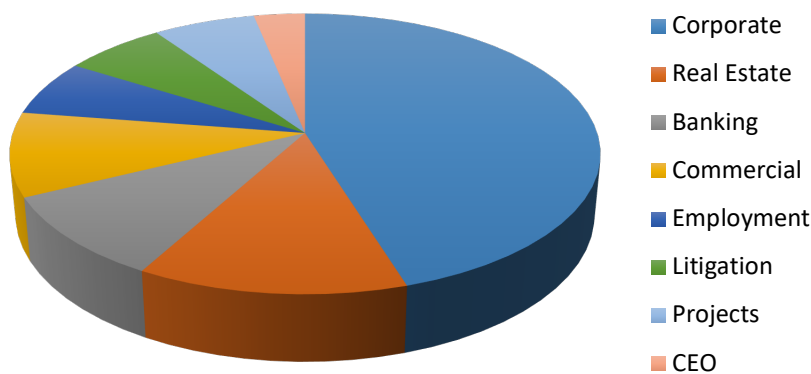


Figure 4.1: Summary of individual participants' primary area of legal practice

4.3 Findings

The remainder of this Chapter will focus on the results as they relate to the seven Research Questions (see Conceptual Framework, Table 2.7). How the findings relate to extant literature and advance theory will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.1 Research Question One: how do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms?

The purpose of Research Question One is to develop an understanding of how CRPs perceive leadership in City law firms. The focus here is firms' leadership at the top level i.e. those perceived by partners in City law firms as leading or running their firm, often by

reference to their title or office (e.g. Senior Partner; Managing Partner). A review of the literature on the characteristics of law firms (Chapter 2.2) suggests the question of who leads in City law firms is not straightforward as those with an official 'title' or 'position of office' can sometimes be considered by Partners to have no more formal authority, influence or power than a firm's highest billing partner or partners not in formal leadership positions but who express influence by other means (e.g. due to their reputation in the legal sector).

As set out in the Conceptual Framework in Table 2.7, Critical Incident Technique was the primary research method used to investigate Research Question One. Participants were asked to bring to mind a key client relationship they had led in the last three years and, in the context of that client relationship, were then asked to select specific events where they had either a positive or negative experience of leading peers. The CIT method was used in 26 of the 31 interviews.

As discussed in section 3.8.3, Template Analysis as a subset of Thematic Analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis to interpret the Critical Incidents. This enabled the development of a broad to narrow coding framework (Patton, 2014) to help the researcher derive meaning from the Critical Incidents identified by the CRPs in order to address research question one. This approach assisted in the identification of the following four findings:

1. Finding One: CRPs conceptualize and define their firm in very different ways

A key finding of the research relates to how CRPs define and make sense of the organizations in which they work. However, prior to exploring how CRPs perceive leadership in City law firms an even more fundamental consideration arises; which is how the very notion of a firm is understood and interpreted by CRPs. Respondents evidence very different perspectives on the subject, as can be seen in the following quote:

"...the firm isn't this entity you know... it's reflective of probably the partner or partners that you interact with most, so is the firm [the name of the Managing Partner]? No. But if it's something that I had to deal with [the name of the Managing Partner] about, I will say it's the firm, so I don't think it's sort of systemised and structured in that way.

Arthur

The above quote, based on a positive Critical Incident recounted by Arthur, helps to illustrate the hierarchical coding framework developed for this study. A key feature of template analysis is the hierarchical organization of codes, with groups of similar codes clustered together to produce more general higher-order codes. In this instance, the quote by Arthur was first categorized at the 'Parent' code 'Characteristics of Law Firms'. As set out in section 3.8.3 and Appendix C, this Parent code is used to capture examples of systemic, structural,

processual and cultural factors that may affect the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in 'City' law firms. Appendix C shows that all 31 interview transcripts contain at least one passage of text that was coded to this Parent code. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, a total of 590 passages of text across the 31 interviews were coded to the 'Characteristics of Law Firms' Parent code.

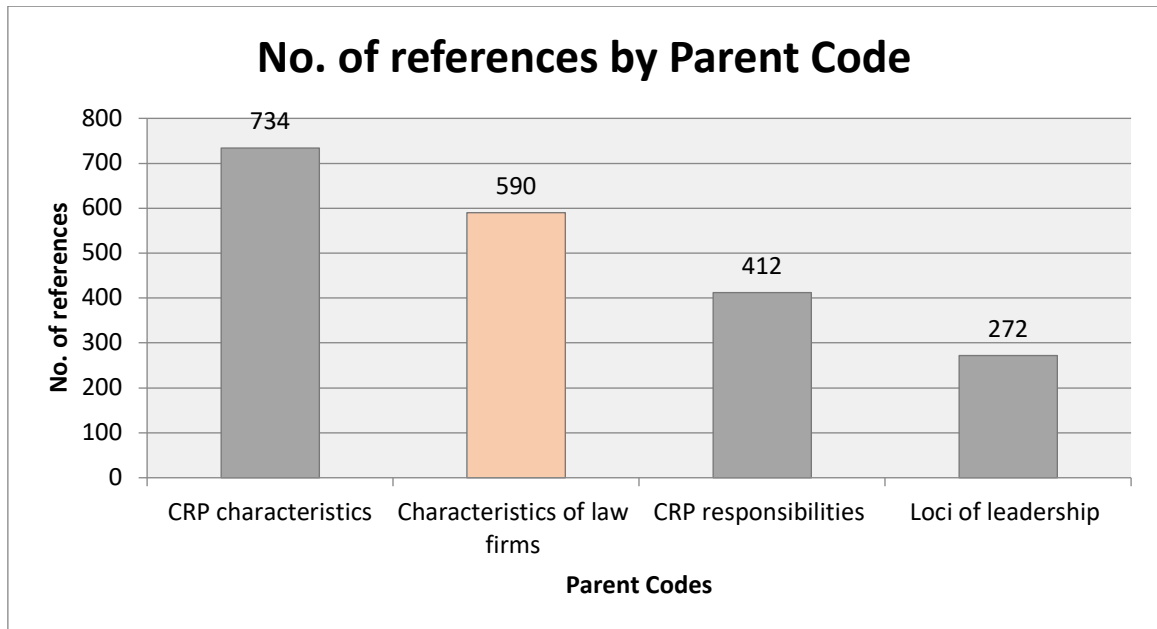


Figure 4.2: Number of references by Parent code

Within the Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms, the quote by Arthur was then subsequently coded at the Child code 'Partnership Structure and Governance'. As shown in Figure 4.3, this is one of 13 Child codes under the Parent code. The Child code 'Partnership Structure and Governance' represents more detailed insights into how CRPs perceive and navigate the structures and forms of governance (i.e. rules and forms of control) in the City law firms in which they work.

Finding One is unexpected as the literature suggests a more uniform view among partners on what it means to be in a partnership (Maister, 2003). This finding is important because it raises a matter that goes right to the very centre of the Research Question. Namely, the implications for effective leadership when people in positions of power i.e. law firm CRPs, have diverse views on the very notion of their firm, what it means to be in partnership and, as a result, how they perceive and respond to certain initiatives and programmes that originate outside of their immediate team or practice area. How, for example, are centrally directed activities relating to a firm's key client programme that are intended to be firm-wide in their focus and application perceived by partners when those partners may have fundamentally different preconceptions of their 'firm'? Based on the research, it does appear at times as though almost anything and everything in a City law firm is up for negotiation and open to

interpretation. Therefore, there can be few 'taken for granted assumptions' when even the very definition of a 'firm' and 'partnership' themselves appear to still be open to debate.

2. Finding Two: Traditional practices of identifying, electing and assessing law firm leaders raises questions about the quality of decision-making

The lack of uniformity in how CRPs define their firm or partnership appears to also extend to how they define leadership. For a number of respondents, 'leadership' and 'management' are used interchangeably to define those partners who hold 'formal' leadership positions e.g. Senior Partner, Managing Partner or CEO. Yet other respondents cast a slightly wider net, also including the 'head' of their legal practice area, division or sector (often known as a Divisional Managing Partner or Department Head). This is captured in the following quote by Brian, that was recorded under the Parent code 'Characteristics of Law Firms and at the Child codes of both Partnerships Structure and Governance and Organizing (processes).

"Good question because earlier when I spoke about firm management I really meant kind of top management whereas here well I guess it's top management too, it's the practice group leaders, there's four or five practices and there's one leader in each."

Brian

King (2011) discusses how this parallel coding of text, whereby the same segment is classified within two (or more) different codes at the same level, is permitted in Template analysis. This fluid categorisation of leadership is important, as shall be evident in section 4.3.4, for how and when CRPs choose to involve others to help address blockages or exploit opportunities in the day- to-day operation of their key account.

While the terms 'leadership' and 'management' appear to have been used interchangeably by respondents when referring to those in their firm in positional leadership, there was expressed, on the whole, an unexpected and well-developed understanding of the difference between the activities that characterise leadership and management.

There was also wide acceptance on the importance of effective leadership for a City law firm as a critical success factor in a highly competitive market:

"I think it's [leadership] critical and undervalued and, you know, has informed all the up and downs of the firm I've been in... I think, you know, you can be brilliant individuals, but if you're not well organised and the lines are pointed in the right direction and inspired and enthused, you're going to fail, because there's lots of competition..."

Evan

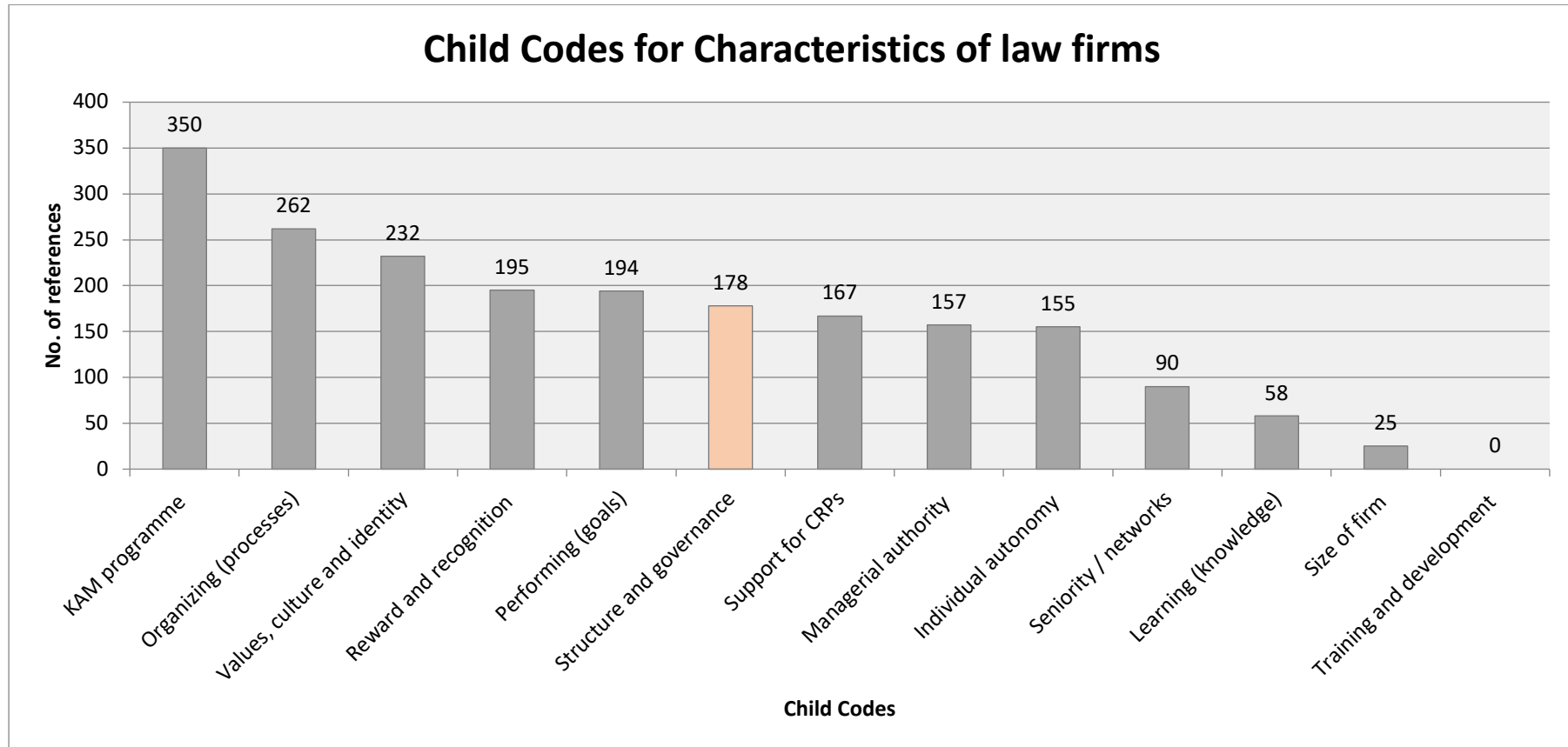


Figure 4.3: Child codes under Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms

Though complete unanimity on the subject is still some way off:

“Why don’t we have an experiment and take out all of the sort of layers management we just have maybe some people running the admin side, you take out all the management and would the firm be any worse off and actually you wonder if it actually would, like having some massive strategy overarching everything, does it make much difference? Probably makes some difference but you can be fairly sceptical about strategy sometimes”

Kevin

The above quotes by Evan and Kevin are both recorded against the Child code Managerial Authority, which is referenced 157 times in 28 of the CRP interviews. Investigating this code across the 28 interviews suggests a well-developed understanding by CRPs of both the role and contribution of effective leadership in a modern, dynamic City law firm. However, it also the case that traditional practices of identifying, electing and assessing individual law firm leaders remains in place. On further analysis, the results suggest that Partners are often ‘promoted’, by their peers, to ‘formal’ leadership positions on the basis of their technical capability and / or due to a strong track record as a high fee-earning lawyer. A strong technical background, client following or high-income practice area is often seen therefore as a proxy for or taken as evidence of a lawyer’s ability to manage and lead.

This practice, where partners elect peers to serve terms, raises questions about the independence and quality of the decision making process by those in positional leadership in City law firms, as evidenced by the following example. In addition to having acted as a CRP, Ewan had, in the recent past, been appointed to a leadership position by the firm’s Managing Partner. The position was intended to provide oversight, support and challenge to all of the firm’s other CRPs and involved Ewan performing the role full-time, which necessitated him handing over to his fellow partners his existing client relationships. A key element of his new role involved Ewan meeting with the clients of the other CRPs to ask questions about the health and state of each relationship; a fairly common practice in City law firm’s often known as a Client Audit. In his interview for this study, Ewan recounted a negative Critical Incident in which he identified shortcomings in the role being performed by a fellow CRP on a specific account through a client audit. To address the issue Ewan ultimately made a recommendation, which was acted upon, to the Managing Partner and the firm’s leadership committee that the CRP be removed and replaced with another partner. As a consequence of this action, Ewan reported a souring in the relationship between him and the CRP in question. Sometime later Ewan’s role performing the client audits came to an end and he moved back to a full time ‘fee earning’ role. However Ewan believed he paid a heavy price when returning to his former practice area for some of the decisions he had taken, in his view in the best interest of the firm, while in his formal leadership position.

“...if I look then at the behaviours of some of the partners when I went back into fee earning towards me there was a degree of retribution... someone said to me ‘what’s it like being back fee earning?’ and I said ‘it’s a bit like being in Majorca... every sunbed’s got a towel on it, no fucker’s lying on it but everywhere I went ‘no you can’t go there that’s mine’”.

Ewan

Other responses provide additional weighting to a view that that traditional practices of identifying, electing and assessing individual law firm leaders may restrict the capacity of City law firms to develop the high quality strategies necessary to leverage the opportunities and mitigate the threats facing these firms:

“...why law firm strategy is probably never as radical as it should be is because ultimately what you are doing is - it's like you tell people what they want to hear because you have a constituency of people (partners) who say they voted you in and can vote you out again and you've got to keep them happy and the way you keep them happy is by delivering year on year returns for them, that's what they want, that's what they expect you to do”.

Adam

“...law firm leadership doesn't tend to come up with radical strategies and they don't because they are not trained to do it. They might be ambitious but what happens is that they get plucked out of a client-facing role... and are expected to have a strategic [capability]... I realise when I talk to other partners how little they know about the broader market that they operate in, the metrics of law firms, how the law firm business model works and operates... there is still a lack of understanding amongst most line partners about what makes our business tick about how the resourcing model works, about how you have to sculpt and shape the things that you do to deliver services in a particular way. Most, you know, are tram-lined in their thinking about that, so I would like to think, you know, that there is a sort of a radical and different approach, but I don't, firms aren't embracing that, they're just trying to carry on for as long as they can, continuing to compete in a small way with their competitive firms and measure themselves by reference to those”.

Adam

3. Finding Three: The size of a firm may affect perceptions of leadership and management

The results suggest that the size of a firm, measured in terms of the number of partners, may affect partner perceptions on what constitutes appropriate leadership and management practices. As displayed in Figure 4.3, there were 25 references to the Child code Size of a Firm across 17 interviews. Respondents were broadly of the view that an exclusively inclusive, consensual and meritocratic form of leadership likely to be dominant in smaller firms was unlikely to be an appropriate model for the firms participating in this study.

Respondents Dominic and Paul referred to how leadership and management practises that were once effective might become ineffective as a firm grows in size:

“...some partners were in different offices so it’s not quite the same as if you can bump into somebody in the lift and just have a quick conversation; which we were able to do at [name or previous firm] because it was a single site, it was a small firm and you were always talking to people but when it’s a diverse organisation spread over a number of different offices that just doesn’t happen”.

Dominic

“When it used to be 120 partners, everybody was in this building, apart from a few people who were lucky enough to be posted to Hong Kong, it was kind of okay, but now we’re 3,500 people and 26 offices, it doesn’t work, you can’t walk the floors and chat to people and the clients aren’t within 10 minutes’ drive”.

Paul

Ewan elaborated further on how the size of a firm can raise searching questions (and cause tensions) for all partners (not just a firm’s formal leaders):

“So I joined a very small firm... there were six or seven partners and it worked really well. I then left there and joined a very big firm and whilst we were called partners it was run like a corporation. I think one of the problems with mid-market law firms is that they are neither one thing nor the other and you are too small to be run like a corporation because the people, because the partners wear too many hats when they make decisions so they wear their personal billing, personal fee earner my relationship hat, they wear their divisional hat, they wear their owners shareholder hat and they wear their managerial leader hat and the conflict between those three they don’t quite know who they are when they are making decisions. I think partnership is fantastic for relatively small businesses it’s a great model but I don’t think it works in the middle”.

Ewan

A view that found support from Colin:

“Yes, there is little doubt in my mind about looking at [name of firm] that its problems are driven by its size. [name of a colleague] said, very intuitively I thought, when all the shit was happening, he said it’s just the wrong size; if it was a bit smaller it would have got over all the problems, if it was a bit bigger the problems would not have surfaced. And to be fair for [current Managing Partner], that’s what he now he wants to try and do, he wants to try and get a bigger firm”.

Colin

Based on coding queries performed in Nvivo, some passages of text recorded as Child code Size of Firm were also recorded as the Child code Managerial Authority. This may suggest,

in the perception of those interviewed, a potential relationship between the size of a firm and the role of positional leaders. As surmised by Weston, one of the most significant challenges for a firm's formal leaders may be to practise effective leadership as a partnership grows in size:

"I mean if you go back to the first principles a partnership model works very well it seems to me with a small number of partners where you can all sit round the table and you're genuine in partnership on how you run the business and decisions are shared and debated and I think within that kind of environment it's much easier for, you know, particular partners who are not behaving as they should be to be held to account. I think where it becomes difficult is where partnerships get bigger numerically and you've got a sort of management layer as it were inevitably just to run things but if that management layer is not being seen to hold partners who are behaving poorly to account, then that's a problem I think".

Weston

Few CRPs offered a solution for what might constitute an appropriate model for leadership (by formal leaders) for the firms participating in this study. Those that did were predominantly of the view that a more 'directive' approach would be most appropriate; a view captured by Evan:

"...but I suspect one of the main answers is scale, so they [a firm participating in this study] are such a size that they just become more directive businesses. The idea of being a partner is no longer one of being equally a shareholder, senior line manager and a coal digger. You've got a couple shares but basically you're a line manager and you do what you're told by your boss".

Evan

The tensions of practising this more 'directive' form of leadership in a traditional partnership structure are likely to be significant challenge for a firm's formal leaders:

"You simply can't have a sense of equality of ownership in a business of £200m and 200 partners, and we're small. So I think the partnership model itself fundamentally creates probably as many challenges as there are solutions for our size. I still fundamentally like it, because I like being in partnership with specific people in the way that I'm not sure you're going to get if you are just, you know, holding some shares. I'm not sure. That's all I know, but I like the sense of collective achievement, albeit that tends to come from pods of partners within the partner group. So yeah I would struggle, I think, really to tangibly and measurably articulate the upsize of the partnership model, other than it's just the way it's always been".

Dominic

Overall, a wide range of views and knowledge were expressed about both the theory and practice of leadership and management that, on balance, demonstrated a far more informed view among the sample group than the literature on leadership and lawyers has acknowledged to date. Concepts such as servant leadership, charismatic leadership, emotional intelligence and the benefits of a compelling vision were used in respondents' narratives as they recounted their personal experiences. This might indicate that CRPs in City law firms are more engaged with such topics than lawyers more generally.

4. Finding Four: CRPs place a high value on their individual autonomy

The orientation by CRPs toward individual autonomy is a constant theme of this study. The following quote by Kevin, which summarises well the view of many respondents, is just one of 155 passages of text from 28 interviews assigned to the Child code Individual Autonomy (see Figure 4.3):

“...in some senses we're just a bunch of sole practitioners who in some ways we've all got our own relationships, our own practices and we're all just beavering away running our own little business in some ways”

Kevin

Based on the responses of CRPs, individual autonomy can be characterised as: placing a high value within City law firms on the individual strengths of partners; partners having ultimate control over which clients they work for and how they spend their time; and minimal management and oversight of partners by others.

“I don't really feel very closely managed as a partner, which is not necessarily a bad thing, it's quite nice not to be closely managed. You get a lot of autonomy...”

Kevin

There is however an alternate view of individual autonomy as expressed below by one respondent. This view suggests that the high value placed on individual autonomy can be one of the single biggest obstacles to an effective, functioning partnership:

“If you're being a lawyer for a minute, as many of the people would have been who are talking about autonomy and individual identity and all that claptrap which tends to mean don't touch me, I've got a very good suit on I'm a lawyer, I'm a partner, don't criticise me, I know the answers...”

Beyond that it's obvious isn't it, autonomy can only exist to the point where it's good for the common business... But autonomy doesn't mean you can do what you want and choose not to do things which are good for the business. It's unacceptable and if that's what you want to do then fuck off get on another bus or set up your own firm. “

Bernard

It is suggested, through the quote above and insights from other CRPs, that the idea of individual autonomy as a principle of a modern partnership can and is used by some partners as an excuse for avoiding challenge from others or for leaders of City law firms not challenging people sufficiently because it's 'not the done thing'.

Strong cultural norms that emphasise an insistence on not telling partners what to do and on not being 'corporate' appear to have developed in some City law firms. It was suggested by one respondent, Bernard, that a firm's "bigger beast billing partners" are often those who are most frequently "let off the hook" or described as just being "a maverick" as an excuse for not being held to account by a firm's leadership when they display behaviour inconsistent with the values of the partnership. When issues arise, it was claimed that a form of shuttle diplomacy between meetings and quiet corridor conversations then takes place (or is claimed to have taken place) so that each party can come out of the situation having claimed to have addressed and resolved the issues. Situations such as these can then visibly reinforce to all partners the primacy of individual partner autonomy. A situation that Bernard summarised as follows in a passage of text that was coded to several Child codes:

"I think it's avoidance but it's a cultural history and a lack of clear leadership and support from the wider leadership team. And it's hard when there are many years of cultural disposition to avoidance and slide. As you can gather I think it's iniquitous but it exists"

Bernard

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question One

The following key insights have been provided by this study in relation to Research Question One: how CRPs perceive leadership in City law firms

- I. How CRPs conceptualize and define the firm's in which they work is inconsistent and open to interpretation. The very notion of a firm is understood and interpreted in different ways by CRPs. Therefore there can be few 'taken for granted assumptions' when such fundamental definitions appear not to be a closed debate
- II. Traditional practices of electing positional leaders raises questions about the quality of decisions and the decision-making process. Respondents typically identified the leaders in their firm as those in formal leadership positions, though there was fluidity in how these were categorised i.e. some including their practice area head. There was also an unexpected and well-developed understanding demonstrated by respondents on the difference between leadership and management and the importance of effective leadership as a critical success factor

- III. The size of a firm (total partner population) affects the models of leadership and governance that are likely to dominate and there appears to be a mediating effect on claims for individual partner autonomy as firms grow in partner headcount
- IV. Individual autonomy is highly prized but comes with associated costs in terms of the overall cohesion of a firm's partnership and the ability of a firm's leaders to confront and address behaviours that are inconsistent with the best interests of the firm.

The findings in response to Research Question One suggest that CRPs in City law firms recognise the value of the positional leadership roles performed by their elected peers, but that tensions are present; particularly where decisions taken by these leaders are perceived to impinge on individual CRPs identity and autonomy. These tensions were beautifully summarised in the following quote by Weston:

“I can see that in theory management's a good thing and there are all these partners in this big business and they need managing and that must be right, but actually as soon as it impinges on me well actually I'm a partner and I have autonomy and I should have the freedom to develop my practice in the ways that I think I should.”

Weston

The implications of the findings to Research Question One are that the unique context, characteristics and power dynamics of each firm must be considered before any recommendations can be made or implemented.

4.3.2 Research Question Two: How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?

The purpose of Research Question Two is to investigate the cognitive and affective factors at play in terms of how CRPs perceive their role in the context of leading peers. The paucity of academic literature on the specific question of how CRPs perceive their role is a significant gap that this study aims to address. Critical Incident Technique was the primary Research Method used to investigate Research Question Two. As stated in section 3.4.2, respondents were asked to recount Critical Incidents based on a key client relationship they led in the last three years and, in the context of leading that relationship, to select a specific event where they had either a positive or negative experience of leading peers. Template analysis as a subset of thematic analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis to interpret the Critical Incidents.

1. Finding One: The importance of gaining and retaining legitimacy as a CRP

A number of respondents identified the need to appear legitimate to other partners if one is to be perceived as having authority in the CRP role. Legitimacy, or words like 'credible' or 'credibility' which were more frequently used by CRPs, can be claimed (or perceived by others) in a variety of ways, but is typically arrived at by having a strong client following, high billables (income generation) or a deep technical legal (and / or increasingly sector) knowledge. The following quote by Violet supports this view and was expressed as she recounted a positive Critical Incident (see Table 3.7) that was categorised as a 'specific business development opportunity (not a pitch)':

"If someone is good and someone is well known for doing things well, there's a recognition that comes attached with that partner's brand as it were and so they have authority just by being regarded as a successful partner."

Violet

Maintaining a positive internal brand (within the partnership) and having a reputation for delivering on promises made were also highlighted by a number of CRPs as essential qualities for both CRPs and partners generally, as evidenced by the following quote in which one respondent recalled a time in which she had 'instructed' another partner: "actually I had not worked with him previously... I knew of him by reputation in terms of the client work he does and the quality, but I'd never actually worked with him" (Tina). These points highlight the need for partners and especially CRPs to be cognisant of how they manage their internal brand in their interactions with others, for it is evident that perceptions (positive and negative) travel far, quickly and widely in a partnership.

Respondents also referred to virtuous circles that, over time, build both confidence and reputation. A virtuous circle might begin with a partner developing a strong technical capability in a particular legal specialism. Over time the strong technical ability attracts a loyal client following and a steady stream of income. This leads to increased credibility within the partnership and a higher likelihood of the partner being asked to contribute to a wider or more valuable number of client assignments by peers – thus further increasing their income potential and credibility and so reinforcing the virtuous circle. The following quote by Mike demonstrates this well and was categorised against three Child codes split across two of the four Parent codes:

"I felt I had authority in part because I had years of managing a very big relationship growing it year on year expanding across the firm and entrenching it and so on therefore when people said 'what do I think?' they were asking me that question knowing that I had all that behind me and could speak authoritatively about it so it is authority that comes from managing a team".

Mike

Parent code: CRP Characteristics. Child codes: Cognition – thoughts and sense making; Broadens the relationship

Parent code: Loci of leadership. Child code: Legitimizing (claim and grant identities)

However one respondent, in the context of discussing a negative Critical Incident, raised a degree of caution and a need to be aware of the potentially negative implications of partners who associate their reputations too closely with a particular client relationship:

"...some of those partners recognise that their continued existence or at the very least their continued existence at that level of remuneration dictated, was dictated and determined by them holding on to that relationship and continuing to do what they had always done and progressed on the back of that and therefore anything that was, anything that might require change in approach would be seen by a certain category of partner to be a threat".

Ewan

The preceding quote raises an interesting question around the extent to which some partners are motivated to be a CRP for a key account primarily for the heightened status within their firm and other more tangible rewards (such as higher earnings) that are often associated with the role. This and broader issues relating to CRP reward and remuneration are discussed in Chapter 5.2.

2. Finding Two: CRPs favour acting primus inter pares

A number of respondents described acting as a coordinator, interpreter or conduit for their client's needs within their firm as a significant component of the CRP role. Accordingly, examples were given by respondents of how essential it is for them as CRP to be perceived by the client as the main point of contact for all relationship related matters. It was stated that while it is expected a client will have a series of high quality relationships with colleagues across the firm related to on-going work matters, it should be the case that the client "can come to you with all of their needs and all their complaints without feeling they've got to mince their words" (Paul). It is then the responsibility of the CRP to take what they learn from

those client interactions and convert it into an expression of the client's requirements that is understood by lawyers in the firm and which, in turn, is converted into propositions that makes sense to the client; referred to by one CRP as "a constant translation exercise". (Paul). This study identifies the potential for tension within City law firms when the role described here (to act as interpreter or conduit) is not performed effectively by a CRP. As will be discussed further in Chapters 5.3 and 5.4, findings suggest that some CRPs may lack the necessary skills to perform this role in full, may be too busy with other commitments to invest the necessary time or may choose not to pass on information in an attempt to retain or exert power or influence. The result can be deleterious to the overall health of both the client and peer relationships.

Another key aspect of the CRP role as reported by respondents is the coordination of internal activity. One CRP reported a very practical example of getting colleagues to turn up to a meeting to discuss business development efforts with a particular client:

"so you know what it's like, you can sit there in a meeting which has started and you can turn up for five minutes and you can go back to your desk, send emails, is this meeting happening or not, I'm now unavailable, blah, blah, blah, so I almost just became a meeting organiser and I would walk into people's offices, is now a good time? Oh no I couldn't possibly, I'm having my, you know, toenails polished... but when will be a good time... just literally try and broker getting people together in the room at the same time, because that to me is the most effective environment in which you can deal with what you need to deal with"

Stanley

Other respondents referred to the "burden" of following up with peers, organising conflict checks for new instructions, coordinating regular reporting to the client and responding to and arranging client secondment requests, all of which are associated with the CRP role and which totalled 412 references across all 31 interviews when were captured under the Parent code CRP responsibilities by the researcher in Nvivo: see Figure 4.4.

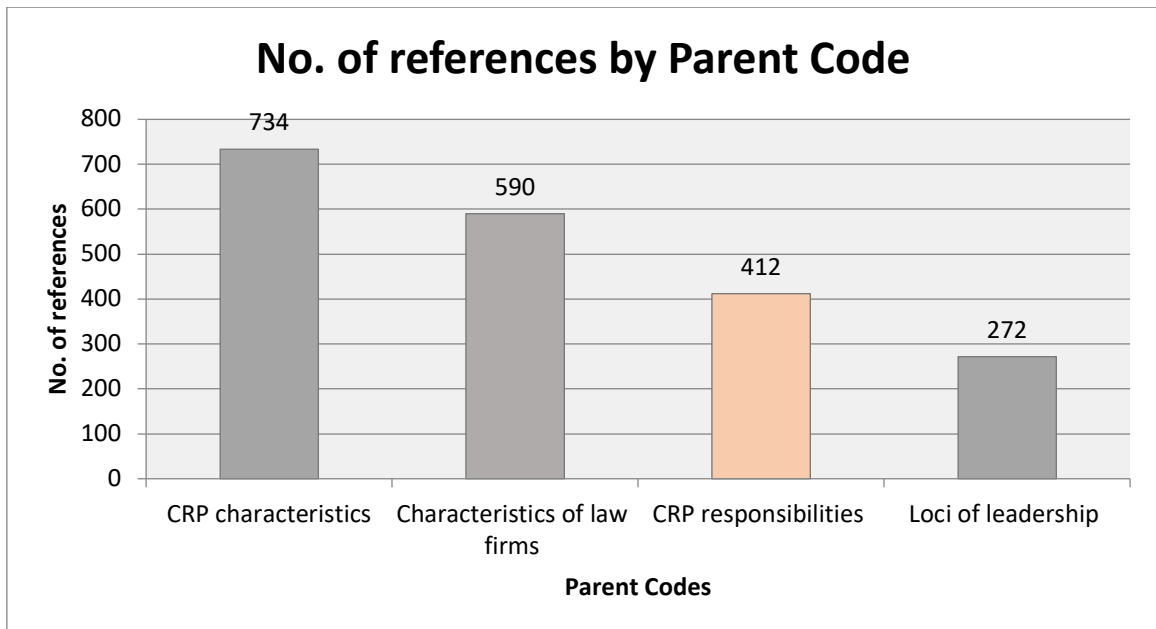


Figure 4.4: Number of references by CRP Responsibilities Parent code

Rich descriptions such as the quote by Stanley provide insight into the activities that CRPs are undertaking in fulfilment of the role. In so doing, this study raises questions about whether performing the role of ‘meeting organiser’ and other such administrative tasks is something a highly qualified partner in a City law firm should be doing and the associated opportunity costs.

Indeed, based on responses to questions relating to Research Question Two, this study finds huge variance in how CRPs perceive the role and the main activities associated with it. A picture has emerged of CRPs performing (even within the same firm) what can in practice be substantially different roles, with little or no guidance on what elements of the role deliver the most value add. This can contribute to an anxiety, as expressed by one CRP, about the fundamental purpose of the role (Child code: Cognition – thoughts and sense making; under Parent code CRP Characteristics):

“Honestly, I am always waiting to be found out. Every day I walk into this office, I am always waiting to be found out or to have, you know, missed something vital or whatever”

Callum

Relatedly, questions arise as to how CRP performance be measured and rewarded in the absence of any framework against which their activities can be assessed? As one CRP commented in relation to the role:

“It’s implied and it’s, I mean we don’t necessarily have a really clear scope of responsibility for a key Client Relationship Partner so I think that’s one of the things we’re kind of working

on so we probably... it's quite an informal sort of approach here and therefore it's probably a little more implied than expressed..."

Weston

As has already been identified in this study, individual autonomy and cultural norms of a partnership effectively prohibit any form of what might be perceived as directive leadership among peers. Most respondents therefore appear to perceive their role as operating *primus inter pares*. In this context, it appears that, based on the responses of CRPs, in order to be effective in their aims, respondents' employ a vast array of traits, competencies, political skill, emotional intelligence and other factors. This soft power in the absence of positional authority was commented on by a number of CRPs, with one referring to "my main weapons as being more carrot than stick" (James). Another respondent made the following comment on the subject of leadership and power when discussing a positive Critical Incident relating to co-ordinating activity on an account for which they are the CRP:

"I think it's all exercised [by CRPs] in a soft way and for very good reasons that you know, you can't lead if people won't follow and they have to follow voluntarily so it is all soft in many ways but it's a matter of using the right levers; and I go back to this investability point I think that's critical and that's all about getting buy-in"

Henry

The concept of buy-in and investability refers to the need for CRPs to ensure that other partners working on their account are clear about the benefits that they personally are likely to receive. It is suggested that the more effective CRPs recognise that internal advocacy, in the form of promoting their key client account to other partners, is a key element of the CRP role. A number of references were made to "getting the right people on the bus" or "the right partners" on the team. To achieve this CRPs must highlight to each 'line partner' the scale of the opportunity and what is required from them to secure a return; hence the reference in the quote above to 'investability'. One CRP commented that "once you have done the heavy lifting... people will come in behind you and say 'I like that idea, what about this?' and they will contribute" (Neil).

Another CRP summarised his role as follows:

"For me, it's about creating a shared sense of excitement around the client, around the sector, which people really enjoy but they can see its tangibly changing and building something and they get a sense of personal benefit..."

Evan

What the data suggests is that CRPs are, in a sense, competing with one another to secure the services of peers in the form of their specialist legal input. Viewed in this context, being

more proficient in the use of 'soft power' than a fellow CRP can be a significant material advantage in terms of 'getting the very best partners on the bus'.

Continuing the investability metaphor put forward by Henry, it would appear easier to secure the services of a fellow partner to an account generating large amounts of legal work (and income) compared to an account which is not. A number of CRPs made the point that, in relation to influencing the activities of peers on a key account, their role can be made more or less difficult based on the activity levels of their client. Some clients such as large financial institutions consistently generate large and reasonably predictable levels of legal work. In theory this confers a significant advantage to the CRP of a financial institution when attempting to influence the activities of peers. In reality, the advantage may be less clear-cut. In recent years financial institutions (and other large corporates) have used their buying power to drive down the rates they pay for legal advice. As a consequence a number of partners in City law firms now consider the work for these large clients to be less attractive and so, leveraging their individual autonomy, they choose to work on matters for clients with more generous fee levels.

Whether a CRP for a large financial institution leveraging buying power or the CRP for a client with more lumpy and less predictable levels of legal spend, it can be argued that those CRPs who are faced with fee income pressure on their account must be even more proficient at utilising the soft power identified in this study to their advantage.

3. Finding Three: The importance of trust in peer relationships

The centrality and importance of trust as a key factor in how CRPs view their role also emerged as a key finding in this study. Based on an analysis of the interview transcripts in Nvivo, the topic of trust was raised by 26 of the 31 interviewees. As previously mentioned, 'getting the right partners on the bus' is considered to be a critical component of the CRP role and a number of CRPs used the term trust in this context i.e. under the Parent code of CRP Responsibilities. One CRP, Garry, commented that they (CRPs) take a chance whenever they introduce anyone in their firm to a client relationship for the first time, with thoughts about whether they "will screw it up for them and me" being the foremost concern. This relates not just to a peer's technical competence but extends to more nebulous anxieties, for example, the partner not responding quickly enough to the client.

From the perspective of the CRP, it is essential to identify and involve those peers who share a similar perspective, for example by recognising the value of a long term client relationship over the short term opportunity for billable legal work (sometimes referred to as a strategic as opposed to a transactional orientation). One CRP, Steve, expressed this when stating "So there are people [peers] I wouldn't involve in key clients because they would either try and

take the relationship over for their own ends or they might in some countries try and bill it to death". Respondents also commented on the high degree of trust CRPs must have in peers once they are 'on the bus', as exemplified by Violet when she described a positive Critical Incident involving a peer in relation to a pitch for new work:

"You just put them [peers] on track and then they have to deliver, so you're not sort of monitoring them so closely once they get direct access to the client. So, yeah, there's some element of leadership but then it sorts of gets diluted when the client relationship is spread to other areas".

Violet

While the quote above captures the views of a number of respondents on the need to trust peers, its suggestion of a degree of passivity in relation to the role performed by the CRP was not supported in other interviews. As will be shown in Section 4.3.4, the most effective CRPs are aware of the need for consistent, open and high quality dialogue with peers to ensure delivery against the overall aims for the account.

Working with the same peers over a number of years, working together on particularly complex legal matters or sending opportunities for work to one another ('reciprocity') were all referenced by CRPs as effective ways of building trust. As Garry commented: "you know who the good citizens are and the non-team players are and you'll make decisions about where you refer work based on those instinctively". A quote that suggests maintaining a positive internal brand (as discussed in relation to Finding One) might be an important antecedent to building trust in peer relationships.

4. Finding Four: Tensions exist around practising prominent, visible leadership while simultaneously recognising the autonomy of peers

A number of respondents used words such as "authentic" and "genuine" as qualities they consider to be critical in performing the CRP role. Use of these terms was often accompanied with war or sporting metaphors such as "leave nothing on the field" or the need to be "seen in the trenches". In the same vein, several partners referred to the commitment required to be a partner and CRP in a City law firm, with one respondent, Dave, capturing the views of many when he commented: "[it's] a 25 hour, eight-day a week... three hundred and sixty-six day year commitment".

These qualities, the use of metaphors and the commitment required provide a number of valuable insights into how CRPs perceive their role. Insights that were recorded in Nvivo against the Parent code CRP Characteristics. As shown in Figure 4.5, 734 references across all 31 interviews were assigned this parent code.

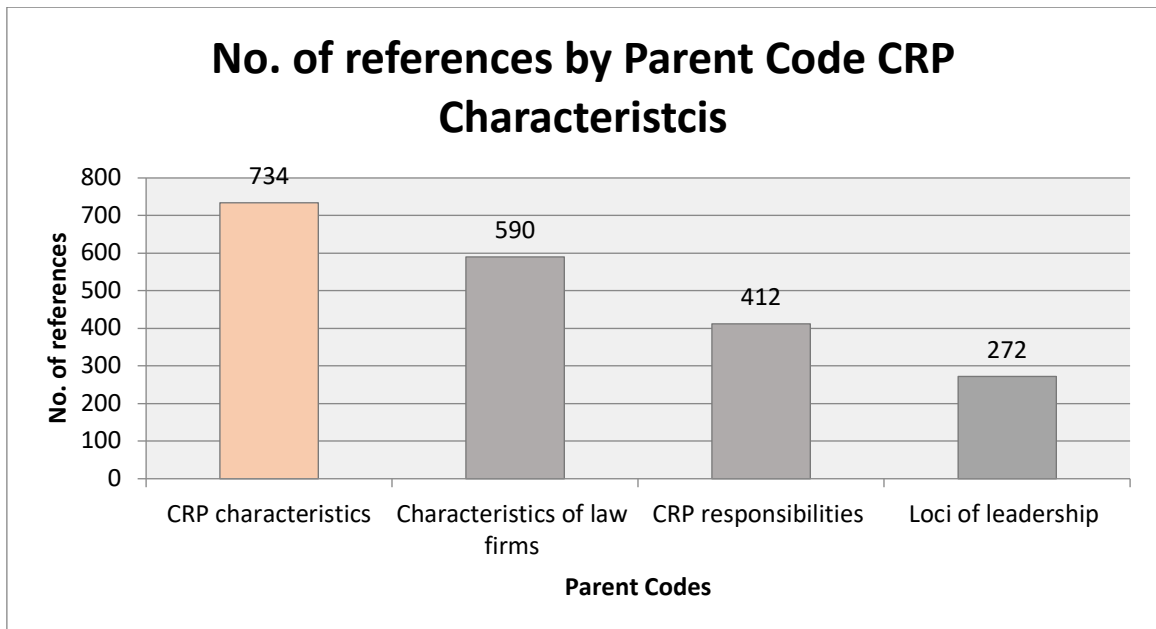


Figure 4.5: Number of references by Parent code CRP Characteristics

Figure 4.6 displays the clustering of four Child codes under the Parent code of CRP Characteristics.

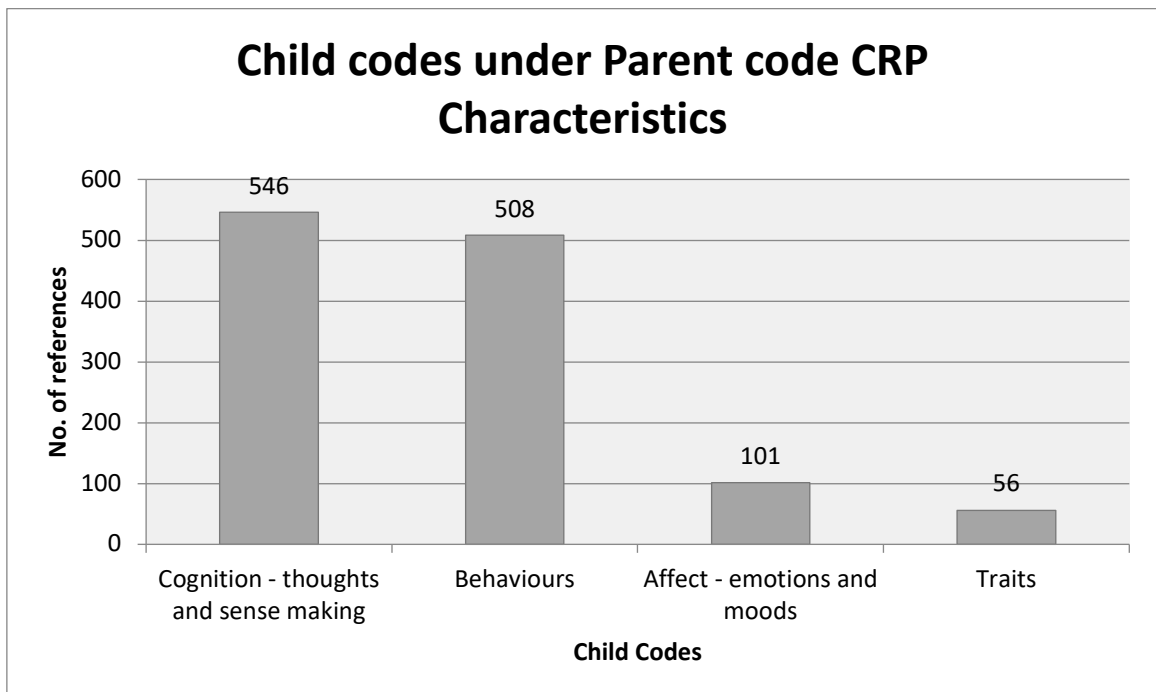


Figure 4.6: Child codes under Parent code CRP Characteristics

The behaviours identified through the development of the 15 Sub Child codes under the Behaviours Child code (see Figure 4.7) suggest that the models of leadership most prevalent among CRPs are those in which the leader visibly acts as a “role model” and “leads from the front”. This raises interesting questions around how CRPs practise prominent, visible

leadership while at the same time recognising the primacy of individual autonomy and working within a culture that effectively prohibits any form of directive leadership.

One potential answer is that what we may see practised by CRPs in City law firms is an elastic form of 'leadership' in which roles and responsibilities between team members are necessarily fluid and malleable:

“...roles can shift from time to time and eventually the person who had the strongest link to the client may be replaced by someone who has built a stronger relationship over time and I think one has to be prepared to acknowledge these developments along the way.”

Violet

The above quote by Violet does however suggest an environment in which CRPs graciously and readily pass on client relationships to other partners to lead. The reality is that recognition, reward and remuneration structures in City law firms are often closely related to the accounts that partners lead and therefore perform a strong moderating effect. As we shall see in Section 4.3.4, this can result in partners taking actions that place their best interests above those of the firm.

A second potential answer is that in a desire to be seen as apolitical, a first among equals and 'in the trenches', CRPs counterbalance what might be considered overt acts of leadership with prominent examples of administration and management that are considered undesirable uses of time in the minds of fellow partners. In recognition of this, Rachel commented: "I don't think you can be a leader without inevitably doing some of the more mundane management, whether it's doing the reporting, chasing people, what have you".

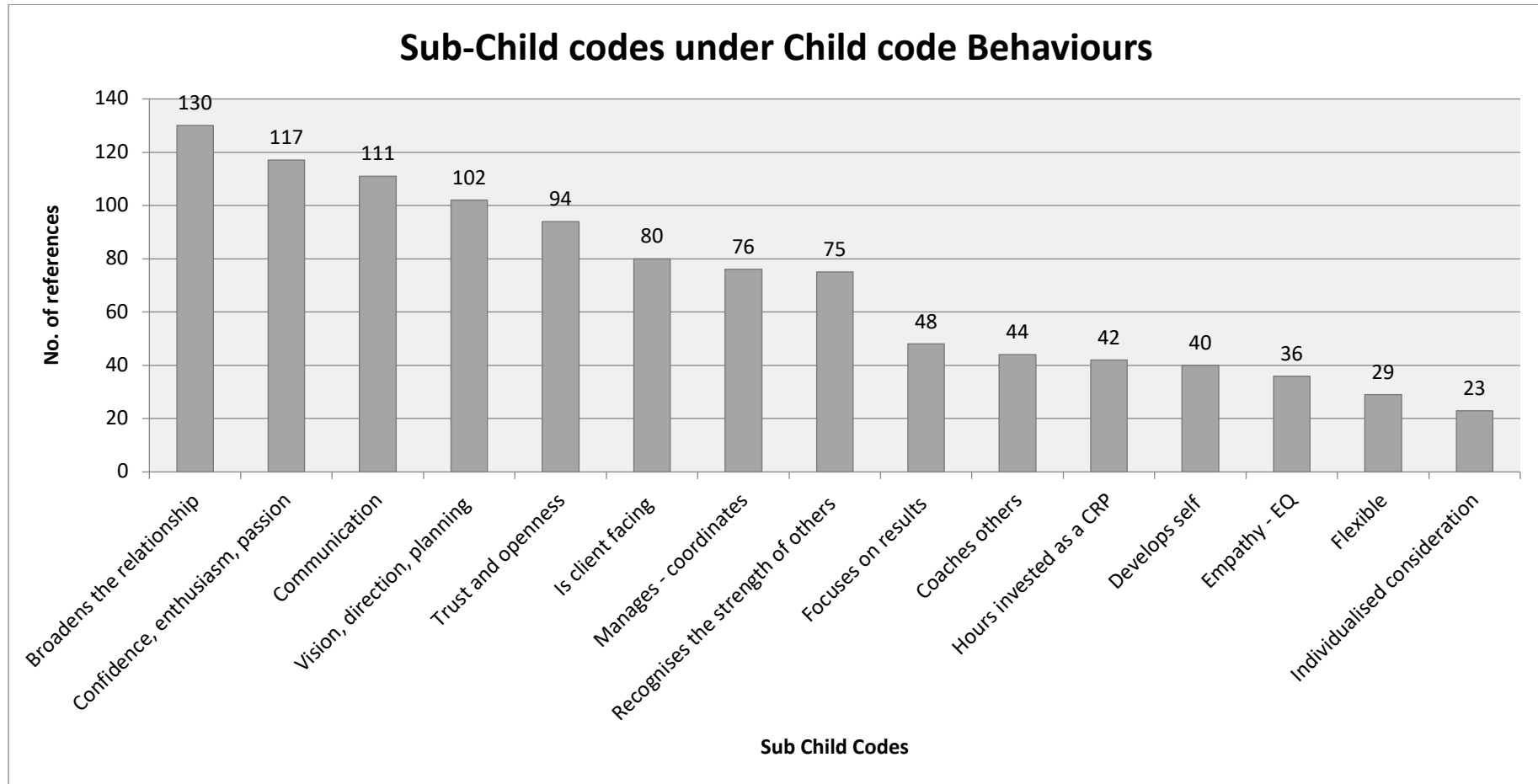


Figure 4.7: Sub-Child codes under Child code 'Behaviours'

The findings of this study will prove timely in helping CRPs reconsider the activities they perform and their cognition regarding leadership in light of a trend in City law firms towards placing more formal mechanisms of influence within their control. According to many respondents, CRPs increasingly have responsibility for controlling the budget for their account(s) as well as both contributing to the setting of the objectives for and providing feedback on fellow partners who carry out work for their client. Interestingly while these actions are intended to provide more control to CRPs, they are not universally embraced by respondents, most likely due to the aforementioned concerns about a desire to be seen as a first among equals:

“I am not the management to the other partners and this is a partnership. So I think if anything like the appraisal of partners through the client management piece came to me I would be very surprised that this is part of my role. I don't think it is.”

Flo

5. Finding Five: The age of a CRP may affect how they perceive their role

The findings of this study show that the age of a CRP may affect how they perceive their role on a number of fronts. Those respondents in the 50-59 and 60+ age categories (see Table 4.3) often provided a narrative that showed how their attitude toward the CRP role had shifted over time. Maximising individual fee earning opportunities was shown to characterise the priorities of a CRP earlier in their career while leaving a legacy and ‘passing down the elevator’ to others feature more prominently as the main drivers of activity for those in the 50+ and above age category. Transitioning from ‘income generating machine’ to a provider of opportunities for others was a subject of interest and intrigue for a number of respondents. One respondent reflected that those partners who do not successfully make the transition often ‘burn out’ from the high expectation that they will deliver successful returns year on year:

“...you look for those number of partners between the age of fifty-five or sixty there's not many because they lose their appetite.”

Hugo

Commenting on a positive Critical Incident relating a successful bid for work, another CRP expressed concerns at how each partner is left to figure out things for him or herself:

“I think one goes through phrases around that, so when you're a young partner I think supervised billing is probably the biggest barometer of how successful you are in building a business... As you become older and more experienced, you're having to make this transition which is not about you, but about us and yet we're not clear when that transition should be made, it's blurry and we can use it as a stick to beat you with because we can

say oh your billings aren't very good and you say well I've been collaborating with five or six other partners and they're [the billings] all in their name ...”

Arthur

Three significant insights in relation to how age affects perceptions of the CRP role emerge from this study. The first insight is the extent to which CRPs believe that their age affects their cognition and attitude in relation to the type of role they would like to perform. The second insight suggests that the remuneration model in operation by the majority of City law firms finds it challenging to accommodate the shifting needs of CRPs with a need to generate income. The third significant insight is that CRPs feel largely unsupported by their firm as they transition through different seasons in their career.

6. Finding Six: Gender may affect how inclusive a CRP is in involving peers in their account

Gender was a recurring theme as a construct but perhaps tellingly was raised almost exclusively by female respondents. Tina commented that “one of the things that I have observed of women who are leaders is that with a handful of exceptions, they are more inclusive, they are more likely to be trainers and nurturers and they are less likely to take the ladder up behind them. They are more likely to put their hand down and try to help someone up the ladder”. Another female respondent elaborated on this point and also raised the gender make up of in-house legal teams (who are the main providers of work to law firms) as a further interesting point to consider:

“I generally think women are particularly suited to doing client relationship roles because our client relationship partners generally tend to be men and so if you are a women doing that role you stand out amongst our competitors... if you have a male and female team doing the client relationship role [as joint CRPs] I think you really do just add up ticking all the boxes. Certainly there are a lot of women that work in-house and they are often the people you are facing off to as a client relationship partner, so I think to have some women involved in the relationship piece does differentiate you in a good way as a firm. And I think that sort of female skills of being empathetic trying to encourage people, generally non-confrontational, that sort of thing being very well organised – of course they're generalisations - being very well organised and they are skills that women generally tend to have”.

Rachel

The potential for the gender of a CRP to have a bearing on their perceived effectiveness is an interesting finding. Just as interesting is that the role of gender did not feature in discussions with male respondents while featuring in nearly all of the conversations with female respondents. This finding calls for a deeper investigation on the role of gender as an area for further research; insofar as exploring whether the behaviours of highly effective

CRPs identified in relation to Research Question Four (Section 4.3.4) correlate more closely with male or female CRPs.

7. Finding Seven: Whether a CRP inherited or originated their account may affect their attitude to growing the account and involving peers

The final and unexpected finding on how City partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers concerns whether a CRP originates or inherits the relationship. This research suggests that Partners assume the position of CRP for a client account in two main ways. The first is they originate a relationship i.e. they are the first partner within their firm to work on the account. The second route is that they inherit the relationship from another partner, typically over the course of many years under a 'master and apprentice' type model as the former CRP moves towards retirement. Partners do also 'inherit' client relationships over much smaller timeframes, such as when a partner leaves for another firm or there are performance or relationship related issues that necessitate a change of CRP.

A number of respondents made the point that, in their view, those partners who originate relationships are more likely to recognise the need to proactively involve others from across the firm and to more readily secure their involvement as they attempt to grow and develop the account. Conversely, those CRPs who inherit a relationship may, unconsciously or otherwise, judge their efforts and success by reference to the nature of the relationship at the point in which they inherited it. Consequently if success is defined as maintaining fee income levels at pre-existing levels, a CRP may see little need to proactively involve peers from across the firm.

“...a couple of the folks I think of as being the relationship partner in legacy clients, it's almost as though they are stewards, 'don't screw this up it's worked for a hundred years'”

Tina

The implications of this finding are important for this study. Firstly it raises the possibility that partners leading inherited relationships may be unknowingly less inclusive, less ambitious or operating in some other way that inhibits the income potential on the account. Such insights suggest broader investigations about the prevalence of prevailing paradigms like abundance versus scarcity mind-sets among CRPs within a City law firm are also worthy of investigation. Relatedly, and a second implication, is the extent to which individual accounts and firms could be more profitable if all partners were to receive training and development on how to lead relationships at different stages of the client life cycle or phase of relationship maturity. This could extend to an assessment of the suitability of a partner for an account prior to being appointed to a CRP role or even the systematic and comprehensive assessment of all CRPs on a regular basis.

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Two

The purpose of Research Question Two was to investigate how CRPs perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account. The following key insights and answers have been provided by this study:

- I. Appearing legitimate to other partners and maintaining a positive internal brand (within the partnership) are critical qualities if one is to be perceived as having authority in the CRP role. There must be a minimum level of technical capability, but beyond this a range of approaches appear acceptable to developing one's credibility e.g. one's standing in the market; a large client following; high billables. Leading a key client relationship can also confer power and status on a CRP, both real and perceived. Consequently in a desire to maintain their position some CRPs may act in a self-serving way that places their own interests before those of the wider firm. This finding has implications for the training and development of lawyers at all levels in City law firms
- II. CRPs favour acting *primus inter pares* and eschew what peers may perceive as 'directive' leadership. CRPs are performing substantially different roles; with little or no guidance on what elements deliver the most value add. Significant value will be delivered by identifying elements that are 'core' and 'peripheral' to the CRP role, though any recommendations on how CRPs can be more effective must acknowledge their desire to operate *primus inter pares* and the absence of positional authority
- III. Trust between partners influences the growth and proliferation of key accounts. CRPs and leaders of law firms should identify and leverage opportunities to develop trust between partners, particularly cross legal discipline or sector
- IV. Tensions exist around practising prominent, visible leadership while simultaneously recognising the autonomy of peers. CRPs are being asked to provide prominent, visible leadership while at the same time working in a culture that places a primacy on the autonomy of individual partners and that effectively prohibits any form of directive leadership. The result is a group of individuals employing a patchwork of leadership and management styles and methods to do their best in challenging circumstances. In addition, many of the leadership and management activities performed by CRPs are administrative, come with high opportunity costs and should be performed by more task appropriate resource or processes.
- V. Age affects CRP perceptions of their role and the activities they perform. This has implications for how the findings from this study (and others) should be tailored for

different groups within the CRP community and law firms generally. Related to age, this study also finds that law firms are failing to provide guidance and support to CRPs as they transition through different stages in their career

- VI. Gender may affect how inclusive a CRP is in involving peers in their account. The gender of CRPs was raised as a topic for consideration almost exclusively by female respondents. Women are undoubtedly underrepresented in City law firms, including at the CRP level. This can only have a limiting affect on how firms relate to their clients and their people more broadly, including the retention and development of top talent
- VII. Whether a CRP inherited or originated their account may affect their attitude to growing the account and involving peers. As a consequence, firms may want to consider systematically and comprehensively assessing CRP suitability to lead a key account, which may include factors such as their orientation toward an abundance mind-set (which could suggest a greater propensity to grow the relationship by involving peers)

4.3.3 Research Question Three: How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?

The purpose of Research Question Three is to determine the importance of the CRP role in terms of influencing the activities of peers on a key account. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is scant literature on the specific leadership role performed by CRPs. Research Question Three is intended to address this gap. Critical Incident Technique was the primary Research Method used to investigate Research Question Three. Template analysis as a subset of thematic analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis to interpret the Critical Incidents.

Responses to Research Question Three are based overwhelmingly on positive Critical Incidents reported by participants. Indeed, as set out in Table 3.7, 20 of the 26 incidents were categorised a positive. This is in spite of the researcher providing each interviewee with the option to elucidate on either negative or positive experiences by posing the following question to each CRP (as discussed in section 3.4.2):

Bring to mind a key client relationship that you have led in the last three years. In the context of leading that relationship, select a

specific event where you had either a positive or negative experience of leading your peers.

That the critical Incidents were overwhelmingly positive is also contrary to the experiences of Dasborough (2006) that when the researcher does not specify the type of incident to be discussed, the respondent is more likely to recall negative incidents. The preponderance of positive incidents from participants is therefore an interesting finding and might be suggestive of what Matlin and Stang (1978, p. 4) refer to as the Pollyanna Principle in which “cognitive processes selectively favor processing of pleasant over unpleasant information.” While the ratio of positive to negative incidents may indicate that CRPs are more likely to demonstrate an optimistic, positive, and forward-thinking outlook, it may equally be the case that, building on the work of Matlin and Stang (1978), they are in fact exhibiting what Dember and Penwell (1980) refer to a positivity bias. In the words of Dember and Penwell (1980, p. 321) positivity bias manifests as “...overestimating the size of valued objects, avoiding looking at unpleasant pictures, communicating good news more frequently than bad, and so on.” It would therefore certainly be of interest to see whether any future studies of CRPs that utilises the Critical Incident Technique also demonstrates a strong weighting towards a recall of positive over negative critical incidents.

Responses to Research Question three were informed by all four of the Parent codes and related Child and Sub Child codes developed in the coding framework (see Appendix C):

1. Finding One: CRPs are performing a valuable role, aligning organizational resources to serve the best interests of both the client and their firm

This study provides strong support for the role currently being performed by CRPs but with some notable caveats. Having a clear, primary point of contact is undoubtedly of value for both clients and colleagues (as discussed in relation to Research Question Two). While line partners focus on providing excellent service delivery in their legal specialism, effective CRPs can use knowledge of their client and firm to identify additional ways to maximise income potential across the relationship. Respondents indicated that this could be through expanding the client relationship to additional service lines, positioning the firm for more valuable mandates or securing greater volumes of existing work. In short, performing elements of the KAM as nexus role discussed in Chapter 2.3 and the coordinator, translator, integrator role as discussed in Chapter 2.4.

Without exception, CRPs consider greater proliferation of their client account to be a clear sign of success, as demonstrated in the following positive Critical Incident recounted by Rachel in which she discussed her coordinating role on the account:

“Right well I think that it is that piece about I think if I look back at the past, no three years but five years of [name of client] relationship the thing that I am, one of the things I am most proud of is how much broader it is now as in the number of partners that engage with the relationship and the number of people that have got relationships with people in the bank and it’s massively broader which I think helps sort of protect the relationship between the firm and the client and perhaps just more alert really to people to say having wider relationships so I think it’s just made me a bit more alert to that. I think it was there before but definitely made me focus on the fact that you can’t really have just one sort of critical person in a relationship like that”?

Rachel

As discussed in Section 4.3.2 a picture has emerged in City law firms of an ‘internal market’ in which CRPs must use strong internal advocacy and soft power to secure the services of peers in the form of their specialist legal input. Effective CRPs recognise the need to clearly demonstrate to others the benefits to them of their involvement in the account (the ‘investability’ metaphor proposed by Henry) or to somehow influence them to work on the account. This is demonstrated well in the following quote by Mike in which he reflects on a positive Critical Incident that involved a pitch for work (for a specific work opportunity). As noted in Table 3.7, nine of 26 Critical Incidents identified by respondents involved a pitch for work and all nine were positive incidents. This suggests a potentially important (and positive) role for CRPs in coordinating the efforts of their peers to secure new work:

“...it wasn’t necessarily an easy account for anybody to work on. The client is very demanding and wasn’t a top payer in terms of, measured by the value per hour of effort expended. This was a client that was at the lower end so people working for that client would not be wanting to work for it just for the value of bills delivered, it would have to be something more than that. And that does mean that you as a relationship partner need to get people over the financial questions if they are, particularly if they are in a department like commercial or employment where they are looking after a lot of clients for a lot of departments of the firm and they could be spending their time earning more per hour servicing another client then you have got to get them to a place where they are willing to say ‘actually this client’s sufficiently special to me that they are particularly at the top of my list at a time like this when the firms needs a re-tender.”

Mike

Based on a further positive Critical Incident relating to a pitch for work, another CRP commented:

“Because often when you are in the early stages of building a relationship you are really asking for something for nothing... people have got other things to fill their time with so you have to acknowledge that and you have to be patient and you have to be appreciative of

what they are doing for you. I think you partly win that trust and appreciation by helping them when they need help. When they need help maybe on something completely different, it doesn't need to be managing their own key client, it's simply trading and helping people."

Steve

The preceding quotes highlight two key points in relation to Finding One of Research Question Three. Firstly, the need for CRPs to often make a compelling case for the involvement of a specific line partner not only to the partner in question, but also to his or her immediate colleagues. While partners in City law firms have large amounts of individual autonomy, especially when compared to their corporate counterparts, very few partners operate truly independently. Due to the ways in which City law firms typically choose to organise themselves, lawyers often work within a department, practice area or sector. These groups of lawyers have shared income targets and objectives based on the expected contributions of each partner. Friendly and not so friendly competition exists in City law firms between these internal groupings as they each aim to demonstrate their comparative levels of value and contribution to the firm overall. If partners within a department, practice or sector perceive the contribution of one of their members to their 'team' objectives is being adversely affected by working on less profitable client relationships (as in the first of the quotes above), they can bring considerable pressure to bear, which may then affect that partner's actions. Acknowledging this, an effective CRP will often make the case for the involvement in their account of an important line partner to not only the partner in question but also to the partner's immediate colleagues and line manager (DMP).

The second key point in relation to Finding One of Research Question Three relates to trust and reciprocity (two issues that were also identified in response to Research Question Two). As evident from the preceding quote by Steve, an effective CRP will often make a series of investments or down payments that can later be called upon to secure the involvement of others. This notion of 'trading'; having something to give in return for something you want, appears to be an important 'currency' in the CRP role.

What emerges in relation to Research Question Three is a prominent and important role in which the CRP acts as "oil in the machinery" (Stanley), aligning organisational resources to serve the best interests of both the client and firm. This includes the CRP acting as a filter or gatekeeper between the firm and the client which, when performed effectively, ensure the clients receive only relevant, tailored approaches from the firm. One respondent commented how he uses the metaphor of a 'builder' or 'master contractor' to explain to others the role of a CRP:

“... [as the client] you only want one number on your phone, you know, you don't want the electrician or the tile maker in France or the oven maker in Germany, you just want the builder's number, so if you're stressed about something, you call the builder. That's a very big part of being a CRP and similarly, you know, you don't want that builder to let lots of other people get in your way, so you don't want the builder to let the electrician be calling you all the time, you want to have some channelling and process that they control and, you know, equally you don't want the builder to constantly be flogging you things you don't want, so you've got, the only reason I'd want a builder to say to me, "look I know we are doing these German tiles, but do you want to have a chat with this guy in France", it's because I can see a personal benefit and so it's the same for me saying to a client, "why don't you meet my pensions person". Unless I can understand what the benefits are for the client in with meeting the pensions person, some upside, some saving, some future, looking good internally, why would I want them to meet a pensions person”

Evan

However, the view of the CRP as master contractor (acting as coordinator, interpreter or conduit) is not without challenge. Paul expressed frustration with a view that it is the CRPs responsibility to motivate partners across the client relationship to pursue opportunities in their specialist area:

“I'm pretty unsympathetic towards people who think that because you are the CRP, somehow it's your job to convince them that they should be endeavouring to improve what they're doing with the client or pursuing an opportunity...”

Paul

While Frank questioned the fundamental purpose of the CRP, suggesting it might actually inhibit the capacity of other partners to develop relationships with the client:

“as far as I'm concerned where we want to get to is that they're not constantly contacting me, I mean, you know, they might contact me if they can't get hold of someone else and they've just got a list of names, but really we want them to be in bed with the firm, as opposed to me personally, so what is a client relationship partner, what's the point, do you know what I mean, it is someone to co-ordinate our BD efforts in relation to a client”

Frank

In summary, Finding One suggests the majority of CRPs consider aligning organizational resources to be an important element of the role, but with some questioning whether this might be at the expense of inhibiting the proactivity of peers.

2. Finding Two: The potential dark-side of the CRP role

The CRP role is not without potential downside, costs and risk. Most notable among these, and developing the theme identified in the preceding quote from Frank, is the degree of power within a firm that can be exercised by a CRP. Commensurate with acting as the primary point of contact for both the client and internal client focused activity, many CRPs take a prominent role in producing regular relationship updates and reports for their client. Regular meetings between the CRP and senior members of a client's in-house legal team often accompany the production of these reports. As noted, the CRP is also most often the first to be notified by the client as to concerns regarding performance issues by team members. Increasingly some CRPs also control budgets that line partners can theoretically access (with the permission of the CRP) for entertaining the client and other business development activity. It is also widely acknowledged that the CRP will set and be responsible for the overall strategy and objectives for the development of a relationship with a client. This extends to potentially allocating and directing energy, efforts and the firm's resources in one area at the expense of another. Viewed in the round, these activities and responsibilities can theoretically place large amounts of positional and informational power in the hands of a CRP. When used appropriately and effectively by a CRP, this power can have a transformational and positive impact on the overall health of a relationship between a firm and client. Unfortunately as shall be highlighted in Section 4.3.4, there are examples where CRPs use this informational and positional advantage to serve their own interests over and above those of their colleagues or firm. In summary, an emergent finding of this research is the potential for a dark side of leadership to develop in which a CRP misuses the power and status of their position to serve their own interests.

3. Finding Three: A large variance in non-chargeable hours raises questions around the effectiveness and efficiency of some CRPs

One further potential challenge to the CRP role insofar as how it is currently practised relates to time. As first witnessed in response to Research Question Two, there is huge variance in the activities undertaken by CRPs with little or no guidance on what elements add the most value. Unsurprisingly, related to this large variance in activity is a large variance in the amount of time CRPs are committing to the leadership and management aspects of the role. Often broadly categorised as 'non chargeable work' these are costs that the CRP and firm cannot directly pass on to the client and so must absorb.

All respondents were unable to give a specific answer when asked how many non-chargeable hours they commit per annum to their account. The lowest range expressed was

two to three hundred, while at the upper end of the spectrum one partner estimated it to be over one thousand. Considering partners in some City law firms charge clients in excess of £1000 per hour, the non-chargeable time committed by CRPs represents a potentially significant opportunity cost. The numbers are striking even if we take a more 'conservative' charge out rate of £700 per hour as the basis for comparing the non-chargeable time invested by two CRPs:

Example A: 250 hours p/a at £700 p/h = £175,000

Example B: 1000 hours p/a at £700 p/h = £700,000

Variance between A and B = £525,000

The example above highlights the activities of partner B represent an additional opportunity cost of £525,000 when compared to the activities of partner A. While this may represent a worthwhile additional investment (in the context of some client accounts generating millions of pounds per year more income than others) this study has demonstrated there is often insufficient evidence on the activities undertaken by CRPs on which to base this claim. Is it the case, for example, that partner B is spending an additional £525,000 per year on low level administration that adds minimal value to the firm? Or is partner B using this additional investment wisely and generating multiple millions of pounds worth of additional income in return?

Based on the findings of this study, what emerges in relation to Research Question Three is a view that the CRP role is undeniably important, but with searching questions around whether the activities currently being performed come with too high costs. The findings also raise questions around the benefits of greater transparency and information on the non-chargeable activities undertaken by CRPs to enable firms to make evidence based decisions on the true cost / income ratios of client relationships across a portfolio of key accounts.

Whether the non-chargeable activities undertaken by CRPs could be carried out by less expensive resource is an interesting consideration. Business Development (BD) departments in City law firms are certainly well positioned to pick up the majority of these largely administrative activities. Certainly from a pure economic standpoint, BD professionals are a much cheaper alternative to lawyers and equity partners in particular. However, as previously mentioned, there are strong cultural, political and structural factors that would need to be addressed before the transfer of certain client activities to BD professionals could become the norm.

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Three

The following key points emerged in relation to Research Question Three, the purpose of which was to investigate the importance of the CRP role in influencing the activities of peers on a key account:

- I. Effective CRPs perform a valuable role aligning organizational resources, but this may be at the expense of inhibiting the proactivity of peers
- II. There is a potential dark side to the CRP role and a danger that some CRPs might misuse the power and status of their position to serve their own interests
- III. There is a need for much greater transparency and information on the non-chargeable activities undertaken by CRPs. Based on estimates by respondents, there is significant variance in the amount of non chargeable time CRPs are committing to their accounts, which could mean substantial unnecessary opportunity costs are being incurred. Accordingly there are opportunities for firms to help systematically divest away from the CRP role activities that are largely administrative and 'low value add'. This may require firms to address a range of other tensions and issues relating to structure, culture, the identity of the professional and governance

4.3.4 Research Question Four: What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account?

The purpose of Research Question Four is to identify the behaviours that distinguish effective from less effective CRPs in their ability to influence the activities of peers on a key account. Repertory Grid was the primary method selected to address Research Question Four. Although it is possible to undertake various types of statistical analysis on the grids (Jankowicz, 2004), analysis methods used here are limited to cluster analysis and frequency data so as to remain true to the study's phenomenological intent.

Results will be discussed thematically from across the sample, but with close attention paid to the meaning of the constructs within each theme. Table 4.5 identifies the core themes that account for all of the constructs elicited from respondents. The top six themes account for 76.9% of the constructs and as such will be the basis for an analysis of the results. Each theme is considered in turn.

1. Theme One: Combines a strategic perspective with a focus on delivering short and long term results

This theme represents 20 constructs or 16.53% of the total number of elicited constructs

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Clear purpose and measures of success v Does not set expectations / rules;*
- *Execution. Sees things through v Less well organised; and*
- *Desire to win v Flicker of light. Soon moves on.*

Respondents were of the view that effective CRPs display behaviours that demonstrate they are results focused, with a clear vision for the development of their key account. Crucially these effective CRPs combine this strategic capability with disciplined implementation and a focus on day-to-day activities that will lead to the desired results.

I. Strategic orientation

In relation to the strategic elements identified, respondents used words and phrases including “strategic thinker”; “clear purpose and measures of success”; and “has a clear vision” at the emergent poles. “Is tactical” and “does not set expectations” were used at the implicit pole to describe CRPs who respondents considered to be less effective.

Chapter 4: Results

Table 4.5: Repertory grid: core themes

Number	Theme	Definition	Constructs	Sum %
1	Combines a strategic perspective with a focus on delivering short and long term results	Seen to deliver results v talking about delivering results; sees things through; leads by example and is a Role Model to others	A3 E5 L4 Q2 C3 F5 M2 Q8 C6 H5 P1 Q9 D3 I4 P2 S1 E3 I6 P5 S3	16.53
2	Prioritises the needs of others and is open to new ideas	Demonstrates through their actions that they prioritise the interests of the broader firm over feathering their own nest. Displays behaviours that are outward looking (beyond their immediate team)	B1 K2 O2 R2 D2 L3 Q5 R7 G7 L5 Q6 H6 M5 Q7 J6 O1 R1	14.05
3	Builds relationships, develops others and recognises the individual strengths of team members	Matches the needs of the client with the strengths of fellow partners. Shapes up opportunities for others, broadening the relationship beyond a dyad between themselves as CRP and the client. Is a demonstrable team player through their actions	B2 H2 N2 U1 B3 H4 O3 C4 I3 P3 D4 J5 P6 F6 J7 S2	13.22
4	Is trusting and inclusive of others	Demonstrates trust in peers and is inclusive of others versus hoarding knowledge as power	A5 K1 O8 A6 L1 T1 D1 M3 T2 F1 N1 V1 G6 N4 V3	12.40
5	Displays confidence and passion that inspires others	Confident they will succeed versus an air of doomed to fail. Conveys passion and inspires others.	C1 I1 M1 F3 I2 Q1 F4 J2 R3 G3 K3 R6 G4 L2	11.60

Chapter 4: Results

Number	Theme	Definition	Constructs	Sum %
6	Perceived by the client as a business partner	Appears symbiotic with the client. Represents the interests of the client and is highly knowledgeable of their business. Is respected by the client (versus being perceived as 'transactional' or 'administrative')	B4 E4 J3 B5 G2 B6 G5 C5 H1 E1 H3	9.10
7	Communicates powerfully and prolifically	Visible proactive communications promoting the interests of the client relationship across the firm versus inward looking and insular	A4 P4 C2 Q3 F2 Q4 G1 R4 J1	7.44
8	Demonstrates a strong legal or sector specialism	Places a high value on legal, sector or other specialist knowledge	E2 N7 N3 O6 N6	4.13
9	Leverages internal networks	Has built and leverages a network of relationships across the partnership	A1 J4 A2 R8	3.30
10	Displays emotional intelligence	Demonstrates emotional intelligence and emotional equanimity	F7 S4 M4 V2	3.30
11	Has an agreeable demeanour	Likeable, personable, modest and maintains humour versus unpleasant to work with, arrogant or quick to anger	L6 O4 N5 O7	3.30
12	Can demonstrate past success	Has a track record of strong financial results or client following	A7 L7	1.70

Total number of constructs: 121 100

Mike provided insight into the type of activities CRPs associate with a strategic focus when he commented:

“Well I think someone who is good at that is able to quite naturally make judgements around the client’s environment... and relate that to bigger developments in the economy, the legal market or whatever is relevant... and then bring that down to the level of making judgements about team resource... the client would rate them as strategic thinkers and will engage them to think strategically for them... and their relationships reflect that.”

Mike

II. Align purpose and vision with a plan

Being strategically oriented was considered by CRPs to be insufficient as a standalone competency. Truly effective CRPs were considered to combine a strategic orientation with a clear plan for delivery. Representative of this view was Evan who identified “planning and process” and ‘having clear process around business development” as the behaviours of effective CRPs, while “relies on hope” was used as descriptor of less effective CRP behaviour in this context.

Putting in place what may be actually rather basic systems and structures of account management (such as templates or email proforma for collecting data from line partners or regular team meetings), but being rigorous in the implementation of these, was considered a standout feature of effective CRPs. Aligned with this was a view that effective CRPs are “disciplined and organised” [construct M2] in how they approach the operation of their account. Commenting in a rather self-effacing way on his approach to disciplined implementation, Henry noted:

“The other issues frankly I think are much more operational in terms of getting buy-in and getting people to do stuff... so it’s things like transparency and I’m a dull fellow, I’ll frankly make a note of what someone said they will do, we’ll stick a deadline on it and I’ll put it on an internal web page which says they’re going to do it and at the next meeting I’ll look at them and say ‘well have you done it?’ and at the third time of asking most people get quite embarrassed and actually they go and do it. So there’s that process which goes on as well.”

Henry

One general criticism of less effective CRPs is that they do not appear to extend their client relationship as far, as wide or as deeply as more effective CRPs. These less effective CRPs are considered to by some to “sit on” or “hog the relationship”. What has emerged in relation to theme one of the Repertory Grid analysis is that these CRPs, rather than intentionally limiting the proliferation of their account, may simply be less proficient in developing a clear

plan for their account and, relatedly, may be much less rigorous and disciplined than effective CRPs in following up on activity.

III. Is results focused, determined and displays grit

Being “single minded, focused” [L4]; “seen to deliver results” [A3] and “tenacious” [Q2] were all expressed by CRPs as descriptions of effective CRPs and which correlate closely with having a strategic orientation and a clear plan for implementation.

A view was expressed by a number of respondents that effective CRPs are persistent and broad shouldered; recognising there will inevitably be delays and setbacks in their efforts to develop their client relationship. In comparison less effective CRPs were considered to “lack persistence” [L4] and to quickly move on from one task or initiative to another. Evan captured the view of a number of CRPs when commenting:

“A and C [effective partners] I’d say have, they have quite a sort of relentless desire to win. So when they’ve got their teeth into a client target, they don’t let go. E [less effective], there will be a flicker of light and if he can’t close it out straightaway that will be the last you hear”

Evan

As an interesting counterpoint, one respondent highlighted that while being focused on results is a positive attribute of effective CRPs, taken to the extreme it can be perceived as overly aggressive or single minded to the detriment of others. This raises a thought-provoking point around the subjective nature of being perceived to be ‘results focused’ and how other factors may colour perception. This extends to the ‘halo / horn effect’ in which a general impression is made about an individual because of what is perceived to be a single positive or negative characteristic.

That a ‘long-term view’ is much more likely to be taken by effective than less effective CRPs is also worth a moment of further consideration. A number of respondents made comments to the effect that an effective CRP will “put in the leg work” (Garry), meaning to be seen by others to visibly invest significant amounts of their time to develop a client relationship, often over many months or years. Reflecting on his recent experience of building a relationship with a client, Garry commented:

“...there was a credibility-building phase and then once you have a certain level of credibility and exposure, then there is the sell. The sell’s probably the last nine months, the two years before that were about positioning and getting to know decision makers”

Garry

That effective CRPs are much more likely to take a long-term view while faced with the same pressures as less effective CRPs to deliver income in the short term is an interesting point of comparison. Particularly when juxtaposed with the view of several respondents that, while taking a long term view, effective CRPs are perceived to be “much more likely to make things happen” and to “move with speed” (Henry).

A final point worth highlighting in relation to being results focused, determined and displaying grit is the propensity for more effective CRPs to have challenging conversations. As highlighted in this study, there are few issues more contentious in a City law firm than one partner having to address the performance issues of a peer. On this point a small number of respondents commented that effective CRPs were far more likely to acknowledge and address issues of underperformance on their accounts than less effective CRPs. One respondent commented that having replaced an under-performing partner on one of his accounts the income from that account grew from £300,000 to £2.5 million in less than five years.

IV. Sets high standards for self and others

Setting high standards and expectations for self and team members is the final key component of Theme One. Respondents identified effective CRPs as wanting “to be the best” [E3]. In so doing – and in combination with other attributes – they are considered to “act as a role model” [C3] for other lawyers. In comparison, less effective CRPs were described as “providing no sense of purpose” on their account [C3], which meant that others find it difficult to learn from them.

While leading by example, acting as a role model and having high standards are laudable aspirations for any CRP, the findings in relation to Theme One do sound a note of caution. Though expressed by only one CRP, a potentially invidious aspect to setting and maintaining high standards was highlighted. Insights from George suggest a fine line is to be found between a healthy approach to setting and maintaining high standards and a neurotic fixation that the performance of oneself and others is never good enough:

“[partner name] worries constantly about how she... while she's quite brisk and brusque on the surface from a client perspective, she's obsessed with how she's being perceived, is she good enough, you know, it's the question she's constantly asking herself, even though she is arguably one of our best lawyers. Again, I think you see the good lawyers they are constantly questioning themselves. [Partner name], [Partner name], they're constantly sort of, they have that sort of degree of well it's a constructive insecurity that drives them forward.”

George

2. Theme Two: Prioritises the needs of others and is open to new ideas

This theme represents 17 constructs or 14.05% of the total number of elicited constructs.

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Firm focused v Practice and self-focused;*
- *Focused on advancing the interests of the client and firm v Interested in maximising own personal revenues; and*
- *Selfless v Self focused*

I. Outward focused orientation

Having an outward looking orientation beyond one's self or immediate team was considered another key attribute of effective CRPs by respondents and was characterised in two main ways. At the most 'outward' focused level it was positioned as philosophical position in which one has a "role and obligation to sell the firm, [to] grow the firm, grow the client relationship" (Frank). These CRPs were also considered to have "broad interests" that are external to the firm [G7] whereas conversely, less effective CRPs were considered much more likely to define themselves by reference to their profession, firm or department and to have much narrower interests. The second level of characterisation of an outward looking orientation was described as displaying behaviours that demonstrate a 'firm first' [B1] before self approach and "sells the firm" as opposed to being "focused on one's own practice" [Q5]. This was a strong and constant theme of an effective CRP that was raised across all interviews.

II. Is open to ideas, new ways of working. Listens. Looks to grow and develop

Another strong clustering in relation to Theme Two was a view expressed by respondents that effective CRPs are open and "receptive to the views of others" [J6]. Examples of other words and phrases used at the emergent pole of related constructs included "willing to listen" [R2], "engages with the ideas of others" [Q7]. In contrast less effective CRPs were likely to demonstrate behaviours that displayed they were "frustrated [by the involvement] of others" [R2] or that they "think they know best and does not listen" [L5].

III. Is selfless, altruistic and displays an abundance mind-set

A clustering around "selfless" [M5], "reciprocates" [O1] and "willing to help" [K2] at the emergent pole of effective CRPs was also evident from the interviews. While "arrogant" [L3], "lacks interest in others" [O2] and "self focused" [M5] were used at the implicit pole to describe less effective CRPs.

3. Theme Three: Builds relationships, develops others and recognises the individual strengths of team members

This theme represents 16 constructs or 13.22% of the total number of elicited constructs.

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Shapes up opportunities for others v all about me;*
- *Our client - everyone will get mutual credit v "My client"; and*
- *Concerned about perception of team v concerned about perception of self*

Whereas Theme Two focused on the orientation of CRPs to be firm or self-focused and their appetite for being open to and learning from others, Theme Three considers how effective CRPs very practically recognise the contributions of others and build cohesive teams.

I. Is a team player

Being recognised as a strong team player was highlighted by virtually all respondents as a positive attribute of highly effective CRPs. This is a perhaps unsurprising finding given the Research Question is aimed at identifying how effective CRPs influence the activities of peers.

What however was unexpected was the breadth and depth of constructs and behaviours which respondents associated with this important attribute. Most striking was the extent to which effective CRPs promote a sense of "our client" [J5] in which every team member receives mutual credit for their shared endeavours. Accordingly they are much more "concerned about the perception of the team" than they are "concerned about their own perception" [S2]. Less effective CRPs were also considered to take a "my client" [J5] view of the relationship, to be "insular" [P6] or to "focus on their immediate team and department" [N2]. In displaying behaviours consistent with being a strong team player, a number of respondents were of the view that effective CRPs were also much more likely to "engage many parts of the firm" [N2] and to "see the value of internal relationships" [O3]

II. Recognises the contribution of others

Strongly correlated with being a strong, visible team player (and possibly as an antecedent to it), recognising the contributions and strengths of others was considered to be another quality of effective CRPs. This included not just "acknowledging the contribution of others" [U1], but using insight and knowledge of individual partners respective strengths and weaknesses in order to be "effective at matching partners to the client" [B2] and ensuring "a balanced team" [C4]. In addition, effective CRPs were much more likely to be "participative" as opposed to "prescriptive to team members" [H4] and demonstrably "committed to the success of others"

[D4]. Orphelia commented on the perceived risk to team harmony and the perception of the CRP by peers when they consciously choose not to involve others:

“...they don’t naturally delegate because they think it’s going to be... they will get it done quicker, better, more efficiently... and therefore they deprive everyone on the team of a role effectively and thereby the ability to learn and feel that you are part of a joint enterprise. And worse what that can end up looking as if you are actually hogging the relationship you don’t think other people, you’re not letting other people in and I mean that is utterly hopeless because clearly you can’t expand a relationship unless you send the strong message that you want everyone to do as much as they possibly can to develop the relationship in the way which is suitable to them and their particular practice.”

Orphelia

III. Tailored communication

The important role that consistent, tailored and visible communication plays in the perceived success of effective CRPs cannot be overstated and represents a significant number of constructs within theme three. Converting a strong affinity with the client into a meaningful, inspiring narrative for why others should want to work on the account was raised as an important aspect of effective CRP behaviour. Commenting on his own experiences and the central role that story telling played in his own successes, Mike, commented:

“You talk, you communicate. I found that I wanted to tell a story really I wanted to get my peers into a position where they understood I suppose why I was enthusiastic about working for this client and why it mattered to me to look after them [the client]. It helped enormously that I genuinely, I suppose authentically felt that my relationship with this client was a good one. It was founded on all the right principles of a joy in working together, achieving good results for the client, for us a sort of almost a joint view that we had a good team going on.”

Investing the time necessary to engage with all team members was also a striking finding into the behaviours of effective CRPs. In the words of one CRP:

“...you have to make time...I don't think we focus enough, I think there's a lack of focus on people, there's a lack of focus on how people are going to respond to certain things, I think we make mistakes as a result, there's a lack of acceptance of difference sometimes, but I think it's actually down to each person... in terms of the people who reckon they're good leaders, I think it's their responsibility to effectively spread the word”

George

A number of respondents highlighted that when engaging with members of their team, highly effective CRPs take the time to ensure each message and opportunity is tailored to the needs of each individual. Violet provided one such example in relation to her own client

service team in which she was encouraging colleagues in an overseas office to seize an opportunity for additional work on the account:

“...what did they like? The fact that it was being presented to them and that they were involved from the beginning in setting the terms and that they were happy with the terms and so that we can build something from their own ends on that basis”

In reflecting on the importance of considering the individual needs of peers and the value in crafting bespoke messages, respondent Brian captured the mood perfectly when commenting:

“I guess we as client relationship partners should maybe... just try to put ourselves on the other side and say ‘what does the guy, the financial payment regulation specialist in Rome think of this client and why should this be important to him?’ And then try to find a way to make a one liner or to add some synopsis or some client summary, kind of make it more sexy I think. I think we should be more, we should anticipate more that the other person in the other office and the other practice is maybe not waiting for that client relationship and therefore we should maybe say ‘look there’s an opportunity this is the background on what we do for this client blah, blah, blah’... I mean everybody accepts work, but the challenge is when you are asking him or her to do something that isn’t yet work, that’s the whole situation we are discussing.”

The need to provide all team members with an opportunity to make a contribution while simultaneously ensuring forward momentum and the continued progress toward the objectives of the account was also raised:

“it’s about engagement I think and people want to feel as though there is a stake in the relationship and a say and that challenge on big accounts is giving everyone a say and an opportunity to chip in, while at the same time not inhibiting the dynamism of the strategy, whatever it might be you’re trying to implement.”

Paul

What is evident therefore is the importance and value that respondents place on highly tailored, bespoke messages that provides an inspiring story or narrative arc around the account, its development and the role of each team member.

While perceived as being valuable, one has to question the long-term sustainability of a model of communication that requires significant amounts of CRP time. As accounts grow in size and scale they can number many hundreds of lawyers (not all partners) in large law firms.

4. Theme Four: Is trusting and inclusive of others

This theme represents 15 constructs or 12.40% of the total number of elicited constructs.

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Trusting - encourages others to take on portions of the client relationship v Controlling;*
- *Open. Willing to involve peers v Secretive; and*
- *Flexible. Will adapt their behaviour, style and strategy if persuaded to do so v Inflexible - steadfast belief they are right*

That trust plays an important role in relationships between peers was previously evident in response to Research Question Two and the ways in which CRPs perceive their own role in relation to leading a key account. Trust was once more at the fore when, as part of the Repertory Grid technique in Response to Research Question Four, respondents were asked to identify behaviours that characterised effective CRPs. At the emergent pole were descriptors including “trusts peers” [A5] and “Trusting – encourages others to take on portions of the client relationship [D1]. Ways in which trust is perceived to exist or potential antecedents to trust were also evident through the words and phrases used by respondents at the emergent pole. These included “promotes participation with the client” [O8]; “Shares freely” [V1]; and “sells in others. Promotes others. Engenders loyalty” [N4]

A large number of respondents associated effective CRPs with being “Open. Willing to involve peers” [L1] and “Open. Sharing information” [K1]. The antithesis - less effective CRPs - were characterised at the implicit pole as being “Secretive” [L1] and “Pay(s) lip service. Playing the game (Hide(s)) behind billings and relationships” [G6]. These important results highlight the extent to which the CRP role may bestow informational and positional power to CRPs. How CRPs choose to leverage this power may then be interpreted by peers as a reflection of the CRP’s ‘character’ and the extent to which they can be trusted. A point encapsulated by Isaac who identified how, at the emergent pole, this informational and positional power can be used by CRPs as positive force for collaboration “Knowledge as power. Explicit. Open about the relationship” [N1] or as a barrier to the involvement of others “Knowledge as power. Secretive. Hoard power” [N1]

5. Theme Five: Displays confidence and passion that inspires others

This theme represents 14 constructs or 11.60% of the total number of elicited constructs.

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Confident they will succeed (communicates to others their objective is achievable) v attitude of doomed to fail and feels victimised;*
- *Positive outlook that inspires others v negative outlook; and*
- *Enthusiastic. Driven. Persistent v Disinterested*

That effective CRPs are perceived as acting or being confident was mentioned by the majority of respondents. The use of laddering or pyramiding, consistent with the repertory grid technique, enabled the respondents to move past a first order level of construing and to give richer, deeper insights into how they categorise confidence in this context. Looking at this deeper level, responses range from a focus on the CRP themselves “self confident. At one with their-self” [L2] to displays of confidence in others “Confident in self, relationship and ability of peers” [G4]. Being “positive in outlook” [R6] was also considered to be a laudable quality in effective CRPs, most often raised in the context of the role this plays in inspiring others. Looking at the implicit pole is also illuminating insofar as developing an understanding of how respondents perceive CRPs who are unconfident and the potential reasons for this. Moving past simply being “not confident” [F3], respondents characterise these CRPs as having an “attitude of doomed to fail; feels victimised” [C1] and of being “scared of rejection” [i1]

Enthusiasm on the part of effective CRPs was also raised by a number of respondents and is a close corollary to confidence. By laddering down respondents were able to express constructs in more specific, behaviourally defined detail and with quite different meaning. For example we find that for [i2] enthusiasm means to be “driven, persistent” while for [F4] it relates to being “inspiring – conveying passion”. The antithesis of enthusiasm, and hallmarks of less effective CRPs, included being “disinterested” [i2]; viewing the CRP role as a series of “tasks to be done” [Q1] or as someone who “sucks energy” [R3].

Mike attempted to capture the difference that being enthusiastic and passionate about an account can play in terms of the additional value a CRP is able to deliver to the client:

“...I think people can be committed without necessarily being passionate. I think you can just be a damn good lawyer but with a sense of needing to do the right thing, go the extra mile work in the trenches and all the rest of it but that doesn't necessarily boil over into passion. In other words you can just get some very good operators who will just do a job but they won't love the client for it. I think there's probably a lot of people in the magic circle who do that. If they are working for some of the banks or whatever they will just do the job because technically it turns them on and it's part of their skill set and they do it. But I think being passionate in the sense of absolutely wanting to give clients the very best that you can give and get the firm to deliver behind that, that's a different thing.”

Mike

While Kevin expanded on the importance of a CRP being enthusiastic and passionate so they in turn can “fire up” colleagues on their client service team:

“You need people to sort of, have energy and enthusiasm and commitment and that’s one of the biggest challenges. How do you fire people up to do it? It comes back to what I was saying earlier, a lot of it is just personal relationships and trying to get them thinking oh well I’d better do that because David will be a bit of hacked off if I don’t, that sort of thing. It’s not that I’m going to administer a great bollocking if it doesn’t happen it’s more that you want their respect so that they feel as if they owe you that. And as I say also it comes down to self-interest really if they think there is some juicy work for their team, people will generally do it. If they are really busy on high margin work for other clients you know, it’s often harder”

Kevin

6. Theme Six: Perceived by the client as a business partner

This theme represents 11 constructs or 9.10% of the total number of elicited constructs.

Example constructs within this theme include:

- *Operates as a Business Partner with client v not able to realise opportunities for the firm;*
- *Conveys a sense of connection to the client and peers v transactional; and*
- *High client contact v Low client contact*

To be perceived as a true Business Partner to a client appears to be a universal aspiration for CRPs. Consistent with this view, respondents considered effective CRPs to “operate as a business partner with the client” [B4] by virtue of their “deep client knowledge” [E1] and that they work hard to “build deep insight into [the] client’s business” [C5]. In so doing they (effective CRPs) were judged by respondents to be “100% committed to the client” [B5] and to demonstrate “high [levels] of client contact” [J3].

Whether as an antecedent to or as a consequence of operating as a business partner, conveying a clear sense of passion, commitment and connection to the client was also highlighted by respondents as a key distinguishing feature of high performing CRPs. Descriptions such as “committed to the client relationship, the relationship has meaning” [H1]; “passion for the client” [H3]; and “conveys a sense of connection” [B6] were all evident at the emergent pole of effective partner behaviour.

Taken in the round, effective CRPs were therefore considered to take a “relationship based approach” [G2] that can be understood as sacrificing short-term opportunities for income or

“transnational behaviour” [G2] in favour of the long terms interest of the relationship. In so doing, effective CRPs were viewed as “aligning interests (own and others) with the needs of the client” [E4].

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Four

The purpose of Research Question Four was to investigate what behaviours on the part of Client Relationship Partners are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account. The following key insights have been provided by this study:

- I. Six themes account for over three-quarters (76.9%) of all constructs mentioned by participants as being behaviours that CRPs practise in order to effectively influence the activities of peers on a key account
- II. The results empirically identify, for the first time, a set of behaviours that may form a basis for how City law firms can establish a competitive advantage through a greater focus on the development and adoption of these identified behaviours by a greater number of CRPs
- III. CRPs effective in influencing peers can be broadly characterized as demonstrating behaviours that: enable them to be both results focused (in the near term) and strategic; are enthusiastic team players who recognise and value the contributions of others; display a disposition that is positive, open and trusting toward others; and are able to provide long-term outcomes in which the interests of both the client and firm are aligned.
- IV. The constructs identified by respondents suggest a spectrum of interrelated behaviours at which effective CRPs are proficient and that range from those that are intrapersonal in focus (e.g. a positive outlook), through interpersonal (e.g. inspires others) to more strategic (e.g. clear vision and purpose).
- V. These results therefore raise important points (that will be considered in Sections 4.3.6 and 4.3.7) about how these competencies are acquired by CRPs and whether City law firms are doing enough to aid their development.

4.3.5 Research Question Five: How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?

The purpose of Research Question Five is to investigate the context in which CRPs operate and how this might hinder or enable CRPs in their efforts to influence the activities of peers. As set out in Chapter 2, the academic literature on City law firms describes a unique environment in which firms face substantial challenges not experienced by corporate organisations. This is due, in part, to the traditional autonomy of professionals and the inherent tensions in the three-fold role of a partner as a producer, a manager and an owner of the business. Semi structured questions were the primary method of data collection to address Research Question Five; with the method used in 27 of the 31 interviews. A series of probes were used by the researcher to enable spontaneous follow-up to questions and encourage participants to expand on particular points that came up in the interview (Whiting, 2008). Template analysis as a subset of thematic analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis to interpret the responses to the semi structured questions.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms and the related Child and Sub-Child codes from the coding framework (see Appendix C) were developed by the researcher in Nvivo to capture the key themes and meaning emerging from the data in relation to Research Question Five. However, where appropriate text coded to other codes was also used to help address Research Question Five. This enabled the identification of the following findings.

1. Finding One: The short-term orientation of firms may act contrary to the long-term interests of effective KAM

A number of respondents commented on the unsuitability of the law firm model to support the effective operation of a Key Account Programme over the long term. Many felt that the focus of firms was too short-term; something that was often reflected in the objectives set by partners with their line manager:

“...I think sometimes people need some longer term objectives because some objectives just aren’t achievable in a year. You can make steps towards achieving them but you won’t necessarily achieve them. So I think you need to have balance and short-term objectives with some slightly longer-term objectives, that never happens and so I think that would help as well just acknowledging that some things just aren’t going to happen in a year and just be very clear.”

Rachel

The setting of short-term objectives reflects the orientation in City law firms to attempt to maximise profits each year for the purpose of distribution to partners. In contrast to their corporate counterparts where residual profit is reinvested, law firms distribute profits to equity partners. A firm that can therefore demonstrate to the market a year on year increase in the amount of profit distributed is considered 'successful'. However, this perceived 'success' is often artificial (e.g. relentless internal cost-cutting and the 'de-equitization' of under-performing partners) or comes with significant costs, including a failure to invest in a firm's infrastructure (e.g. IT upgrades) or strategic initiatives (e.g. a key account management) that may be in the firm's long-term best interest:

"Our business operates on a 12 month cycle and that's it. You can't think ahead to 5, 10, 15, 20 years, you just can't and you can't because the partnership model demands that you generate a significant amount of money to keep your partners employed and healthily remunerated and distribute all of that cash. You have issues around, you know, investing, you've got the structural cycle issue, so the business model itself does not support taking very long term views, which you could do in other industries... Fundamentally the business model of businesses like this are not structured to do that. They are structured on a 12 month rolling cycle and if you ask most partners, 'do they think they have a long term future', most of them will say I see myself on a rolling 12 month contract because they know that if they have a bad year they could be gone, so what they focus on is just making today work and tomorrow. There is a major structural issue".

Adam

Given that all law firm partners face the pressure of this annual cycle to maximise profits, it is no surprise that activities and investments in key accounts that may take many years (or just more than twelve months) to see a return are often sacrificed. This is evidently a source of tension for CRPs who may require the commitment of line partners to activities for which there is no obvious and immediate return. Sentiments expressed by CRPs on this theme were coded to the Child codes 'Organizing (processes)' and 'Structure and Governance' using the coding framework developed in Nvivo. As shown in Figure 4.8, these codes account for a combined total of 440 references across the 31 interviews, or 21% of all Child code references under the Parent code Characteristics of law Firms.

The number of references under these two Child codes may point to tensions between the short-term focus of firms and the often long-term perspective that is required for the development of key client relationships. Tensions that are compounded by the way in which law firms are typically structured. As discussed in Section 4.3.3, lawyers are often grouped in areas of legal specialism. Accordingly it is not uncommon for a single partner to be part of a team (e.g. Employment), that is part of a department (e.g. Corporate), which in turn is part of

the wider Firm. In addition, most City law firms now also provide a sector focus, so the same Employment / Corporate / Firm partner may also belong to a number of Sector groups e.g. Retail; Financial Services; and Manufacturing. A key account programme may then be overlaid onto this structure i.e. a ring-fenced number of key clients drawn from across the teams, departments and sectors. This hierarchical, matrix structure can result in a partner with specialist, in demand skills being faced with multiple often competing demands on his or her time, which may include several requests from different CRPs. Line partners and CRPs who require their services must then navigate issues around identity and the hierarchy of objective setting and affiliation i.e. is the line partner's first commitment to their team, department or sector and how do they reconcile these interests and apportion their time?

These issues are manifest in the following two quotes from respondents, the first of which (Paul) highlights the confusion and ambiguity in the setting of objectives; and the second quote (Evan) demonstrates the tendency towards parochial behaviour:

“...we organise ourselves in practice groups but I think, you know, the firm is wrangling with this problem at the moment where should it be sectors, should it be clients... lawyers like to think of themselves in practice areas, but nobody else thinks of us in practice areas, most people don't know what a practice area is, clients don't, they might say what do you specialise in, then if you said to them, you know, do you know what my practice area is, they don't know what you're talking about, it's very introspective, whereas, you know, if you're talking about a client relationship, delivering a certain result for a client, I would say that that should be one of my objectives that I feed in to my personal development objectives but quite what the hierarchy should be or how it all clicks together, I don't know and I think that's quite an interesting question.”

Paul

“So, a small example, I was discussing with someone last night is we want to use insight from disputes [litigation department], to go and talk to businesses about how to avoid disputes. Now that fundamentally doesn't sell our litigation team very much, it sells our commercial lawyers and their ability to help people avoid bear traps, but the litigation team want to focus it around IT disputes which are more likely to arise and give them work, but if you look at any big client, I can only get two [client name] lawyers to go to an IT dispute session; I can get 30 to go to one of our commercial contracts disputes, but I've got to persuade my key litigator, well just a litigator, to prepare something which benefits the different personal group i.e. the commercial partner”

Evan

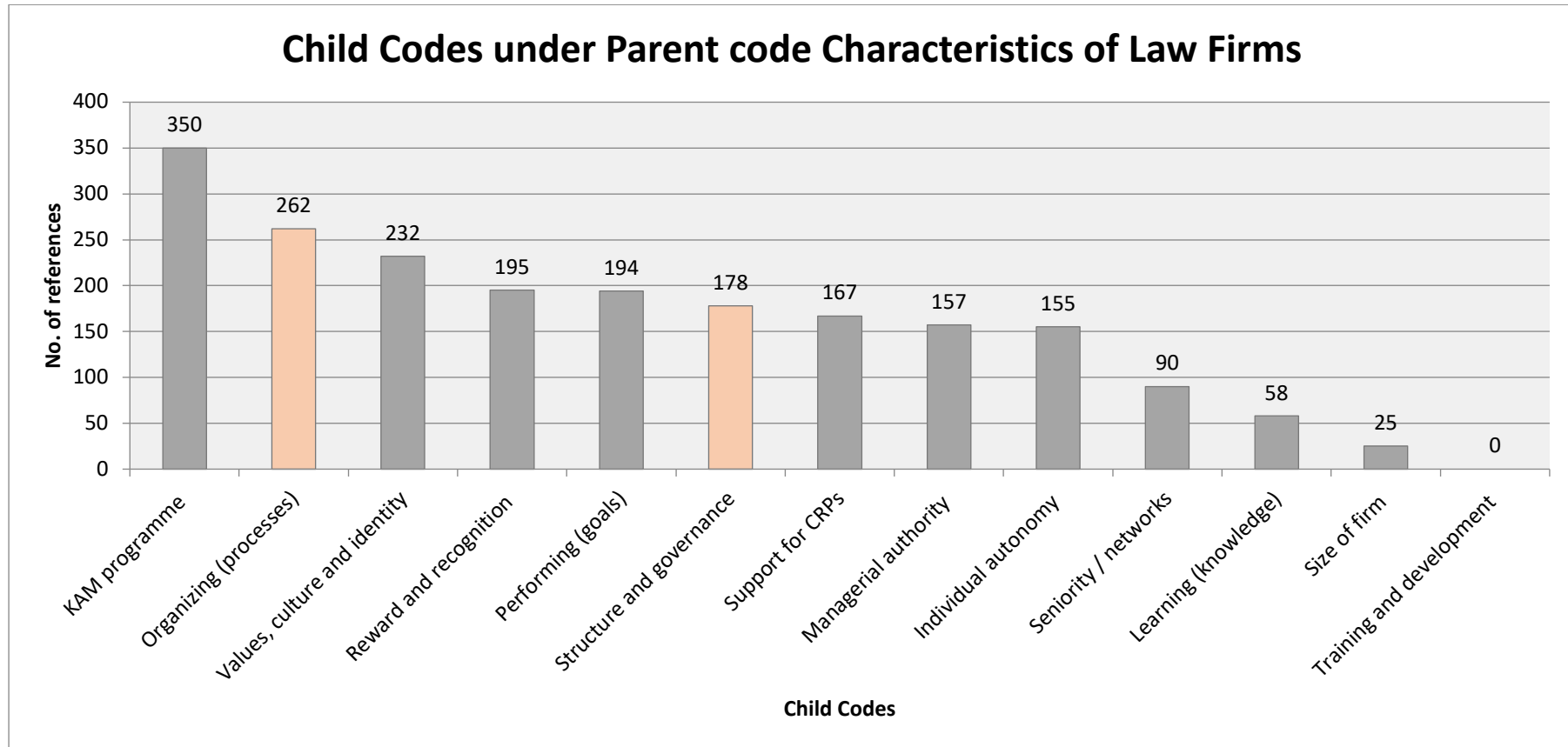


Figure 4.8: Child codes under Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms

To provide CRPs with more leverage, some firms do involve the CRPs in the objective setting and feedback review process for those partners who work on their account. However, the author of this study queries how much significance is attributed to those CRP influenced objectives where those objectives are not directly aligned to the objectives of a line partners immediate team or department. In short, the objectives of a key account may be considered a priority only when they are the priority of a partner's immediate team or department; which brings us back to issues of identity, hierarchy of objective setting and short versus long term orientation.

The way in which law firms choose to structure themselves therefore appears to contribute directly to one of the key tensions highlighted by this study; namely how CRPs effectively lead peers in the absence of positional authority. Relatedly, this study finds that structural barriers inhibit CRPs being actively involved in the setting of objectives for those partners on whose performance they rely for the overall success of the key client relationship. Where the CRP is actively involved in the process, those objectives may carry less 'weight' in comparison to those recommended by a head of department or sector for a line partner. A further finding is the significant time and resources required (and therefore the high opportunity cost to firms) by CRPs having to navigate the structures of their firm to influence the activities of peers.

Despite the impact on CRPs of law firm structure and the absence of positional authority, surprisingly there was little demand among respondents for more formal levers of power. Evan surmised the views of a number of CRPs when commenting:

"Personally, I don't really want to be giving anything else, I don't want sticks to beat people with, I mean I'll feedback on people's year end stuff and say they didn't do any of the things they'd say they would do or they did an amazing job. For me, it's about creating a shared sense of excitement around the client, around the sector, which people really enjoy but they can see its tangibly changing and building something and they get a sense of personal benefit, because it's an area of where, if they don't win work with this client, they'll win it with the next one, because it's all the right space for that type of activity"

Evan

One interpretation of this response is further support for the finding, first identified in relation to Research Question Two (Section 4.3.2), that CRPs favour acting *primus inter pares* and eschew what may be perceived by peers as 'directive' leadership.

2. Finding Two: Reward, remuneration and recognition affect CRP behaviour

Closely related to the short-term orientation in law firms are systemic issues relating to reward and remuneration structures. Indeed many respondents highlighted reward and remuneration as the biggest single factor in directing partner behaviour. As demonstrated in Figure 4.8, 195 references were recorded against the Reward and Remuneration Child code. As part of the data analysis process, the Query function in Nvivo was used to develop Word Trees to help generate additional insights and connections between the thoughts expressed by CRPs in relation to reward and remuneration. This helped to identify that firms involved in this study appear to be largely representative of law firms more generally in that they operate a range of approaches to reward and remuneration. There is a very strong clustering (in both the sample and population) around what is known among UK firms as a 'modified lockstep' system. The main approaches to profit sharing in UK firms that were evident through the interviews can be categorised as:

- Lockstep system: profits are distributed based on seniority. Lockstep works by providing a path of progression for incoming partners from a low starting allocation of a profit share (often known as points) until, over time, he or she reaches parity with the other more senior partners. This parity is often known as the plateau
- Modified lockstep: seniority is just one criterion alongside other performance related metrics
- Eat what you kill: operates on the principle that every partner's profit share or compensation is directly linked with the revenue introduced to the firm by him or her

Where a firm sits on the spectrum between the two extremes of pure lockstep and pure eat-what-you-kill exerts a strong influence over how partners perform their role and the tools that are likely to make them more or less effective.

Pure lockstep firms have historically scored high on enabling collaboration across partner groups as they emphasise a culture in which clients are viewed as firm clients and in which efficient teamwork is encouraged. Conversely, 'eat what you kill' approaches reward strong individual performance, recognise young partner talent and can attract strong lateral hires (new talent) by offering a remuneration packages that would be challenging for traditional lockstep firms to match. By reference to the lockstep model, 'eat what you kill' systems are also seen to offer additional ways to address issues around partner underperformance. However, Isaac gave an impassioned case for a lockstep approach when he commented:

"I don't think eat what you kill is conducive to effectively serving large clients right across the firm... it is no coincidence that most of the firms who have eat what you kill are the

firms where lawyers when they leave take their clients with them and you can either institutionalise clients or you can personalise them and eat what you kill tends to create personal relationships with clients, which has its merits. Lock-step institutionalises clients and helps to service them across the board and makes them sticky so that it's difficult for them to disengage from you. It's like dealing with an octopus and the way in which I prefer to contribute value is by an intense personal relationship with the client but which allows all the tentacles to wrap around the client so that he thinks actually do you know what it's jolly difficult to get away from these guys even if I wanted to".

Isaac

Explaining her firm's relatively recent move from a traditional lockstep to a modified lockstep, Tina commented "...there are good elements in a lockstep in terms of collegiality but it can also breed laziness and lack of entrepreneurial spirit...".

What is measured and as a consequence what firms value in a modified lockstep was, however, considered by a number CRPs to be opaque and uncertain. This is a surprising finding given the seniority within their firm of the individuals interviewed for the study. Under a modified lockstep system partners will typically agree a 'scorecard' for each year that contains various elements by which their performance will be assessed and their remuneration set. The elements will include income metrics along with a number of other metrics considered to be important to each firm. These non-financial metrics may include, for example: the extent to which a partner mentors associates; their involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility activity on behalf of the firm; or their involvement with an overseas jurisdiction or office. Theoretically a modified lockstep should provide the flexibility for a firm to incentivise and reward partners across the broad range of duties and responsibilities they can be expected to perform.

Paradoxically (to claims of opaqueness and uncertainty), the view expressed by a number of respondents is that the financial metric on partner scorecards counts for a disproportionate amount of reward a partner can expect to receive.

"...there is still a perception in our business that the only thing that matters is supervised billings, so if you can control a large client relationship and therefore the matters that come in, you have a big number and, therefore, that's all that people will look at and so you can do a lot of other stuff and you'll still be fine and we have not got beyond that yet".

Adam

A view that is well supported by one respondent who chaired his firm's Remuneration Committee that would meet on an annual basis to review partner performance for the preceding year (and determine remuneration accordingly):

“I led the remuneration committee and we had, you know, eight metrics and we did a really good job of giving each of these metrics equal weighting, equal consideration until the time when we got... you know, you're talking about individuals [partner performance] and, you know, conversation after conversation, when you're in those final knockings, the metric that people always pointed to, where people would go to is 'yeah but look at his or her matter partner billings', so we always kept coming back to it, as a business we couldn't get away from it...”

Stanley

Emphasising the strength of feeling expressed by respondents on this topic, a further respondent recounted his experience of holding a senior management role within his firm while also acting as a CRP:

“...you get people paying lip service to “we've got a balanced score card”, what they mean is ten years ago Deloitte came in and told us we needed a balanced score card, so we produced one but every meeting we have and performance review and Remcom only looks at the numbers then it's a waste of time.”

Bernard

What emerges then is a picture in which CRPs consider the income assigned to each individual partner to be the only true measure of success. A measure described by Bernard as “a spurious science”. On this basis, it would appear the modified lockstep has failed to ameliorate the individualistic, winner takes all mentality that can be found in 'eat what you kill' systems. The focus on income may be having a deleterious affect on collaboration between peers as each partner attempts to first secure work that propels him or her toward their year-end income target, irrespective of what is in the best interests of the broader firm. Once again this is a particular concern for CRPs as they look to nurture and develop a key client relationship over a number of years:

“I guess the first thing is that there was a really blunt instrument being used [the review and reward process] to manage actually the whole firm but also in particular the key client programme which was incongruent and there was no recognition that if you're going to manage a relationship in a strategic way that it will take time to bear fruit and time wasn't allowed.”

Ewan

Another respondent reflected on how the situation may be representative of the sophistication and maturity of City law firms when it comes to aligning reward with individual performance:

“I’m not sure the business of law is sufficiently sophisticated to be able to really recognise those strengths, different strengths in individuals and then have the confidence to reward those strengths”.

Stanley

Each of the main approaches to profit sharing has its comparative strengths and weaknesses in helping or hindering CRPs in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account. This study has identified that a modified lockstep appears *de rigueur* in City law firms, but that at least one of the following two conditions must be present for it to be effective:

- the metrics used to evaluate partners are clear to all, well understood and are genuinely balanced; and / or
- partners have confidence and faith in those appointed to the Remuneration Committee to make fair and equitable decisions that align with the espoused metrics and strategy of the firm.

3. Finding Three: Poor quality data and management information restricts evidence-based decision-making

The Child code ‘KAM Programme’ captured the comments of respondents regarding issues with the quality of management information and the availability and transparency of data to enable evidence-based decisions. Respondents were of the view that law firm leaders have a limited understanding of the activities of CRPs, with one commenting: “I genuinely don’t think people really know what I do and, therefore, they don’t fully understand my merits and demerits” (James). In turn, some CRPs appear to have only a limited understanding of the activities of important line partners working on their account: “...I don’t have access to the hours of the partners for example, I don’t know what their hours are, I don’t know that they do or don’t have the time to do. I don’t know [whether or not] they are telling me fibs. Again it’s all very theoretical” (Flo).

A surprising finding of this study is the extent to which CRPs appear not to record the non-chargeable time they spend working on their key account(s). As discussed in relation to Research Question Three, there is wide variance (from 200 hours to over 1000 hours per year) in the amount of non-chargeable time CRPs estimate they are committing. This and issues around management oversight raise a number of important points and extend Finding Three by asking the following additional questions:

- How can firms determine whether a CRP is over or under investing in an account i.e. spending too much or too little non-chargeable time?

- How can law firms determine whether success or failure on an account is due to a CRP (which may necessitate a need for a change of CRP) or other factors beyond the control of the CRP?
 - How can firms determine which CRPs and accounts are most deserving of finite investment e.g. in the form of a secondment from the firm to a client?
 - How can meaningful objectives, aligned with the overall objectives for the account, be set for line partners across multiple practice areas?
4. Finding Four: Strong, visible alignment of a firm's senior leadership behind a key account programme is considered critical to its success

A significant number of CRPs called for greater clarity of message and strong, visible leadership from management (positional leaders) in relation to their firm's key account programme. This study has identified that elements of the boundary-spanning role currently performed by CRPs are undeniably of significant value to law firms, but many respondents felt the role was given insufficient weighting or status alongside other priorities and initiatives in their firm.

Respondents were broadly of the view that there was too much inconsistency from senior management around what is valued from CRPs in their role. They also called for more transparency and greater clarification around which clients a firm should pursue, in which order and with what level of investment. This lack of direction (or leadership) was reflected in the views of one CRP when he commented:

“So I think they [the firm's leadership] do value it [the CRP role], but it's quite opaque and uncertain, so from one year to the next, I don't know whether management, as it might change, will continue to take the view that it's important, but I encounter no resistance to operating the way I operate... and when I asked them the question, am I doing what you want me to do, the answer is yes, yes, just carry on.”

Paul

The above quote by Paul was coded to the Parent code: Characteristics of Law Firms and, within this, to the Child codes: Support Provided to CRPs; KAM Programme; and Performing (goals). The quote was also coded to the Parent code: CRP Characteristics, Child code: Cognition – thoughts and sense making. The parallel coding of this quote to multiple codes helps to demonstrate the interplay between the loose formal structures around KAM programmes and the need for CRPs to interpret these as best they can to understand whether their activities are aligned with those of other CRPs and the direction of the wider firm.

It was considered by CRPs that the strong, visible alignment of a firm's senior leadership behind a key account programme is critical to their success and the programme overall. As one respondent commented "even being neutral in a key leadership role is being an anti-sponsor and over time if you allow the people who don't want to do it to criticise and that to continue unchecked, it becomes quite a powerful anti-sponsor" (Bernard).

One respondent provided additional insight on how difficult it can be to achieve this alignment given the structure of law firms and the multiplicity of initiatives and objectives:

"I know for a fact that whilst the managing partner was saying this is really important and this is going to carry equal weight with remuneration and promotion the message because he and the finance director were then beating the divisional management partners with a stick to say 'I need your numbers and I need them now'. The message that was going from the divisional managing partners, probably most divisional managing partners to the client relationship partners and others was effectively undermining what we were trying to achieve".

Ewan

A firm's leadership that is aligned behind the efforts of a key account programme, that is consistent in what is valued in the CRP role and which provides the necessary weighting and status to those activities were therefore considered critical success factors by respondents.

5. Finding Five: The culture and values of a firm produce tensions that influence the behaviours of CRPs and partners

The Child code Values, Culture and Identity under the Parent code Characteristics of Law Firms helped provide considerable insights in relation to Finding Five. The results suggest cultural factors heavily influence attitudes and behaviours at a variety of levels in City law firms and which can become manifest through a number of tensions:

- i. Tension One: Partner autonomy was once again at the fore as Kevin spoke about "one of the big hindrances" to effective key account management is "that you need people to buy-in voluntarily almost to these things, you have to persuade them it's in their interest to do it and maybe that's a symptom of the partnership structure... that's our culture because you know we are all big boys and we've been around a long time and you have to trusted to do the right thing". Flo expanded on this cultural component when she spoke about how it is "not in the culture of the firm" for CRPs to "be poking their nose in; you trust your partners". Garry provided a perspective on how the culture in his firm encourages CRPs to pause and give thought to their interactions with peers: "The type is a sort of uniform resistance to any sort of homogenisation in this place and that culture requires you to navigate and be more socially aware I think.

As referenced in the following quote by Rachel, there are serious potential downsides to blindly accepting partner autonomy as an unquestionable truth. Issues around transparency, due process and good business management can become muddled concepts in City law firms:

“That people just weren’t held to account around their objectives... for three of the last four years I was on the firm’s remuneration committee and I would see as part of that process all the objectives of all the partners and what people were meant to do... some people had very precise objectives measureable and all that, some of them had terrible ones, would say something like contribute in a positive fashion to the litigation team. What does that mean? How can you possibly measure that? And then at the remuneration committee the differing ‘oh well X didn’t meet that objective but it doesn’t matter because, you know, basically they’re a nice person or what have you’... so I thought the whole process was just fundamentally flawed”.

Rachel

- ii. Tension Two: Tensions between City law firms and the rapidly changing culture and attitudes in the wider legal sector were also present. The greater frequency (compared to historical levels) of partner movement between firms (known as lateral hires) was referenced as being a symbol of shifting cultural mores. One respondent referenced how greater movement of partners and teams between firms can have a direct impact on the culture of a firm insofar as there being reluctance on the part of some CRPs to involve in their account team new joiners who “did not grow up within the firm” (Adam). This directly relates to issues of trust first discussed in Section 4.3.4 but also merits inclusion here due to the significant impact that assimilating a large numbers of hires (and / or exits) can have on a firm’s culture and the preparedness of CRPs to involve others, as demonstrated in the further quote by Adam:

“I think there’s obviously been a very significant change in the way in which law firms operate over the last 20 years or so. When I first qualified... it was very much your career was in one firm, people tended to start at a firm, were trained there, built up client relationships, their internal networks, were introduced to clients, help build those clients and brand and keep the brand of the firm that they were employing over the long term. Over the last, I suppose twenty odd years or so, that’s all changed and so increasingly now law firms are structured around individuals, individual practices, as opposed to the overall brand and that’s just, that’s globalisation for you, that’s also the way in which law firms have found... they haven’t driven this, this has been something that I think has been foisted upon them, always trying to chase, improved financial performance, improved metrics, improved workflow and improved quality of work. So, that’s resulted in a much more active recruitment market, which just didn’t exist 20 odd years ago... which is why some partners

are more reluctant to bring other partners in to their relationships, unless they are confident that those partners are here for the long term. So, quite often, I think you will find that a new lateral, you know you sort of try to manage the, you will take a long time to build up that level of trust before you will, I think, trust them with a relationship that is important to you and important to the firm

Adam

- iii. Tension Three: Whether a client relationship is primarily between the client and the CRP or the client and the Firm was a tension also evident and for some CRPs. This often appeared to be closely aligned with their interpretation / understanding of their firm's culture:

"We do have those individuals who are manipulative and who build little empires and then use that to protect themselves and their income... it is counter-cultural and it is not in the firm's interests to see that... but ultimately you say this is not your firm, these are not your clients... if you compromise over that, forget it, because actually you are sending out entirely the wrong message, you know, it's like over rewarding the person who treats his team badly... you undermine your case, so from a leadership perspective that is the wrong thing to do. However, every leadership team is faced with the same issues now and again and in some cases they will compromise for, for purely pragmatic reasons, but you have to recognise that in doing that you undermine your business..."

Adam

This point speaks directly to one of the most perceived significant benefits of an effective key account programme in City law firms; which is to institutionalise client relationships for the good of a firm.

- iv. Tension Four: Tensions between generating income and upholding the values of a partnership. Dominic described how the corrosive, anti-cultural behavioural of one partner was tolerated within his firm because of his large client following and levels of income: "Well I think, I used the word 'bullying', that's probably overstating it, but his conduct was tolerated within the firm because he was a high earner... I think that's a problem with many firms, particularly small firms"

6. Finding Six: Firms and CRPs attempt to shape and direct culture by employing a broad range of tactical initiatives

CRPs highlighted a number of ways (or "workarounds") in which they or their colleagues attempt to shape, shift or otherwise change over time the culture of their firm to ensure a focus on effective key client activities and navigate obstacles and tensions. These

workarounds were a mix of firm wide initiatives and attitudinal / behavioural responses by individual CRPs. This is reflected in the use of both the 'Characteristics of Law Firms' and 'CRP Characteristics' Parent codes (and related Child codes) in the coding structure to generate the following examples:

- i. Example One: Investment pots. Garry described how in his firm a new approach had recently been introduced whereby:

"...a certain percentage of the revenue from our key clients can be used by a CRP to effectively to pay partners to invest in business development (BD) activities; so the key client team controls how their money is spent... So say you collect £100 in income from a client in a year, we have a certain percentage of that hundred that is taken off the top and the key client team can spend that on BD; and that spending is in two parts: on paying for plane flights and just disbursements out the door or things like that; but a percentage of it is to actually pay partners for their time. So say we think x is an important initiative, you spent 50 hours on it, that's billable work you are not doing; we will pay you out of this global revenues".

Garry

- ii. Example Two. Golden tokens. Two participants from the same firm referred to a scheme of Golden Tokens in operation in their partnership. In summary, each partner is given a notional set of tokens on an annual basis that they then award to fellow partners who have been particularly collaborative and / or supportive in client development efforts. The tokens can be awarded all to one partner or distributed across a range of partners. The intention is to recognise, through peer identification, those partners that have been particularly collaborative. Neither respondent mentioned whether the tokens are linked to their firm's reward and remuneration process i.e. if there is monetary value to the tokens.
- iii. Example Three. Robust use of time sheets. Time recording, where lawyers must account in six-minute blocks for how they have spent their time throughout the day, is considered by many to be the bane of being a private practice lawyer. The purpose of time recording is to accurately record time spent on different matters for the purpose of issuing correct invoices to clients. Naturally, some lawyers are more disciplined than others in recording their time. Kevin spoke about a new approach to time recording within his firm in which partners were fined if timesheets were not completed in a timely manner:

"We've actually introduced a new one [approach] of filling out your time sheets daily, which there is absolutely no excuse [not to do]... it doesn't matter how busy you are you should be able to do your time sheets daily. You can either do it yourself, it takes a minute or you can dictate it to your secretary... scribble it on a bit of paper... you know you should be able to do it; it takes two minutes. Amazing how many people are incapable of doing it.

Now we've got a system whereby we actually fine partners a hundred quid or something if they are late with their timesheets... and unbelievably I've had partners saying this is outrageously unfair and I say it's not outrageously unfair, it's perfectly reasonable. So you know, that is a purest form of you hit people in their pockets and I think it's probably been pretty successful".

Kevin

- iv. Example Four. The O and the P. Larry recounted a system in operation in his firm that attempts to identify those partners that Originate work (the 'O') and those that Proliferate / distribute the work (the 'P'). The intention is to incentive partners for sharing client relationships rather than 'sitting on' client relationships to maximise individual reward and recognition. Under this system, the partner who originates the relationship receives recognition (in the form of the O) for the income generated. Then, for every pound subsequently generated by the account, there's recognition for both the originating partner and the partner performing the work:

"say I get a client in and then I get you to do some work for them and then they go back to you, you will start getting the P credit even though it was my client. But when I first start working with this client, I get to hand out the P because it's my client. I decide, so that is an incentivisation I suppose which is different from other firms. So you will hear people say 'I've got the O on this file so you can get the P. I suppose that is an incentivisation".

Larry

When implementing workarounds in response to perceived tensions, a clear theme emerged in which there is an overwhelming preference expressed by CRPs to influence peers through persuasion as opposed to more directive methods. A view encapsulated by Evan when he referenced a recent episode of the television programme *The Apprentice*:

"There was a very funny scene where two of the psychotic idiots that they have as apprentices were having an argument and one of them, who was the, whatever you call it, the team leader for the mission, said to the other I am your boss and the other one said you're nothing to me [laughter]. So that is sort of our place [the firm], that's what goes through a partner's head. Unless you're [name of Managing Partner] or managing a division; everyone else is nothing to a partner. There's no inherent quality of leadership or ability to direct, so you have left tools of persuasion only.

Evan

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Five

The purpose of Research Question Five is to investigate the context in which CRPs operate and how this might hinder or enable CRPs in their efforts to influence the activities of peers

on a key account. In summary, the following insights have emerged in response to Research Question Five:

- I. The short-term orientation of firms may act contrary to the long-term interests of effective KAM and compromise the efforts of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account
- II. The model of reward and remuneration in a firm may be one of the single biggest factors affecting CRP and partner behaviour
- III. Poor quality data and management information restricts evidence-based decision-making
- IV. Strong, visible alignment of a firm's senior leadership behind a key account programme is considered critical to its success
- V. The culture and values of a firm appear to play a significant role in influencing the behaviours of CRPs and partners
- VI. Firms and CRPs attempt to shape and direct culture by employing a broad range of tactical initiatives

4.3.6 Research Question Six: How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities?

Research Question Six sought to uncover how CRPs develop as leaders. The author could find no directly relevant literature on how CRPs develop the skills necessary to influence the activities of peers in relation to key account activities. Consequently, Research Question Six attempts to fill this sizeable gap. Critical Incident Technique was the primary Research Method used to investigate Research Question Six. As discussed in section 3.8.3, template analysis as a subset of thematic analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis to interpret to Critical Incidents.

The findings of this Research Question are brief. The overall picture is of very little proactive activity on the part of CRPs to develop their leadership capability. Given the range of major corporate law firms represented in this study, this is a significant finding.

In relation to self-directed training and development (i.e. initiated by CRPs), only one of the 31 respondents (Bernard) gave a full account of how they actively sought out opportunities to develop as a leader. In relation to firm provisioned training (i.e. so not necessarily proactively

sought out by CRPs), Paul summarised the experiences of many CRPs when he commented:

“I mean they kind of throw you into the job without really explaining what it is, although I think that’s gradually improving. They [the firm] are very patchy in this provision of support, formal support in the form of people, but there’s no toolkit, so I end up, you know, creating my own toolkit”.

Paul

However, a different view was expressed by Harry who commented that his firm takes a more considered and long-term perspective on partner development:

“...we do provide bespoke coaching when needed but for every young partner coming through we have something called a transition to partnership... So for the first five years of a partner’s career we have an annual course where they go away and we help train them in the things that we expect of partners from people management skills to relationship skills and business development is a chunk of that and we teach them about client relationship management, we put them through training on pitching and all that sort of good stuff. So there is a proper development exercise for young partners coming through”.

Harry

Many of the insights in response to Research Question Six were coded to either the ‘Training and Development’ Child Code and related Sub-Child codes (see Figure 4.9) under the Parent code ‘Characteristics of Law Firms’ or to the Child code ‘Develops Self’ under the Parent code ‘CRP Characteristics’. The coding of responses across different Parent codes (one ‘Characteristics of Law Firms’ addressing systemic, structural, processual and cultural factors in firms and the other ‘CRP Characteristics’ addressing affective, cognitive, behavioural and trait factors of CRPs) suggests that the topic of CRP development needs to be addressed in a holistic fashion.

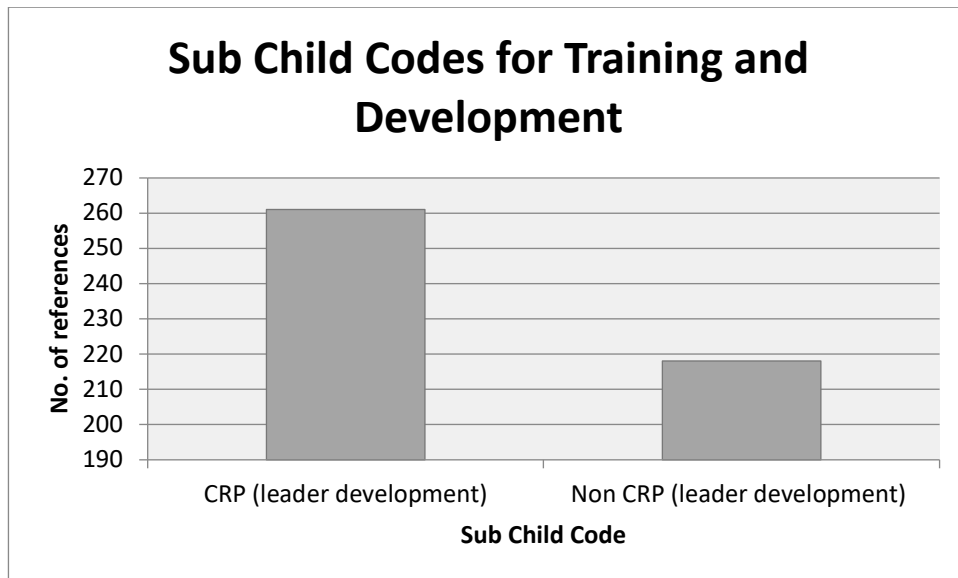


Figure 4.9: Sub-Child codes for Training and Development Child code

One reason why a greater number of firms may not provide comprehensive training and development for CRPs on leadership topics is a prevailing paradigm that there is a lack of interest from partners. However this study provides an alternative perspective, with the following quote from Flo suggesting CRP insecurity may be a significant underlying factor behind this perceived lack of ‘interest’:

“It’s funny isn’t it because at the simplest level if I went and said I need development I might worry, and it’s not that I think asking for coaching is a sign of weakness, it’s not, but I might worry that they might think is she the right person to lead this? And do I want to lead this? So... would I feel that shows a weakness that I shouldn’t be showing”.

Flo

That CRPs may feel insecure about asking for support and development is an important finding. CRPs expressed a view that, throughout their careers, lawyers are trained to ‘be right’ and ‘an expert’ in their field: “When a lawyer is trained there is something that comes with that training that makes them feel as though they should be able to give the answer” (Colin). To admit to or recognise a deficiency or weakness may cause intrapersonal conflict in some partners or simply be a skill of introspection or self-reflection that some have not been encouraged to develop. This finding may help contribute to our understanding as to why, in comparison to senior executives in corporate counterparts, partners in City law firms appear to invest less time and resources developing their leadership skills. Interestingly, the same cannot be said for the on-going development of partners’ technical legal skills (i.e. staying on top of case law or regulatory developments), in which anecdotal evidence suggests significant amounts of development time is invested. However, a number of

respondents to this study did acknowledge the issues caused by a paucity of formal training for the CRP role:

“I think partners should be more directly engaged with... and say this is what a good partner is and does and while there’s lots of scope for different skills and strengths, we expect these things of everyone. Nobody taught me how to be a CRP... no one helped me to understand how you grow a portfolio of clients and how you develop”.

Evan

The question then arises as to how partners are developing the skills necessary to be effective in the CRP role? This study suggests that traditional approaches centred around ‘learning on the job’ still dominate:

“I watch the more senior guys how they do it. Guys do it differently sometimes from women but that’s a good point. So I see how what they do to be effective, I don’t always necessarily follow that because it can be a very individual thing.

Flo

A view supported by Weston:

“I suppose there’s been not that much sort of formal instruction or training, in a sort of typical law firm way a lot is by sort of osmosis. I’ve certainly seen how others have done it over time and when you’re more junior you’re playing that junior role and you’re seeing what others are doing around you and certainly learning like that”.

This finding raises an important question as to whether, in a rapidly changing sector with considerable new external pressures, this ‘master – apprentice’ model is appropriate and sufficient to equip the current and next generation of CRPs with the skills necessary to be effective in the role.

Where examples were given by CRPs of more ‘formal’ approaches to development, they typically referred to coaching. The reasons why some partners engaged with coaching / worked with a coach were varied and ranged from attempting to address a specific and perceived issue around a lack of ‘emotional intelligence’ through to general and proactive development to operate more effectively at a senior level.

One CRP, Colin, spoke of having a personal coach, which he described as “quite helpful” insofar as providing him with the “freedom to think”. The same CRP mentioned that he had to overcome his own self-imposed concern for “presenteeism” and allow himself the time necessary to work with his coach.

Evan also acknowledged the benefits of working with a coach, but also felt it necessary to highlight his concern that talking about himself could become an ‘indulgence’:

“No, I mean I've had coaching in the past, which I found useful up to a point, and I have to acknowledge the benefit, but it becomes like a sort of drug, it's like you could get used to this indulgence, talking about yourself for hours, with actually diminishing returns in terms of self-awareness”.

Bernard discussed how there had previously been a formal programme of coaching available for partners within his firm and opined on why this had promoted resistance from some:

“...but there was a backlash against it from those who thought this was funny mumbo jumbo and some kind of private club... whatever personal projection they placed on it because they didn't want to do it, didn't want to be stretched themselves or didn't feel part of it. So that's why at the moment it [coaching] wouldn't work [in this firm]... It's a classic lawyers defensive analysis of 'this sounds like big brother to me, why do you want to know what kind of person I am, I'm a good lawyer, what's good or bad'. None of this is good or bad, it's about understanding preferences and how you work best together and how you work to each person's strengths and cover for weaknesses”.

The comment by Bernard again reiterates how cognisant one needs to be of the specific context of City law firms when attempting to instigate any training and development, particularly that which is non 'technical legal'.

Mindfulness, meditation and adopting processes for self-reflection were mentioned by a small number of partners as other forms of development with which they had engaged. Only one respondent suggested meditation was a current, regular (daily) practice, but the fact these approaches were largely referenced in positive terms suggests there may be the potential for their adoption and application by a wider group of CRPs:

“I have tried mindfulness but I find it I should spend more time doing it, I don't find it very easy, I'm probably a bit too stressed or anxious or whatever so I don't find it very easy to kind of concentrate on my breathing and all that stuff, but I would like to it's sort of on my list of to do's”.

Larry

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Six

The following insights have emerged in response to Research Question Six, which sought to uncover how CRPs develop as managers and leaders:

- I. The overall picture is a paucity of self-directed or firm provisioned development on the leadership skills required to be an effective CRP
- II. This paucity may be, in part, due to concerns on the part of some partners that by receiving support on how to be a more effective CRP they are visibly and publicly indicating to peers a 'weakness' in their current capacity to perform the role. An

acknowledgement that is counter to a lawyer's training to be seen as 'right' and an 'expert' in their field(s)

- III. The lack of firm provisioned training on how to be an effective CRP has resulted in many partners 'learning while doing' and / or copying those around them. This raises important questions about the efficacy of this approach, particularly when considered in the context of a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive market of City law firms
- IV. The practice most commonly referenced by CRPs to develop their leadership capability was coaching. Some CRPs commented the coaching they received was set against a backdrop of misunderstanding or outright resistance from some of their fellow partners
- V. The overwhelming majority of CRPs expressed frustration and dissatisfaction at the low level of training and development support they had received / were receiving to enable them to be even more effective in their role.

4.3.7 Research Question Seven: What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?

Research Question Seven seeks to identify the issues faced by a City law firm in implementing development programmes for CRPs. Semi Structured Questions was the primary data collection method and template analysis as a subset of thematic analysis was used as the chosen method of data analysis for this research question.

Responses to Research Question Seven suggest that the paucity of self or provisioned training and development on leadership (identified in response to Research Question Six) may be a deep-rooted cultural phenomenon in City law firms. This has implications for CRP development.

1. Finding One: A culture in which partners are expected to make it on their own was felt by some respondents to be a significant issue in City law firms.

The move up or move out arc that most lawyers' careers follow, combined with a variety of other factors already identified in this study (e.g. the primacy of individual autonomy and issues around perceived centrally coordinated, directive leadership) may have inculcated a culture that appears to eschew 'non technical legal' development.

Bernard provided a passionate account of the cultural factors that may inhibit the provision of training and development opportunities for CRPs when he stated:

“Law firms typically are very expressive they are very free market. [There is a view that]... we provide the environment it's up to the talent to get on with it, we shouldn't be a bloody nanny state developing these people. If they're any fucking good they will do it on their own. 'We didn't have that when we were younger', 'I used to walk to school without any shoes and all that...' I think that's utterly misguided... A premiership football club doesn't buy a top player and then not train them. It's madness”.

Bernard

Like many of the insights to Research Question Seven, the above text from Bernard was categorised in the coding framework under the ‘Characteristics of Law Firms’ Parent code (see Figure 4.4). This code and the related sub codes (see Figure 4.8) identify systemic, structural, processual and cultural factors that may affect the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in ‘City’ law firms. Accordingly the preceding quote by Bernard was subsequently coded to the following Child codes: Organizing (processes); KAM programme; CRP – leader development; Support provided to CRPs; Managerial authority; and Partnership structure and governance. Although only a relatively short passage of text, the quote was coded to multiple child codes; which is consistent with the view of King (2011) that parallel coding, whereby the same segment is classified within two (or more) different codes at the same level, is permitted in Template analysis.

Building on the themes identified by Bernard, fellow respondent Evan confirmed the role of cultural norms as a significant factor when commenting: "we generally let partners sink or swim". Respondents also conveyed an inimical view towards formal leadership development that is often on display among their colleagues and which may exist due to perceived opportunity costs. Performing ‘fee earning work’ is elevated above all other activities by a number of partners. Fee earning, still largely based on billable hours, is seen as a clear measure of one's value and can easily be measured in terms of time spent. Conversely, each hour spent in training, development or any other none fee-earning capacity is considered by some to be ‘an hour lost’.

2. Finding Two: More client focused training with development opportunities that can be immediately put into practice would be welcomed by respondents

CRPs were of the view that development opportunities should be focused on specific client activities so that those receiving the training could see a direct relationship between what they were learning and how this would improve client relationships. Respondents also acknowledged the tendency of some lawyers to address issues in what one CRP described as an “overly binary approach” (Bernard) and that for some partners any training and development in the ‘soft skills’ space would be outside of their “comfort zone”:

“You are driven to be an expert, you are driven to avoid risks for clients and new things and therefore increasingly I think people are almost shrunken down and encouraged to focus and focus more about that delivery and that approach which is exactly the opposite of the opening up the possibility of understanding different personalities and what you can achieve together”.

Bernard

3. Finding Three: Several respondents identified the benefits of drawing on the experiences of more experienced CRPs to enable the development of others

Insights coded to the ‘KAM Programme’ and ‘Seniority and Networks’ Child codes demonstrated that a structured, centrally coordinated approach in which experienced CRPs are encouraged to share their experiences with less experienced partners was considered by several participants to be an obvious but missing pathway for development in their firm.

“...again it comes back to where this whole partnership model can work very well when you are able to draw on the experience of others and as a sort of equal as it were to say ‘look what did you find worked well here, what would you do in this kind of situation, can I come and just bounce this off of you?’ I mean that is invaluable and I think if you can somehow embed that within what you are doing here would be very positive”.

Weston

However, one respondent implied that the reason for the absence of such an approach in her firm was once again because of a primacy on “billable hours” and a lack of flexibility in her firm’s remuneration process to recognise time spend ‘mentoring’ others:

“Certainly at [name of CRP’s firm] there was no kind of people like me sharing their experiences with the younger partners, there was no way that you could kind of mentor or try to bring somebody on and for that to be seen as something that was a good use of your time. Yet it must have been; I can’t help but think it would be”.

Rachel

In addition, respondents identified an opportunity for greater agility and movement of some CRPs between client accounts (either in a mentoring capacity or on a full-time basis) to help transfer good practice:

“...you need to move away from the identikit partner approach, not everybody can be good at everything... we actually need to start by identifying people who are really good, client relationship partners... as an example, in other businesses, client relationship partners who are really good are moved around relationships, so when they've succeeded in one particular relationship or they've achieved a lot there, they bring somebody else on and I think a lot of it should be training by, for example, an exposure, so rather than putting in formal training, formal training is good in raising awareness, but I don't think it hones skills

and I think where I would start is by taking a proper look at who has been our absolute very best client relationship partners, whose skills are transferable to different sectors and different clients and then for them to be brought into [help other partners] up skill”.

Adam

Certainly rotating experienced CRPs through accounts may help to address the issue of isolation experienced by a number of CRPs and summarised by Stanley: “I think I've always felt that it's a relatively solitary pursuit, being a partner”

4. Finding Four: Personality and behavioural profiling of CRPs to help identify developmental / training needs received a mixed response

Personality / behavioural profiling of CRPs to identify potential developmental areas and / or to assign CRPs to key accounts was raised by three of the 31 interviewees. One interviewee, Harry, described how the psychometric testing of partners was undertaken within his firm with the intention of helping partners to understand a little bit more about who they are and how to work better in teams. He added that it had not been repeated as “it just wasn't adding an awful lot to what we really knew”.

In addition, one other respondent relayed a recent meeting with Deloitte UK, the audit, consulting, financial advisory and tax services behemoth, in which they discussed the use of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator within Deloitte to help partners understand their psychological preferences and how they experience the world around them. The respondent was of the view that Myers Briggs and tools like it could be very helpful in aligning CRPs with the needs of clients within his firm, but suggested cultural resistance by the partners to such profiling tools mean their use and application was unlikely:

“...it was really interesting to meet Deloitte and the head of their client programme a few years ago and they had... I fervently believe this is a good thing but it wouldn't be accepted here... a personality profile of all the partners using Myers Briggs... but I think Myers Briggs is a great starting point and very insightful if people put the time into understand what it means and not just label people”.

Bernard

Summary of findings in relation to Research Question Seven

The purpose of Research Question Seven was to identify the issues faced by a City law firm in implementing development programmes for CRPs. In summary, the following insights were identified:

- I. A culture in which partners are expected to make it on their own was felt by some respondents to be a significant issue in City law firms

- II. More client focused training with development opportunities that can be immediately put into practice would be welcomed by respondents
- III. Respondents identified the benefits of drawing on the experiences of more experienced CRPs to enable the development of others
- IV. Personality and behavioural profiling of CRPs to help identify developmental / training needs received a mixed response

4.4 Summary: SIRCLp - the integrative framework

This study sought to investigate the cognitive, affective and behavioral perspectives of how CRPs perceive their role and the affect that the characteristics of a City law firm have on the ability of CRPs to influence peers when leading key client relationships in City law firms. These Individual and Structural Areas for Research (see Theoretical Framework Figure 1.2 and Conceptual Framework Table 2.7) were developed in response to identified shortcomings in the literature. Seven Research Questions were then developed to further frame the Areas for Research and as a framework for inquiry.

A combination of data collection methods (Critical Incident Technique; Repertory Grid; Semi Structured Questions) and data analysis methods (Thematic Template Analysis and Repertory Grid Analysis) were used to examine participants' thought processes, frames of reference and feelings in relation to the Research Questions (see Conceptual Framework Table 2.7). This multi-method, multi-analysis approach was adopted in order to maximize the opportunity for confirmatory evidence, an additional perspective, or a divergent point of view to emerge from the findings; which is consistent with the inductive design of this study.

Based on the results presented in this chapter, the key findings of this study include:

1. Validation of the role and importance of both the **Structural** and **Individual** Areas for Research (contained in the Conceptual Framework, Table 2.7) on the ability of CRPs to influence peers
2. New insights over the extant literature on how each of the Individual and Structural Areas for Research affect the ability of CRPs to influence peers
3. The identification, for the first time, of tensions around how CRPs perceive their role and the plurality of ways in which the role is being performed. For the purpose of this study, these are characterized as issues relating to CRP **Role & Identity**

4. Concerns around the paucity of self directed and provisioned CRP and positional leader development. For the purpose of this study, this is characterized as issues relating to **Development**
5. The interplay of the Structural, Individual, Role & Identity and Development areas (outlined in points 1 to 4) and how they combine to enable or hinder CRPs in their efforts to influence peers.
6. A central role for Paradox Theory in helping to identify and attend to the multitude of tensions identified in this study

These key findings then provide the opportunity for a further level of abstraction with a focus on four main Focal Areas of **Structural; Individual; Role & Identity; and Development** that the findings show have a significant affect on the ability of CRPs to influence peers. This further level of abstraction, considered in detail in Chapter Five, is in direct response to the results and is consistent with the approach advocated by Bloomberg and Volpe in which they identify guidelines for providing deeper interpretative insights based on findings. This step “involves identifying and abstracting important understandings from the detail and complexity of the findings...moving the whole analytic process to a higher level” (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012)

The four Focal Areas include both the Structural and Individual elements identified as Areas for Research in the Conceptual Framework. However, based on the results of this study, Structural will now be expanded to also include Systemic factors that emerged from the data (such as how reward and remuneration affects CRP behaviour). While also validating Individual as a Focal Area of interest (in helping to address the Research Aim), results make the case for its sub-division into two distinct areas. Individual is therefore bifurcated into ‘Role & Identity’ and ‘Competencies’ to allow for a more granular consideration of the findings in Chapter Five. As discussed above, due to the paucity of self directed and provisioned leadership development for CRPs and positional leaders, the results also make the case for Development as a fourth Focal Area of this study going forward.

The coding structure (see Appendix C) also supports a focus on the four key Focal Areas due to synergies in how the Parent and Child codes applied across the Research Questions. By way of example, responses to Research Question One and Research Question Five were coded predominately to Parent and Child codes that relate largely to Systemic and Structural Areas. Research Questions Two and Three were coded largely to Parent and Child codes that relate to Individual factors. The coding structure therefore corroborates the view that additional insights can be arrived at by considering further themes of meaning (i.e. the four Focal Areas) via an aggregation of the Research Questions (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). What therefore emerges is an opportunity to consider, at a higher level of abstraction, how

the four Focal Areas act independently and interpedently to enable or hinder the efforts of CRPs in their attempt to influence peers.

In response to this opportunity, this study proposes SIRCLp as a CRP centred framework (see Figure 4.2) to provide a comprehensive assessment of the four Focal Areas and deliver a deeper level of insight not immediately obvious or apparent in the initial analysis. SIRCLp is an acronym of each of the four focal areas described above (**S**ystemic and Structural; **I**ntity and **R**ole; **C**ompetencies; and **L**eadership Development), plus a role for **P**aradox Theory. The development of SIRCLp is the focus of Chapter Five. However, in summary, SIRCLp includes:

1. Focal Area One: Systemic and Structural considerations. Focal Area One of the SIRCLp framework aggregates Research Questions One (RQ1) and Five (RQ5). The focus in Focal Area One is on how the systemic and structural factors identified in this study enable or impede CRPs in their efforts to secure the involvement of peers
2. Focal Area Two: Identity and Role. This Area identifies themes in relation to Research Questions Two (RQ2) and Three (RQ3), focusing on how CRPs make sense of their role and the overall importance of the CRP role in coordinating and leading peers around key account activity
3. Focal Area Three: Competencies. Focal Area Three of the SIRCLp framework considers Research Question Four (RQ4) and the behaviours on the part of a CRPs that are perceived as essential for securing the involvement of peers
4. Focal Area Four: Leader Development. The final area of focus aggregates results from Research Questions Six (RQ6) and Seven (RQ7) and provides deeper insights into the actions that CRPs and City law firms can take to develop the capabilities of CRPs and positional leaders in the context of KAM

Paradox Theory occupies a critical role in the SIRCLp framework and as such is represented as being the 'power ' or 'multiplier' of SIRCLp. Put another way, Paradox Theory serves as a lens through which tensions can be identified and solutions developed at each of, and between, the four areas of focus in the framework. Chapter 5 provides a full description of the central, integrative role of Paradox Theory in providing multidimensional interpretations of the findings as they relate to the Research Questions.

The development of the SIRCLp framework is consistent with the phenomenological approach taken in this study in which "the researcher analyzes data for significant statements grouped into 'meaning units', with the goal of producing an exhaustive description of the phenomenon by developing themes of meanings" (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). This higher

level of abstraction therefore fills a significant gap in helping City law firms address the Research Aim while also providing consilience between different academic disciplines. Findings suggest that, to date, the response by City law firms to the Research Aim has been piecemeal at best i.e. by focusing on each of the focal areas in isolation. While the CRP is the unit of analysis for this study, the results clearly demonstrate that their activities do not occur in a vacuum. Consequently SIRCLp considers not only at the competencies of effective CRPs but also how the systemic and structural issues of the environment in which they work enable and / or hinder them in their attempts to influence the activities of their peers.

SIRCLp provides then, for the first time, an integrative framework for how CRPs and positional leaders can now surface and navigate tensions at the four Focal Areas and, in so doing, address both the Research Aim and Research Problem that frame this study. In effect, SIRCLp provides a blueprint for how CRPs can secure the involvement of peers when developing key client relationships and, in turn, City law firms can establish a competitive advantage through the effective management of their relationships with key clients.

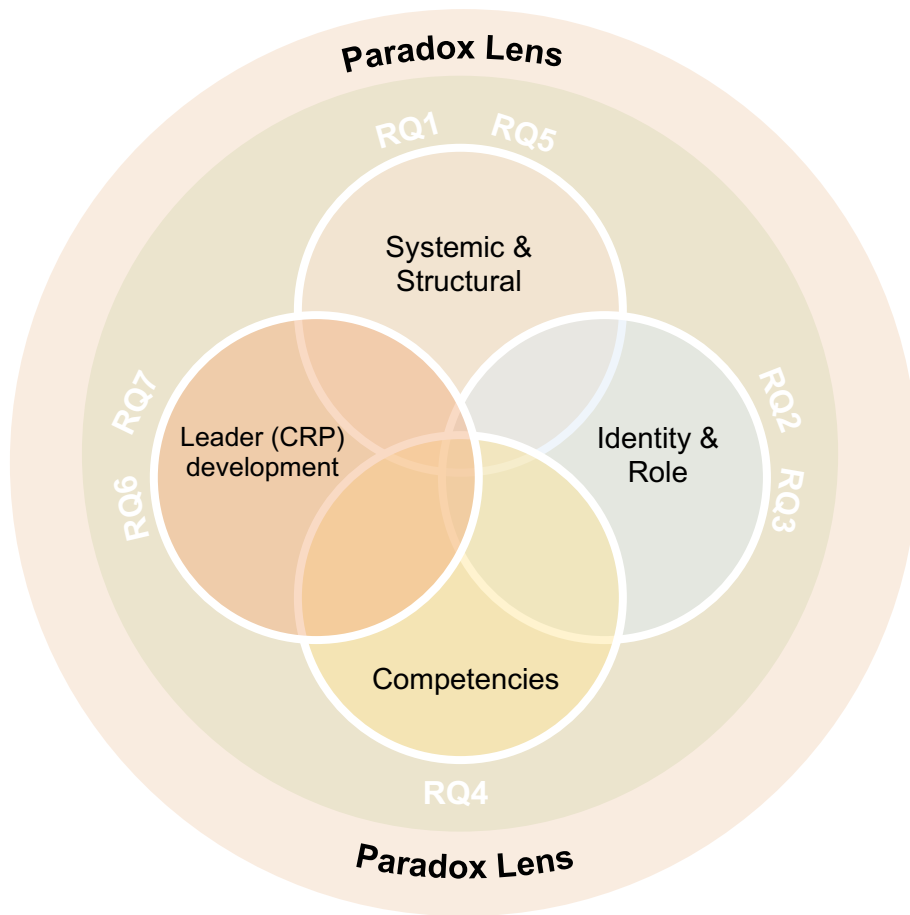


Figure 4.10: SIRCLp: the four focal areas

The following chapter shows how SIRCLp addresses the Research Aim and seven Research Questions developed for this study in the context of the extant literature.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The **Research Problem** that frames this study is:

How City law firms can respond to commercial pressures by establishing a competitive advantage through the effective management of their relationships with key clients?

The context for the research problem was discussed in Chapter One with particular reference to the profound change effecting the legal profession; due in part to a challenging global economic environment, a changing regulatory landscape and continued consolidation within the sector.

Chapter Two then highlighted how the development of key client relationships in City law firms places a great emphasis on the leadership role and activities performed by the Client Relationship Partners who lead the complex, boundary spanning relationships with key clients. As a consequence, the primary **Research Aim** this study was therefore designed to address is:

To investigate which factors affect the ability of Client Relationship Partners to secure the involvement of peers when leading key client relationships in City law firms?

The literature on the characteristics of City law firms, key account management (KAM); leadership; and paradox theory was reviewed to find answers both to the Research Problem and Research Aim. Gaps in the literature were identified and, consistent with the advice of Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), seven **Research Questions** were developed to further frame and find solutions to the phenomenon under study (see Table 3.6).

Addressing these gaps in the literature in the unique context of City law firms therefore provides strong theoretical justification for the research; while there is clear justification on practical grounds given the need for City law firms to urgently respond to the range of commercial pressures they face.

The primary purpose of this study is therefore to address the Research Problem and Research Aim through greater conceptual clarity and in so doing to contribute to knowledge in and across the following four key areas of literature:

1. KAM;
2. Leadership;

3. Characteristics of City law firms; and
4. Paradox theory

In the remainder of this chapter the author shows how the development of the SIRCLp framework brings together the four key areas of literature, the Research Problem, Research Aim, Areas for Research, Research Issues and Research Questions to bring a fresh perspective to the phenomenon under study. In so doing, SIRCLp serves as a purposeful way of presenting a dialogue between the myriad of findings in this study and the current literature.

This chapter does not discuss each of the seven Research Questions in a linear fashion. Rather, each Research Question is directly, comprehensively and systematically discussed in the context of the SIRCLp framework. The Conceptual Framework in Table 2.7 shows how the four focal areas of SIRCLp relate to the seven Research Questions.

In the sections that follow, the author first discusses the central role of Paradox Theory in relation to SIRCLp. Each of each of the four Focal Areas of the framework are then developed. The insights that emerge through this higher level of abstraction are then compared with extant theory and evaluated as to whether they make a theoretical contribution by supporting, questioning or extending the literature in and across the different fields of literature that inform this study.

While the author believes he has carried out a robust interpretation of the data, developed a framework that provides new insights, extended the literature in a number of ways and ensured implications for theory remain at the fore, it is acknowledged that there are other viewpoints that could further elucidate the findings; a point summarized well by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012):

“Data analysis in qualitative research remains somewhat mysterious (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2009). The problem lies in the fact that there are few agreed-on cannons for qualitative analysis in the sense of shared ground rules. There are no formulas for determining the significance of findings or for interpreting them, and there are no ways of perfectly replicating a researcher’s analytical thinking”

Paradox Theory and the Dynamic Equilibrium Model in the context of SIRCLp

Section 2.1 set out how the literature on paradox theory became more prominent as this study evolved. Specifically, a more through examination of paradox theory (and in particular the Dynamic Equilibrium Model (DEM)) took place after the data for this study had been collected in order to help interpret the findings. The data clearly demonstrated a role for

paradox theory in helping to make sense of the myriad tensions that were evident in the findings. The (re)introduction of new literature after data collection is consistent with the direction given by Smith *et al.* (2009) who support its role in helping to uncover and interpret unanticipated territory. As discussed in Chapter Two, the study of paradoxical tensions aims to explore how organizations can attend to competing demands simultaneously. They are seen essentially as dilemmas that cannot be resolved.

According to Smith and Lewis (2011, p.395) “The juxtaposition of coexisting opposites intensifies experiences of tension, challenging actors’ cognitive limits, demanding creative sensemaking, and seeking more fluid, reflexive, and sustainable management strategies.” The literature on paradox theory was therefore revisited in the context of developing the discussion to this study in order to help interpret the myriad tensions evident in the findings. Smith *et al.* (2009) support the introduction of new literature at this stage as it is expected that doing so will uncover unanticipated territory.

Indeed, driven by the findings, revisiting the literature on paradox helped identify a central role for paradox theory and, specifically, the Dynamic Equilibrium Model (DEM) within the context of the SIRCLp framework (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

As discussed in Chapter Two, Smith and Lewis (2011) developed the DEM in an attempt to build a more holistic theoretical model than those that have gone before and in response to identified shortcomings in the paradox literature. Smith and Lewis (2011) propose three primary features of the DEM (see Chapter 2.5.2), the following two of which are particularly relevant to this study:

1. The identification and surfacing of paradoxical tensions that are both latent and salient (see Chapter 2.5); and
2. Management strategies for attending to the identified tensions (see Chapter 2.5).

In the sections that follow, these primary features of Smith and Lewis (2011) DEM are used as a basis to further interrogate the literature on KAM, leadership and the characteristics of City law firms and to assesses their suitability to help interpret the responses to the seven Research Questions and address the Research Aim.

With paradox theory and DEM serving as a critical lens for the SIRCLp framework, the findings in Chapter Four will now be discussed in the context of the four Focal Areas of SIRCLp.

5.2 Focal Area One of SIRCLp: Systems and Structure

Focal Area One synthesises the results to Research Questions One (RQ1) and Five (RQ) with a focus on how the systemic and structural factors identified in this study enable or impede CRPs in their efforts to secure the involvement of peers

Table 5.1 shows the relationship between the following four key areas that, taken together, help build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study through an exploration of Focal Area One. Numbers and letters in red relate to the corresponding sections in Table 5.1.

1. The Research Questions addressed by Focal Area One of the SIRCLp framework
2. A summary of the Results from Chapter Four in relation to the Research Questions that comprise Focal Area One
3. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to surface tensions in relation to Systems and Structure
4. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to identify management strategies for addressing salient tensions for Focal Area One

By applying a DEM filter to help interpret the results at Focal Area One of the SIRCLp framework, a number of tensions emerge that enable an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

1. Latent to salient tensions based on plurality, change and scarcity (3a): environmental factors are calling in to question the suitability of the partnership model

Findings as they relate to Focal Area One of SIRCLp point to a number of key tensions that are becoming more salient based on Plurality, Change and Scarcity in City law firms and which cause CRPs to question the long-term suitability of the partnership model as a form of governance; in which ownership and profits shared among professional peers (Greenwood and Empson, 2003).

This study provides partial support for the archetype view of change in professional service firms that suggests City law firms are undergoing significant configurational change and that new organizational archetypes are emerging based on a questioning of the foundational beliefs on which City law firms were established (Cooper *et al.*, 1996). Evidence for this can be found in the views of respondents to this study which indicate that their firms are operating in a way that is now much more consistent with the literature on the Managed Professional Business (MBP) archetype than the traditional, interpretative P2 archetype;

emphasizing, as it does, more centralized strategic planning processes and directive decision making (Ackroyd and Muzio, 2004; Pinnington and Morris, 2003; Cooper *et al.*, 1996).

Table 5.1: Focal Area One of SIRCLp: Systems and Structure

1	Research Questions: RQ1 How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms? RQ5 How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?		
2	Results (from Chapter 4)	Additional Paradox Lens Enabled Insights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How CRPs conceptualize and define the firm in which they work is inconsistent and open to interpretation • Traditional practices of electing leaders remain prevalent, which raises questions about the quality of decisions and the decision-making process • The size of a firm may affect perceptions of leadership and management • Individual autonomy is highly prized • The short-term orientation of firms may act contrary to the long-term interests of effective KAM and compromise the efforts of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account • The model of reward and remuneration in a firm may be one of the single biggest factors affecting CRP and partner behaviour • Poor quality data and management information restricts evidence based decision-making • Strong, visible alignment of a firm’s senior leadership behind a key account programme is considered critical to its success • The culture and values of a firm appear to play a significant role in influencing the behaviours of CRPs and partners • Firms and CRPs attempt to shape and direct culture by employing a broad range of tactical initiatives 	3	a) Latent to Salient based on plurality, change and scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental factors are calling in to question the suitability of the partnership model
		b) Paradoxical cognition and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appreciation for the role played by positional leaders in creating a competitive advantage but strong cultural norms still dominate
	4	c) Managing tensions: virtuous and vicious cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positional leaders have opportunities to create virtuous cycles by adjusting the systems and processes of their firm
		d) Dynamic capabilities: separating and connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firms can embrace dynamism and change by celebrating the shared culture and values in their partnership
		e) Acceptance and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues relating to metrics and data hinder CRPs
		f) Exploration and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portfolio based approach enables leaders to play a prominent role in marshalling a firm’s resources

Results suggest that a creeping corporatisation of City law firms appears to be a source of tension in some firms; questioning as it does the dominant Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm (Ackroyd and Muzio, 2004; Pinnington and Morris, 2003). Heizmann *et al.* (2020) examine how some professionals employed in professional organizations aim to make sense of these emerging tensions by seeking to undermine the change. They identify three defensive strategies, namely denial, regression, and projection that partners employ and that “result from the inability to resolve conflicts between market-based pressures and their entrenched understandings of professional work” (Heizmann *et al.*, 2020, p.117).

This study therefore suggests a far more complex environment than that portrayed by the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm, with multiple tensions and different interpretations of role and identity at play. As a consequence, findings do provide some support for the view of Mayson (1997) in which he questions the validity of the notion of ownership (among professional peers) in law firms describing it as a mirage and in which he represents it as having an insidious effect; weakening both the firm’s culture and climate and serving to undermine alignment with the firm’s overall purpose, values and strategy (Ackroyd and Muzio, 2004; Pinnington and Morris, 1996; Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Cooper *et al.*, 1996); Lorsch and Mathias (1988); Lorsch and Tierney (2002). His suggestion is that the principal asset of a law firm is its human capital, understood as the collective and firm-specific know-how constituted by individual professionals. This human capital cannot be owned by anyone.

The surfacing of these tensions by contributors to this study has significant implications for how positional leadership is perceived and executed in City law firms (which in turn affect the activities of CRPs). Tensions that, if left unaddressed, are likely to further contribute to the ambiguity surrounding the role of leadership in many City law firms.

This study therefore suggests an urgent and pressing need to identify effective approaches that that will assist City law firms in navigating these unprecedented tensions. Unfortunately, with the exception of only handful of somewhat dated examples, direction from academe on this matter is largely absent. This silence once again points to a worrying lack of research (especially that of a qualitative nature) by academe on City law firms.

2. Paradoxical cognition and identity (3b): an appreciation for the role played by positional leaders in creating a competitive advantage but strong cultural norms still dominate

As discussed below, data generated for this study identifies several key ways in which a greater appreciation of the role of paradoxical cognition could help surface more salient tensions in City law firms.

On balance, respondents' expressed a far more informed view on both the theory and practice of leadership and management than the literature has credited them with to date (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). Concepts such as servant leadership, charismatic leadership, emotional intelligence and the benefits of a compelling vision were used in respondents' narratives as they recounted their personal experiences. There was also wide acceptance on the importance of effective leadership for a City law firm as a critical success factor in a highly competitive market.

These views appear to represent a development in lawyers' attitudes not recorded in the literature; which still suggests a scepticism of lawyers towards professional management and a distinct lack of interest by lawyers in leadership theory (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). Indeed, given the significance of Professional Service Firms (PSFs) to the global economy it is problematic that the PSF literature is largely silent on the topic of leadership (Empson *et al.*, 2015). What literature there is frequently analyses leadership as an archetypal organizational form at the level of structures, systems and interpretive schema (Cooper *et al.*, 1996; Greenwood *et al.*, 1990; Greenwood and Empson, 2003) and is therefore somewhat abstract and impersonal. When PSF scholars do address the topic of leadership from the perspective of positional leaders it is often represented somewhat simplistically, for example by referring to it dismissively as 'cat herding' (Von Nordenflycht, 2010). Findings from this study suggest a diametrically opposed position to that taken by some of the literature on leadership in PSFs. While Lorsch and Tierney (2002) suggest that partners eschew leadership, this study finds that CRPs are open to, supportive of and place a high value in the role performed by positional leaders. Adopting a paradox inspired lens to this study has enabled the identification of this significant shift in CRP cognition towards positional leaders over the position taken by extant literature (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002).

While the attitude of CRPs to the role and contribution of effective leadership appear to have evolved away from the literature, the same process of evolution cannot be said for the process of identifying, electing and assessing positional leaders; a process in which traditional practices appear to remain firmly in place (see Chapter 4.3.1).

This study found support for a view expressed in the extant literature that CRPs are often promoted, by their peers, to formal leadership positions on the basis of their technical capability and / or due to a strong track record as a high fee-earning lawyer (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). A strong technical background, client following or high-income practice area is often seen therefore as a proxy for, or taken as evidence of, a lawyer's ability to manage and lead. This finding therefore supports the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019) on the importance of appearing legitimate. Unfortunately the author of this study could find no hard evidence to substantiate a link between these legitimizing indicators and effective leadership

(e.g. tangible metrics on such things as improving feedback scores from peers or higher billable income figures); which suggests this might be an interesting area for further research. Moreover, the view of a number of CRPs interviewed for this study is that positional leaders are often wholly unprepared for the roles to which they are elected:

“Here, we have this slightly amateurish ideal that you can dip your toe in management for two or three years and then go back running your practice. It’s a billion dollar turnover business right, so the idea of you just have a go at being a CEO for a few years and then go back to fee earning, I mean we’re not running a fucking golf club, you know, this is a big business... So we’re appointing people to managerial positions who are not, in any way, prepared for them, they don’t have the technical skills and they don’t have any experience and then they have a crack and then, you know, as soon as they’ve got their feet under the table and figured out which way up is, well we’re sort of saying ‘so are you going to get back on the tools?’, so it’s a totally dysfunctional way of running a big business.”

Paul

Compounding the issue, findings from this study suggest these ‘unprepared leaders’ are then sometimes faced by a reluctance on the part of partners to be accountable to the people they themselves have just elected to office. In short, these newly crowned positional leaders must quickly get to grips with how to deal with highly intelligent peers who, due to their idealised interpretation of the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm (Maister, 2003), feel entitled to question their every decision.

This study therefore also provides support for the view expressed by Mintzberg (1998) that positional leaders have only contingent authority: in which a senior executive in a Professional Service Firm (PSF) maintains power only as long as the professionals perceive him or her to be serving their interests effectively. Authority is collegial and fragile (Hinings *et al.*, 1991) and deemed to rest with the professional peer group rather than any individual.

This contingent authority raises questions about the independence, risk tolerance and quality of the decision making by those in positional leadership in City law firms who may be unduly preoccupied with how their actions will be interpreted by their fellow partners and will effect their chances of re-election. As a consequence, it is perhaps unsurprising that respondents to this study characterise leadership in City law firms as “conservative and managed by lawyers who lack imagination, lack strategic clarity or differentiation” (Evan). These identified shortcomings are supported in the academic literature by, among others, the work of Lorsch and Tierney (2002, p.202) when they refer to an environment in which: “...most professional service firms are chronically short of the talented leaders required to fill their management positions, from CEO on down, shortages (which) can be both problematic and costly.”

In response to this characterisation by Lorsch and Tierney and the views of respondents to this study, one might conclude that non-lawyers who have demonstrated their leadership and management credentials might be in high demand for positional leadership roles in City law firms. However the findings show this not to be the case. Respondents were consistent in their view that non-lawyers could not successfully lead a City law firm because, in the eyes of the partners, they would lack the necessary credibility. A high amount of value was placed by CRPs in leaders who had seen the world through lawyers' eyes:

“...to have that credibility you have got to have done that [been a lawyer] because people will feel you don't understand the pressures of being a lawyer unless you have been one. Now whether that's entirely fair I don't know but I think for some people there's an element of that”

Steve

The view expressed by Steve once again provides support for the work of (Empson and Alvehus, 2019) on the importance of appearing legitimate in City law firms. A position that is culturally formed based on historic models of leadership in the sector. With the multitude of environmental factors that are making latent tensions salient in City law firms, this cultural norm may come, in time, to be recognised as an indulgent position to have adopted. As such, this provides just one (albeit urgent) example of how CRPs might benefit from paradoxical cognition as a basis for envisaging different scenarios that help overcome entrenched positions of culture and identity.

Having made salient a series of systemic and structural tensions that CRPs believe characterise leadership and management in City law firms, and which affect their ability to influence peers, attention now turns in the following sections to how these tensions can be addressed via a range of management strategies for addressing salient tensions.

3. Managing tensions - virtuous and vicious cycles (4c): positional leaders have opportunities to create virtuous cycles by adjusting the systems and processes of their firm

Results add additional support to the limited number of studies that have called in to question the long-term suitability of the partnership model as a form of governance (Greenwood and Empson, 2003). Once again adopting a paradox theory enabled lens allowed for the identification of what appears to be a significant shift in partner attitude and cognition away from the partnership model as the best form of governance. A paradox lens suggests that a range of environmental factors such as plurality, change and scarcity have had an effect in making salient the previously latent tensions in the partnership structure. As a consequence

there is a more open dialogue between CRPs about the suitability of the partnership model going forward. This study suggests that, in response, positional leaders might want to develop virtuous cycles that respond to the evolving conversation in City law firms around governance and clearly show how KAM and the role of the CRP will continue to play a prominent role going forward. Results suggest positional leaders can create virtuous cycles by:

- Ensuring a clear vision, purpose and strategy for KAM
- Promoting a sense of urgency around KAM while simultaneously emphasizing it as a stable and enduring cornerstone of the firm's strategy
- Creating flexibility and adaptability within a firm's processes to enable CRPs to identify and capitalize on opportunities as they emerge
- Maintaining the motivation of CRPs by, among other methods, recognizing and celebrating successes and good news stories
- Providing much greater clarity on the criteria for being a CRP, including on how CRPs and key accounts are selected, managed and appraised relative to other client accounts
- Role-modeling desired behaviours among senior leaders and CRPs

In some firms, adjusting existing systems, processes and culture to enable the conditions for virtuous cycles to thrive will place great demands on those in positional leadership. This is likely to include a greater need to demonstrate the range of cognitive and behavioural complexity and emotional equanimity advocated by Smith and Lewis (2011). Critical to this will be a need for positional leaders that are able to engage with 'both/and' possibilities in order to attend to competing demands simultaneously and navigate tensions in their firm. Consequently, this study suggests firms would be well advised to give greater consideration to how they identify and develop both positional leaders and CRPs with these qualities. Relatedly, this raises profound questions around broader training and development opportunities provided to lawyers; which are discussed in detail in the discussion of Focal Area Four of SIRCLp (Section 5.5).

Consistent with the view of Smith and Lewis (2011), this study is not claiming it is the responsibility of positional leaders to eradicate or attend to all tensions. By challenging actors' cognitive limits, tensions can stimulate creative sensemaking and demand more fluid, reflexive, and sustainable responses. Rather, leaders can, and should, reduce the starkness of some of the contradictions, minimise the inconsistencies and understand the puzzles in

the paradox; but not make them disappear, solve them completely, or escape from them all together.

4. Dynamic Capabilities - separating and connecting (4d): firms can embrace dynamism and change by celebrating the shared culture and values in their partnership

While cognitive and behavioural complexity and emotional equanimity foster more openness to paradox at the individual level, dynamic capabilities can do so at the organizational level.

An unexpected finding of this study is the previously hidden from view existence of the values in operation in a partnership and how these values may act as a basis for greater dynamic capability. Findings have highlighted a series of deeply held values (e.g. reciprocity) that are contextually specific (to each partnership) and act as social norms, influencing and guiding CRP behaviour.

This study suggests positional leaders may be able to harness these dynamic capabilities to drive cultural change and the adoption by CRPs of behaviours that lead to more effective KAM. In effect, a firm's positional leaders can utilize this new insight as a unifying force or 'glue' that connects partners to what remains consistent while simultaneously transitioning to something new or different. In summary, positional leaders can, paradoxically, lead positive change efforts by connecting partners to the essence of what remains stable within their firm. Change requires stability and so the faster a firm looks to implement change the more necessary it is to simultaneously emphasize what remains stable.

5. Acceptance and Resolution (4e): issues relating to metrics and data hinder CRPs

Findings suggest both CRPs and positional leaders are hampered in their efforts by incomplete, partial or unavailable data and Management Information (MI). As discussed in Section 4.3.5, there are clear tensions caused by this paucity of data in relation to how firms measure performance, promote consistent standards and reward CRPs.

Results suggest an approach that focuses on the Acceptance and Resolution of tensions relating to metrics and data may be helpful. In effect, positional leaders would be advised to give careful consideration to which tensions they can resolve and those that they should accept. Tensions and trade-offs are everywhere, but this study suggests the most effective firms ensure systems and processes are in place to help positional leaders analyse and interpret data, anticipate results, synthesise what is occurring and rationalize resources. Effective firms use data and metrics as a visible beacon in navigating tensions; helping to articulate strategy, drive change, shape behaviour, focus action, and align activities that lead to success.

Based on responses to this study, the following were surfaced as key areas (in relation to data, metrics and MI) that positional leaders should prioritise when it comes to deciding which tensions to accept and which to proactively resolve:

- A need for fewer, more balanced measures. Old measures must be actively dismantled as they often do not just fade away
 - Issues relating to transparency of process, particularly in relation to reward and remuneration decisions
 - A greater recognition for teamwork and strategic, long-term, client-centric activities over partner supervised billings and profit-per-partner metrics in the near term
 - A greater appreciation of both inputs and outputs by assessing the efficacy of processes as well as the results: e.g. through independent client reviews
 - A full appreciation of all CRP and client facing activity to ensure a complete and accurate picture of ROI (not just the selective measurement of some arbitrary metrics)
 - Shaping the culture to position data, metrics and MI as a gift (to enhanced performance), not a threat
6. Exploration and Exploitation (4f): a portfolio-based approach enables leaders to play a prominent role in coordinating a firm's resources

This study also suggests a valuable role for exploration and exploitation as an advocated management strategy to address tensions highlighted at Focal Area One of SIRCLp. Primary among these is an opportunity for positional leaders to take a more active role in determining how a firm's finite resources should be used in the context of KAM; in effect, to assist with the investability metaphor proposed by Henry in Section 4.3.2. Relatedly, in response to the request of respondents, there are also opportunities for positional leaders to provide a greater clarity of messaging and strong, visible leadership in relation to their firm's key account programme. Many CRPs reported feeling that their role was given insufficient weighting or status alongside other priorities and initiatives and were, in effect, calling for more vocal, visible and proximate support from positional leaders.

Findings to this study support the literature that describes KAM as an increasingly important approach to managing customers for companies and organisations operating in a business-to-business marketing environment (Millman and Wilson, 1995; McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Abratt and Kelly, 2002; Homburg *et al.*, 2002; Zupancic, 2008; Davies and Ryals, 2009). There is

also support for the definition put forward by McDonald et al. (2000) that, in its purest form, KAM is an integrated process for managing key accounts profitably.

This study therefore provides partial support for positional leaders that attend to tensions by operating a portfolio-based approach to KAM. By operating a portfolio-based approach, a firm can: efficiently and effectively manage the most important clients for long term, profitable growth; ensure appropriate strategies for individual accounts; and allocate resource to the biggest and best opportunities while at the same time providing a robust case for why the answer must be “no” to others. In effect, a portfolio-based approach can enable both simultaneous exploration and exploitation within a portfolio of key accounts.

However, at this time, this study can provide only partial support for a portfolio based approach as advocated by the KAM literature (see Chapter 2.3) as, once again, examples are largely drawn from ‘corporate’ entities and presuppose a clear role for ‘executives’ based on their positional authority. As discussed extensively elsewhere in this study, this positional authority cannot be simply transferred at face value into the unique context of City law firms. Caution must therefore be exercised in attempting to replicate a portfolio-based approach to KAM as advocated in the literature in City law firms.

Paradoxically, by being more proximate, more interventionist and more directive through the operation of a portfolio based approach, positional leaders may be able to grant even more autonomy to CRPs. Support for a portfolio-based approach can also be found in the literature on paradox theory and in particular the work of Zhang *et al.* (2015) on Paradoxical Leader Behaviour (PLB). Zhang (p.545) refers to the opportunity for PLB to “create conjoined bounded and discretionary work environments” and that these “Bounded environments stress norms and standards whereby followers understand their work roles and responsibilities”. Zhang goes on to posit that these bounded environments can enable followers to “...approach work flexibly and autonomously, believing that they can bend the rules and make mistakes, and thus willingly work proactively to achieve proficiency. Under such environments, followers learn to meet complex and even ambivalent requirements, thus becoming more adaptive (De Jong *et al.*, 2004).”

Summary

Focal Area One of SIRCLp **supports** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Adds additional support to the limited number of studies that have called in to question the long-term suitability of the partnership model as a form of governance (Greenwood and Empson, 2003)

- II. Supports the archetype view of change in professional service firms that suggests City law firms are undergoing significant configurational change (Cooper *et al.*, 1996)
- III. Corroborates a view that City law firms are now operating in a way that is much more consistent with the literature on the Managed Professional Business (MBP) archetype than the traditional, interperative P2 archetype (Ackroyd and Muzio, 2004; Pinnington and Morris, 2003)
- IV. Confirms that the process of identifying, electing and assessing positional leaders remains consistent with the extant literature, therefore supporting the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019) on the importance of appearing 'legitimate'
- V. Verifies that positional leaders have only contingent authority and maintain fragile power only as long as their peers perceive him or her to be serving their interests effectively (Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Mintzberg, 1998)
- VI. Substantiates a view that City law firms are chronically short of the talented leaders required to effectively fill their management positions; particularly in the face of profound change affecting the sector (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002)
- VII. Partially endorses operating a strategic, portfolio-centered approach to managing key accounts in order to ensure that appropriate strategies can be applied to individual customers (McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Woodburn and McDonald, 2011)
- VIII. Supports a focus on Paradoxical Leader Behaviour (PLB) to help create conjoined bounded and discretionary work environments in which followers can work more flexibly, autonomously and with greater achieve proficiency (Zhang *et al.*, 2015).

Focal Area One of SIRCLp **questions** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Questions the veracity of the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm as an ideal to which CRPs and firms aspire (Ackroyd and Muzio, 2004; Pinnington and Morris, 1996; Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Cooper *et al.*, 1996). As a consequence, findings do support the view of Mayson (1997) in which he questions the validity of the notion of ownership (among professional peers) in law firms
- II. Respondents' expressed a far more informed and sophisticated view on both the theory and practice of leadership and management than the literature has credited them with to date (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002).

Focal Area One of SIRCLp **extends** the extant literature in the following ways:

- I. Findings on the ‘creeping corporatisation’ of City law firms suggest a far greater ‘acceptance’ by CRPs of centrally directed control than posited in the literature. Both specific to this point and more generally, the literature appears to be well behind the pace of change in City law firms
- II. Positional leaders appear wholly unprepared for the roles to which they are elected. Firms are advised to give greater consideration to how they identify and / or develop both positional leaders and CRPs with the to ensure they are effective. Relatedly, this raises profound questions around broader training and development opportunities provided to lawyers more generally. These issues are discussed in detail in Focal Area Four of SIRCLp (section 5.5).
- III. The previously latent existence of the values in operation in a partnership may provide a basis for dynamic capabilities that can be molded to positively influence the behaviour of CRPs and to enable firms to implement transformational change while simultaneously emphasizing what remains stable.
- IV. Highlights a worrying lack of research in academe, especially that of a qualitative nature, to help City law firms navigate the unprecedented tensions they face.

5.3 Focal Area Two of SIRCLp: Identity and Role

Focal Area Two synthesises the results to Research Questions Two (RQ2) and Three (RQ3) with a focus on how CRPs make sense of their role and the overall importance of the CRP role in influencing peers in relation to key account activity

Table 5.2 shows the relationship between the following four key areas that, taken together, help build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study through an exploration of Focal Area Two. Numbers and letters in red relate to the corresponding sections in Table 5.2:

- 1.** The Research Questions addressed by Focal Area Two of the SIRCLp framework
- 2.** A summary of the Results from Chapter Four in relation to the Research Questions that comprise Focal Area Two
- 3.** The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to surface tensions in relation to Identity and Role

4. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to identify management strategies for addressing salient tensions for Focal Area Two

Table 5.2: Focal Area Two of SIRCLp: Identity and Role

Research Questions:			
1	RQ2 How do Client Relationship Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account? RQ3 How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?		
2	Results (from Chapter 4)	Additional Paradox Lens Enabled Insights	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of gaining and retaining legitimacy as a CRP • CRPs favour acting primus inter pares and eschew what may be perceived by peers as 'directive' leadership • The centrality and importance of trust in peer relationships • Tensions exist around practising prominent, visible leadership while simultaneously recognising the autonomy of peers • The age of a CRP may affect how they perceive their role • Gender may affect how inclusive a CRP is in involving peers in their account • Whether a CRP inherited or originated their account may affect their attitude to growing the account and involving peers • The CRP role is valuable and important • CRPs act as a 'Master Contractor' aligning organisational resources to serve the best interests of both the client and their firm • CRPs may use the informational and positional advantages associated with the role to serve their own interests • A large variance in non-chargeable hours raises questions around the effectiveness and efficiency of some CRPs 	3	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Latent to Salient based on plurality, change and scarcity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An important role: but many of the activities performed by CRPs are administrative
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Paradoxical cognition and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being perceived as 'legitimate' and acting primus inter pares have a profound impact on behaviour
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Managing tensions: virtuous and vicious cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRPs can exert control by creating virtuous cycles that grant freedom to peers
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Dynamic capabilities: separating and connecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRP as 'intrapreneur' while respecting partner autonomy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Acceptance and resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorise activities that are 'core' or 'peripheral' to the role of the CRP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Exploration and exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more interventionist role for central management in helping to calculate the investability equation 	

By applying a DEM filter to help interpret the results at Focal Area Two of the SIRCLp framework, a number of tensions emerge that enable an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

1. Latent to salient tensions based on plurality, change and scarcity (3a): an important role but many of the activities performed by CRPs are administrative

This study highlights how a rapidly changing external environment for City law firms makes the case for the more effective management of key client relationships. In this context, results also demonstrate that effective CRPs are performing a valuable role as an interface between their clients and their firm in which they use strong internal advocacy skills and soft power to align resources between the two. In so doing, this study provides partial validation for the Key Account Manager as nexus model (see Figure 2.2) within the context of a City law firm. The findings also provide partial support for the work of (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011) and McDonald *et al.* (2000) in which they emphasise the need for internal coordination and integration on the supplier side, by Key Account Managers, as a critical element in the management of these complex client relationships. In recognising this coordinating role, this study supports the definition put forward by McDonald *et al.* (2000) that, in its purest form, KAM is an integrated process for managing key accounts profitably.

While providing support for McDonald's definition of KAM and partial support for the Key Account Manager as Nexus, this study also lays bare a number of tensions within City law firms that make it problematic to simply import wholesale KAM best practice from other fields. Chief among these tensions is the plurality of ways in which the CRP role is being performed, with wide interpretations around what the role should entail and how success should be defined (Weick, 1995). This combination of plurality and ambiguity makes it difficult to assess, challenge and support CRPs in their role and undoubtedly adds, unnecessarily, to the cost to service key client relationships. Costs that all too frequently are written off by firms as a loss or, worse still, are passed on to the client.

This study therefore points to an opportunity for much greater transparency and information on all activities (non-chargeable as well as chargeable) undertaken by CRPs to enable evidence-based decisions on how CRPs and key accounts can be best supported. Findings certainly make a strong case for the forensic examination and potential disaggregation of many activities currently performed by CRPs. Results suggest that many of the activities performed by CRPs are administrative, come with high opportunity costs and would be better performed by more task appropriate resource or automated processes. However, any changes to the responsibilities and role of the CRP may be resisted by some causing, as it

will, searching questions to be asked about the CRP role and whether, going forward, it is a role that needs to be performed by comparatively expensive partner level resource.

2. Paradoxical cognition and identity (3b): being perceived as legitimate and acting *primus inter pares* have a profound impact on behaviour

One constant view expressed by respondents is the importance of being perceived as legitimate in the eyes of peers in order to be recognised as having authority as a CRP. As discussed in Chapter 4.3.2, legitimacy appears to be arrived at in one of three main ways: a strong client following; high billables (income generation); or a deep technical legal (and / or increasingly sector) knowledge. This finding both provides strong support for and at the same time extends the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019).

Findings also suggest that, closely correlated with legitimacy, tensions exist around how CRPs lead peers. In short, there was an overwhelming preference expressed by CRPs to be perceived as acting *primus inter pares*. The desire to be seen as acting *primus inter pares* has some support in the literature, most notably Empson and Alvehus (2019) in relation to *Manoeuvring* (behaving politically and perceiving integrity) in their framework for collective leadership dynamics among professional peers. However, Empson (2020, p.83) states “collective leadership nevertheless requires effective individual leaders who can nurture the context within which collective leadership can flourish.” Commenting on “the increasing focus on collective forms of leadership that has been presented as a reaction against individualized and heroic conceptualizations of leadership”, Empson (2020, p.83) concludes that while they may avoid the rhetoric and personality cult of the conventional ‘heroic’ leader, the ability of leaders in law firms to mobilize and direct powerful individuals within a pluralistic environment can nevertheless be seen as ‘heroic’.

Several other tensions in relation to CRP cognition and identity in the context of influencing and leading peers were also identified by this study. Tensions not previously acknowledged in the extant literature. These include tensions in relation to age, gender and the multiple (sometimes competing) roles and identifies of law firm partners. These myriad tensions have significant implications for the ability to effectively influence peers. Findings to this study suggest many of these tensions are latent and that CRPs are largely left on their own to figure out how to make salient and then navigate these tensions; requiring them to then grapple with a multitude of coexisting roles and emotions (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

Having identified a range of latent and salient tensions in relation to how CRPs perceive their role in relation to influencing and leading peers and the importance of the CRP role, the following sections consider how these tensions can be addressed.

3. Managing tensions: virtuous and vicious cycles (4c). CRPs can exert control by creating virtuous cycles that grant freedom to peers

Findings suggest that effective CRPs appear to employ the cognitive and behavioural complexity and emotional equanimity advocated by Smith and Lewis (2011) to create virtuous cycles that help manage tensions. In essence, effective CRPs ensure there is a supportive infrastructure around their account that enables virtuous cycles. Examples provided by participants include:

- Ensuring a regular (i.e. weekly, fortnightly, monthly) meeting or call for the Client Service Team;
- Systematizing the appropriate delegation of repeatable tasks e.g. compiling internal reports; and
- Developing and regularly reviewing the business plan for the key account to ensure the CST is making progress against the agreed objectives and revenue targets

The views of respondents suggest that, paradoxically, some CRPs empower peers by being more prescriptive in terms of the processes to which other partners should adhere in order to be considered a fully performing member of the client service team. This includes the CRP being clearer on how key decisions will be made in relation to the running of the account (e.g. how secondment opportunities will be prioritised and client facing reports produced). In short, findings suggest effective CRPs empower both themselves and peers by being far more prescriptive than the literature suggests. This prescriptive approach appears to be at odds with findings elsewhere in this study that highlight the importance that CRPs place on being seen to act *primus inter pares*. However, this apparent contradiction may be explained in the paradox literature by the loose–tight principle (Sagie *et al.*, 2002) which juxtaposes leader control with empowerment. Elaborating further, Zhang *et al.* (2015) proposes two paradoxes based on the loose-tight principle:

1. enforcing work requirements while allowing flexibility; and
2. maintaining decision control while allowing autonomy

In the words of Zhang *et al.* (2015, p.543) “leaders can control subordinate behavior and decision making in work processes while giving employees discretion to act flexibly and autonomously”. Zhang (p.543) goes on to state “...the leadership literature has typically framed those paradoxes as ‘either–or’ situational leadership phenomena” whereas leaders who consciously engage in paradoxical behavior can attempt to integrate or harmonize inherent tensions concerning control and empowerment over time. Referencing an interview with Southwest Airlines former CEO Herb Kelleher, Zhang *et al.* (2015) provides an

interesting and relevant approach involving decision control, combined with autonomy: “I’ve never had control and I never wanted it. If you create an environment where the people truly participate, you don’t need control.” Zhang goes on to state that “Kelleher was still concerned with authority and with creating desired procedures and policies, but also saw the importance of granting autonomy.”

The same loose-tight principle is also likely to be just as relevant to the relationship between a firm’s positional leaders and cohort of CRPs as it is to the relationship between CRPs and peers on their account.

4. Dynamic Capabilities: separating and connecting (4d). CRP as intrapreneur while respecting partner autonomy

This study provides support for the work of scholars who identify extensive autonomy as a characteristic of partnerships (Empson & Langley, 2015; Thomas & Hewitt, 2011; Alvehus, 2017; Empson, Muzio, Broschak, & Hinings, 2015; Robertson & Swan, 2003). Moreover, this study then extends the work of these scholars by identifying the significant costs of individual autonomy. These costs include a potential negative impact on the overall cohesion of a firm’s partnership and the (in)ability of a firm’s leaders to confront and address behaviours that are inconsistent with the best interests of the firm. As a consequence, this study suggests that individual autonomy as a principle of a modern partnership can and is used by some partners as an excuse for avoiding challenge from others on the basis that it is ‘not the done thing’ to challenge a peer. Of most concern, this study suggests some positional leaders may, at times, come close to abdicating their responsibility as leaders out of concern for being perceived by partners as infringing their autonomy.

In this context, effective CRPs appear to be employing a patchwork of leadership and management strategies and styles to help navigate these tensions. Findings suggest that effective CRPs utilise dynamic capabilities by, in part, investing time and energy to identify the key individuals and specialists within their firm and, using their informational and positional advantage as a CRP, to then connect colleagues with the evolving needs of the client. In effect, effective CRPs join the dots and act as intrapreneurs (Workman *et al.*, 2003) by navigating boundaries and complex matrix structures; drawing together the skills of team members while simultaneously creating and projecting a coherent vision for the account.

5. Acceptance and Resolution (4e): categorise activities that are core or peripheral to the role of the CRP

Findings demonstrate that the role of the CRP is often implied as opposed to explicitly defined. What is valued in the CRP role by law firms appears opaque and uncertain, other than the financial metric of partner scorecards which, claim respondents, counts for a

disproportionate amount of a CRPs annual reward and that drives certain partner behaviours that may be deleterious to effective collaboration between peers.

As evidenced throughout Chapter Four, CRPs appear to be performing materially different roles from one another; often with little data or guidance on what activities deliver the most value to their firm. Where CRP role profiles do exist they can be contradictory, aspirational or unrealistic.

As a consequence, the findings of this study can be used to identify what elements might be considered 'core' or 'peripheral' to the activities of CRPs. The purpose of this 'categorisation' would be to help firms and individuals better understand what tensions in relation to the CRP role it may be advisable to RESOLVE and those that is would be advisable to ACCEPT. Rather than being prescriptive, the categorization would help CRPs and firms minimise inconsistencies and eliminate the starkness of some contradictions, while allowing other tensions to co-exist.

Findings suggest this process of categorisation would be extremely beneficial to CRPs, many of whom feel isolated and uncertain of whether they are doing the right things on their account and what good performance looks like. Adopting such an approach finds support in the work of Wilson and Millman (2003) that addresses the futility of attempting to eliminate ambiguity in boundary spanning roles. Wilson and Millman (2003) advocate putting in place programmes that reduce and/or help boundary spanners to cope with ambiguity in specific facets of their role: e.g. by intentionally designing jobs with greater autonomy.

6. Exploration and Exploitation (4f): a more interventionist role for central management in helping to calculate the investability equation

Results suggest that a farmer planting seeds for future yields while harvesting crops in the present is a suitable metaphor for the CRP role. Developing a robust, pragmatic and viable long-term strategy for growing revenues (i.e. exploration) while ensuring a focus on generating profitable income in the near term (i.e. exploitation) is an important element of the CRP role.

To execute on their plan, CRPs often require the input of peers with specialist knowledge across a broad range of practice areas. As discussed in Chapter Four, influencing the activities of peers can require CRPs to engage in a series of bilateral conversations with peers in which they extol to each partner the benefits to them of working on the account. This process can consume countless hours of partner time.

This study asks questions about the efficacy of a series of bilateral conversations occurring between CRPs and line partners and raises the prospect of a more interventionist role for

central management to help calculate the investability equation for each account. In effect, the findings provide further support for taking a portfolio based approach to KAM in which a central body with oversight of data and management information on all client accounts can take a more informed, evidence based view of which accounts are more worthy of investment given their comparative ROI.

Summary

Focal Area Two of SIRCLp **supports** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Partial validation for the KAM as nexus model within the context of a City law firm (Wilson and Millman, 2003)
- II. Some support for the work of (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011) and McDonald *et al.* (2000) in which they emphasise the need for Key Account Managers as a critical element in the management of the complex client relationships.
- III. Support for the definition put forward by McDonald *et al.* (2000) that, in its purest form, KAM is an integrated process for managing key accounts profitably
- IV. Corroborates the view of Empson and Langley (2013) and Empson *et al.* (2015) that ambiguity of leadership in City law firms is a cloak behind which CRPs and other partners can hide
- V. Substantiates the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019) on the importance of being perceived as legitimate in the eyes of peers in order to be recognised as having 'authority'
- VI. Strong support on the desire for CRPs to be seen as acting *primus inter pares*
- VII. Strong support for the work of scholars who identify extensive autonomy as a chief characteristic of partnerships (Empson *et al.*, 2015)
- VIII. Lends weight to the work of Wilson and Millman (2003) that describes the futility of attempting to eliminate ambiguity in boundary spanning roles.

Focal Area Two of SIRCLp **questions** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Queries whether CRPs are acting politically in line with the model put forward by Empson and Alvehus (2019) or in fact paradoxically
- II. Effective CRPs are more prescriptive and directive (when leading peers) than the literature suggests. Findings suggest some may achieve this by applying consciously or unconsciously elements of control discussed in the paradox

literature as the loose–tight principle (Sagie *et al.*, 2002) or paradoxical leader behaviour (Zhang *et al.*, 2015)

- III. Takes issue with the position put forward by Lorsch and Tierney (2002) that partners eschew leadership. Findings suggest that while CRPs may take issue with directive forms of leadership that impinge on their sense of professional autonomy, they are open, supportive of and place value in the role performed by positional leaders. Findings therefore suggest CRPs have a more nuanced understanding of, and appreciation for, the role of leadership than that suggested by extant literature

Focal Area Two of SIRCLp **extends** the extant literature in the following ways:

- I. Fills a gaping void in academe on the impact to City law firms of a rapidly changing external environment and, in this context, the opportunity for more effective management of key client relationships
- II. Positions the work of Hansen (2009) on the costs of untrammelled, undisciplined collaboration and the causes of this (e.g the abdication of leadership by positional leaders) as worthy of consideration in the unique context of City law firms
- III. Suggests a role for more evidence based coordination by central ‘management’ to help calculate the investability equation for each account in the context of a portfolio based approach
- IV. Documents the unique characteristics of City law firms that make it problematic to simply import wholesale best practices from the literature in relation to other sectors or professions
- V. Identifies an opportunity for further research to categorise activities that are core and peripheral to the CRP role and to assess the impact of age and gender on the ability of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account
- VI. Introduces the literature on intrapreneuers (Workman *et al.*, 2003) as an interesting complement which to reinterpret the literature on KAM as Nexus (Wilson and Millman, 2003)
- VII. Extends the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019) suggesting other ways in which CRPs can gain legitimacy i.e. the client perspective (beyond providing instructions)

5.4 Focal Area Three of SIRCLp: Competencies

Focal Area Three further interrogates the results to Research Question Four (RQ4) with a focus on the behaviours on the part of CRPs that are perceived as essential for securing the involvement of peers on key account activities.

Table 5.3 shows the relationship between the following four key areas that, taken together, help build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study through an exploration of Focal Area Three in the context of SIRCLp. Numbers and letters in red relate to the corresponding sections in Table 5.3:

1. The Research Question addressed by Focal Area Three of the SIRCLp model
2. A summary of the Results from Chapter Four in relation to the Research Question for Focal Area Three
3. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to surface tensions in relation to Competencies (of an effective CRP)
4. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to identify management strategies for addressing salient tensions for Focal Area Three

By applying a DEM filter to help interpret the results at Focal Area Three of the SIRCLp framework, a number of tensions emerge that enable an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study:

1. Latent to salient tensions based on plurality, change and scarcity (3a). Identification, for the first time, of the multitude of tensions that effective CRPs must navigate

When viewed through a DEM lens, this study identifies, for the first time, the multiple tensions that effective CRPs must navigate. These include but are not limited to:

- Tensions relating to 'plurality': accommodating the needs and sometimes competing objectives of various peers while simultaneously attempting to build a sense of team and implement a coherent long-term strategy for the account
- Tensions relating to 'change': responding to changes in the client's environment which may mean the account is now not as attractive / is more attractive than it once was to peers; with implications for their degree of interest and responsiveness
- Tensions relating to 'scarcity': addressing resource limitations, whether temporal, financial, or human as CRPs make choices about how to source and allocate (e.g. including access to 'in demand' peers in specialist areas of law)

The range, complexity and integrated nature of these tensions exacerbates issues between opposing and interdependent alternatives (Smith & Tushman, 2005) and was not hitherto understood in the context of City law firms prior to this study.

Table 5.3: Focal Area Three of SIRCLp: Competencies

<p>1</p>	<p>Research Question: RQ4 What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for securing the involvement of peers on key account activities?</p>			
<p>2</p>	<p>Results (from Chapter 4)</p>	<p>Additional Paradox Lens Enabled Insights</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines a strategic perspective with a focus on delivering short and long term results • Prioritises the needs of others and is open to new ideas • Builds relationships, develops others and recognises the individual strengths of team members • Is trusting and inclusive of others • Displays confidence and passion that inspires others • Perceived by the client as a business partner 		<p>3</p>	<p>a) Latent to Salient based on plurality, change and scarcity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification – for the first time – of the multitude of tensions that effective CRPs must navigate
			<p>b) Paradoxical cognition and identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the ‘strategy execution gap’
		<p>4</p>	<p>c) Managing tensions: virtuous and vicious cycles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonizing uniformity and individualization
			<p>d) Dynamic capabilities: separating and connecting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a psychologically safe space while facilitating flexibility and autonomy in individual service lines
			<p>e) Acceptance and resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing tensions with a positive outlook and adopting an abundant mind-set
			<p>f) Exploration and exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafting a compelling narrative in relation to a client account

2. Paradoxical cognition and identity (3b): recognising the 'strategy execution gap'

The tensions identified by this study place a great strain on CRPs. Findings suggest that in their desire to respond to these tensions some CRPs fall into what Lorsch and Tierney (2002) describe as the strategy execution gap: where they move from having a vision for their account to tactical execution of an account plan without first ensuring the commitment of others. Attempting to execute a strategy without first securing the buy-in of those whose participation is instrumental to its success is problematic.

Findings suggest those CRPs who engage in the type of paradoxical cognition and emotional equanimity advocated by Smith and Lewis (2011) are more likely to create a space to enable them to pause between the phases of 'vision' and 'execution' and to ensure they invest the necessary resources to influence the activities of peers. Findings suggest that this process helps line partners to feel invested in the outcomes for the account and therefore more likely to commit their discretionary effort to ensuring success.

Having inserted this sacred pause, effective CRPs are able to then consciously move forward by employing a range of approaches to address salient tensions and deliver against their plan for their account.

Having identified a number of tensions relating to CRP behaviour when attempting to influence the activities of peers on a key account, attention now turns in the sections that follow to how these tensions can be addressed.

3. Managing tensions - virtuous and vicious cycles (4c): harmonizing uniformity and individualization

Results suggest that one way in which effective CRPs create virtuous cycles is the individualized consideration they give to recognizing the strengths of peers on their account. In effect they harmonize uniformity and individualization (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). This approach is consistent with the individualized consideration inherent to transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass, 1999) or LMX differentiation within groups (Boies and Howell, 2006).

Beyond transformational leadership and LMX, the role of individualized consideration has also permeated the literature of paradox theory, with Waldman and Bowen (2016) identifying treating subordinates uniformly while allowing individualization as one of their five dimensions of paradoxical leadership behavior. Moreover, they position this as part of an overarching paradox inherent in leadership practice, balancing the individual and the collective, or in their terms, agency and communion. Similarly, Zhang *et al.* (2015) maintain that treating people uniformly while allowing individualization is one of five core paradoxes in people management.

While on the surface consistency and individual responsiveness might seem contradictory, the literature on paradox theory theorizes they can be achieved simultaneously, in an interaction that promotes individual performance and team viability. Smith and Lewis (2011) describe such contradictions in terms of the paradox of organizing and belonging. Expressed in terms of the tensions between the individual and the collective: “Organizing involves collective action and the subjugation of the individual for the benefit of the whole. Yet organizing is most successful when individuals identify with the whole and contribute their most distinctive personal strengths” (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p.384). In many ways, this discussion of individualized consideration appears to have become as central to the literature on paradox as it has to the literature on transformational leadership

Work in the field of collective leadership does show particular promise in helping to interpret and provide a pathway forward for a number of the tensions identified by this study. In particular, the ability of collective leadership to move beyond a focus on the leader – follower dyad that characterizes so much of the literature on leadership is particularly resonant (Denis *et al.*, 2012). Collective leadership provides theoretical support for the results of this study that suggest effective CRPs are ‘not self focused’ are ‘receptive to the ideas’ of others and are ‘willing to learn’.

The literature does also sound a note of caution on the risks to CRPs of not giving careful consideration to how they engage in the practice of individualised consideration. In his work on disciplined collaboration, Hansen (2009) identifies how some collaborative efforts waste time, money and resources.

On balance, findings do support the claim that effective CRPs create virtuous cycles by developing a well-developed understanding of the individual needs and wants of peers on their account. Equally, findings suggest the benefits of giving individualized consideration are likely to be just as relevant to the relationship between positional leaders and CRPs.

4. Dynamic Capabilities - separating and connecting (4d). Creating a psychologically safe space while facilitating flexibility and autonomy in individual service lines

Results suggest that effective CRPs deal with salient tensions by creating dynamic capabilities in which they create a psychologically safe space (connecting) while facilitating flexibility and autonomy in individual service lines across their account (separating) (Edmondson, 1999).

To achieve this effective CRPs empower team members by being clear on the norms and ways in which they will lead the account team. This includes, for example, being clear on how decisions will be made and how team members are expected to behave (e.g. that the CRP will sanction all requests for secondments or that attendance by team members at all

internal meetings to discuss the client is expected). In turn, these norms help to create a psychologically safe space in which team members understand their role and how their contribution is valued (Edmondson, 1999). Effective CRPs then use this psychologically safe space as a platform to meld together the inputs of a diverse group of peers into a cohesive team culture.

In addition to the literature on creating psychologically safe spaces as an aid to an effective team culture (Edmondson, 1999), the literature on Paradoxical Leader Behaviour (PLB) also supports these efforts of effective CRPs. The writings on PLB emphasizes the benefits of creating conjoined, bounded and discretionary work environments (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). At the same time, PLB gives followers discretion and individuality within the structure, allows them to be the focus of influence to maintain their dignity and confidence” (Zhang *et al.*, 2015).

5. Acceptance and Resolution (4e). Embracing tensions with a positive outlook and adopting an abundant mind-set

Results suggest that effective CRPs embrace tensions with a positive outlook and adopt an abundant mindset: believing in their resources (themselves and those resources around them) to address the tension. A position that finds support in the literature: “those with an abundance orientation assume that resources are adequate” (Peach and Dugger, 2006, p.693) and that “people attend to resources by seeking affirmative possibilities and endless potential” (Cameron and Lavine, 2006, p.155). Furthermore, according to Smith *et al.* (2016, p.5): “Rather than seeking to slice the pie thinner, people with this value-creating mindset pursue strategies to grow the pie, such as exploring collaborations with new partners, using alternative technologies, or adopting more-flexible time frames for shifting resources for better use.”

Effective CRPs therefore assume that tensions can and should coexist (Peng and Nisbett, 1999) and they can then mindfully explore the dynamic relationship between tensions (Langer, 1989). Effective CRPs also accept that not everything will be plain sailing; that there will be set backs along the way. However, they display confidence and resilience in dealing with those setbacks. In effect, it can be claimed that they combine an abundance mindset with resilience and grit (Duckworth, 2016). In so doing, they recognize there are some tensions that they can attend to and resolve while there are others that must remain unresolved and which they should therefore accept.

Smith and Lewis (2011) claim that leaders can employ strategies of both acceptance and resolution over time in what they describe as a consistently inconsistent pattern of decision-making. However, while being ‘consistently inconsistent’ in their decision-making enables

leaders to attend to paradoxes over time, it can cause problems for subordinates who often have a strong preference for consistency (Cialdini *et al.*, 1995). According to Wang and Pratt (2008), inconsistencies raise ambivalence and anxiety and lead individuals to respond by seeking to regain alignments and consistency. Specifically, in the face of inconsistencies, subordinates often judge their leaders as hypocritical (Cha and Edmondson, 2006) or rationalize the decisions of leaders to emphasize only one of the goals (Kunda, 1990).

This study sides with the view of Cialdini *et al.* (1995), Wang and Pratt (2008) and Cha and Edmondson (2006) that the practice of consistently inconsistent decision making is likely to be highly negatively perceived by partners in City law firms. However, this does potentially represent an interesting area for further research.

6. Exploration and Exploitation (4f). Crafting a compelling narrative in relation to a client account

Effective CRPs appear to craft a compelling narrative in relation to their account that encourages client service team members to invest in securing opportunities on the account over the long term – EXPLORATION – while simultaneously focused on delivering profitable income in the near term – EXPLOITATION. In effect, effective CRPs master how to design leadership, brand and innovation ‘stories’ that paint pictures of a possibility that inspire hearts, elevate minds and invite immediate action. In so doing they craft powerful narratives that connect emotionally, justify rationally and make change urgent, compelling and clear.

This study has demonstrated that effective CRPs are adept in weaving together a compelling narrative in even the most challenging of circumstances.

Summary

Focal Area Three of SIRCLp supports the literature in the following ways:

- I. Confirms the strategy execution gap identified by Lorsch and Tierney (2002) and how effective CRPs overcome this by engaging in the type of paradoxical cognition and emotional equanimity advocated by Smith and Lewis (2011)
- II. Provides partial support for the role of individualized consideration in City law firms that are central pillars of the literature on transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass, 1999), LMX differentiation within groups (Boies and Howell, 2006) and as discussed in the literature on paradox (Waldman and Bowen, 2016; Zhang *et al.*, 2015; Smith and Lewis, 2011)
- III. Strong support for the literature on collective leadership in helping to address the tensions identified by this study; moving as it does beyond a narrow focus on the

leader – follower dyad that characterizes so much of the current literature on leadership (Denis *et al.*, 2012)

- IV. Substantiates the work of Hansen (2009) on downside risks of seeking to optimise performance in the aggregate by maximising the potential of individual team members
- V. Confirms the positive impact of creating a psychologically safe space and the role of Paradoxical Leader behaviour to help develop a cohesive team culture (Zhang *et al.*, 2015; Parker *et al.*, 2006; De Jong *et al.*, 2004; Edmondson, 1999)

Focal Area Three of SIRCLp **questions** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Contests the view of Smith and Lewis (2011) that CRPs and positional leaders can be consistently inconsistent in their pattern of decision-making. In so doing, this study confirms the view of Cialdini *et al.* (1995); Wang and Pratt (2008); Cha and Edmondson (2006) that consistently inconsistent decision making is likely to be highly negatively perceived by partners in City law firms.

Focal Area Three of SIRCLp **extends** the extant literature in the following ways:

- I. Provides evidence, for the first time, on the valuable application of paradox theory in City law firms to help CRPs and positional leaders identify and attend to latent and salient tensions (Smith and Lewis, 2011; Smith and Tushman, 2005)
- II. Connects the literature on abundant mindset (Peach and Dugger, 2006; Cameron and Lavine, 2006) with the literature on paradox theory (Cameron and Lavine, 2006; Smith and Tushman, 2005) to substantiate a view that effective CRPs assume that tensions can and should coexist (Peng and Nisbett, 1999; Langer, 1989)

5.5 Focal Area Four of SIRCLp: Leader (CRP) development

Focal Area Four synthesises the results to Research Questions Six (RQ6) and Seven (RQ7) and makes the case for a greater focus on the development of CRPs (and positional leaders) to enable CRPs to be effective and efficient in how they influence peers in relation to key account activity

Table 5.4 shows the relationship between the following four key areas that, taken together, help build a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study through an exploration of

Focal Area Four. Numbers and letters in red relate to the corresponding sections in Table 5.4:

1. The Research Questions addressed by Focal Area Four of the SIRCLp framework
2. A summary of the Results from Chapter Four in relation to the Research Questions that comprise Focal Area Two
3. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to surface tensions in relation to Leader (CRP) Development
4. The role of DEM / paradox theory in helping to identify management strategies for addressing salient tensions for Focal Area Four

By applying a DEM filter to help interpret the results at Focal Area Four of the SIRCLp framework, a number of tensions emerge that enable an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

1. Latent to salient tensions based on plurality, change and scarcity (3a): a paucity of training opportunities to help CRPs navigate a rapidly changing sector

This study identifies a paucity of provisioned or self-directed formal training opportunities to help CRPs navigate a rapidly changing sector and thrive in a new legal market as it emerges. These tensions include but are not limited to:

- Tensions relating to 'plurality'. As discussed in Chapter 4.3.2, the CRP role is performed in a range of ways. Little if any direction appears to be provided to CRPs on how to lead key accounts or to acknowledge that the leadership of key accounts can be materially different from one another
- Tensions relating to 'change'. All CRPs interviewed for this study received 'formal' training as junior lawyers in a time and an environment that is markedly different from that in which they operate today. As a consequence, these CRPs may not be fully versed in how to utilize on their account recent developments in legal technology, advances in legal project management or apply the latest processes for unbundling legal work into that which is legal practice and that which is legal delivery

Table 5.4: Focal Area Four of SIRCLp: Leader (CRP) development

Research Questions:			
1	RQ6 How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities? RQ7 What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?		
2	Results (from Chapter 4)	Additional Paradox Lens Enabled Insights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paucity of self-directed or firm provisioned development on the leadership and management skills required to be an effective CRP • A culture in which partners are expected to make it on their own • More client focused training with development opportunities that can be immediately put into practice would be welcomed by some respondents • The benefits of drawing on the experiences of experienced CRPs to enable the development of others • Personality and behavioural profiling of CRPs received a mixed response 	3	a) Latent to Salient based on plurality, change and scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paucity of training opportunities to help CRPs navigate a rapidly changing sector
		b) Paradoxical cognition and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primacy of fee-earning
	4	c) Managing tensions: virtuous and vicious cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inculcating a culture of life-long, continuous learning
		d) Dynamic capabilities: separating and connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action learning based framework for development
		e) Acceptance and resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strengths based approach to CRP selection and development
		f) Exploration and exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model how to connect and integrate competing structural and other demands

- Tensions relating to 'scarcity'. An over supply of corporate law firms has, combined with other factors, shifted the power dynamic in favour of the clients of City law firms. In the face of increased competition, few CRPs appear to have developed their capability (or that of their client service team) to create compelling, needs based solutions that position them and their firm ahead of the competition.

When viewed through the lens of the DEM, these findings represent an emergent range of salient tensions that few CRPs and firms are equipped to deal with. This is a worrying picture and may come to represent an existential threat to City law firms.

For most CRPs nothing of any value has been provided in terms of leadership development. This wholly supports the view reflected in the literature that lawyers have not traditionally committed resources to developing managerial and leadership capability (Lorsch & Tierney 2002; Mayson 1997).

A key contribution of this study is therefore the identification of a range of tensions around effective CRP development and what firms and CRPs can do to navigate these tensions. This study suggests that in a new legal landscape with more diverse and salient tensions than ever before, firms would be well advised to urgently develop a comprehensive programme of CRP development.

2. Paradoxical cognition and identity (3b). The primacy of fee-earning

Paradoxical cognition and identify further add to the salient tensions identified above. Chief among these is the perceived primacy of fee earning that contributes to a false dichotomy in which to receive training in non-technical legal disciplines such as leadership may suggest one is one some way less serious or committed to the technical aspects of lawyering. An alternative interpretation is that too much focus on leadership development may also suggest an ambition to lead or have domain over peers. As demonstrated elsewhere in this study, in many City law firms an overt commitment to leadership is anathema to the culture.

The findings support the literature in discussing the traditional blocks to leadership development in law firms. The primacy of fee earning is referred to by Lorsch and Tierney (2002); McKenna and Maister (2002) and Mayson (1997). Both the literature and the findings indicate that this is one of the most significant challenges facing leadership development. A culture in which partner autonomy is prized further compounds the issue; as CRPs cannot be mandated by a firm's positional leaders to attend training.

Having identified a number of tensions relating to how CRPs develop their leadership capability and the implications for CRP development, the following sections consider how these tensions can now be addressed.

3. Managing tensions - virtuous and vicious cycles (4c). Inculcating a culture of life-long, continuous learning

The literature on virtuous cycles raises profound questions about the training and development opportunities provided to CRPs and lawyers en route to becoming CRPs. This study suggests CRPs have, in general, a deficit in the skills necessary to manage the various tensions that they face. A situation exacerbated by the lack of provisioned or self directed formal training. This represents a significant issue for City law firms looking to establish a competitive advantage through superior key client relationships.

To address this issue, this study suggests firms would be well advised to proactively inculcate within their firm a culture of life-long, continuous learning. This would include a comprehensive and integrated programme of development for all lawyers from trainee to experienced senior partners. The content would be based on the findings from this study and include, but not be limited to, a context appropriate interpretation of the role profile discussed in Section 5.3, the behavioural elements discussed in Section 5.4 and any necessary adaptations to systems and structures discussed in Section 5.2 to enable more effective client relationships.

Any training and development opportunities would, being fully cognizant of the findings of this study, not be mandated but positioned in such a way that CRPs and other lawyers feel compelled to attend. As explained elsewhere in this study, this quasi-voluntary approach is most likely to be accepted by key players in the inherently complex and socially constructed world of City law firms because it recognises the primacy of the professional. Rather than prescribe one best approach, development opportunities would be part of a broader virtuous cycle of activities intended to provide firms and individuals with a compass, guidance and principles for how to implement their strategy for their firm.

4. Dynamic Capabilities - separating and connecting (4d). An action learning based culture of continuous learning

It is beyond the scope of this research to create a model programme of development for all lawyers and CRPs, but findings to this study clearly suggest that any content that made up such a programme should be delivered in a timely and pragmatic way. CRPs eschew abstract classroom based training that does not have a direct relationship to how they can be better lawyers and improve their client relationships. Providing skills injections that are timely, specific to their identified need and immediately implementable is therefore critical.

In this context, firms operating a portfolio based approach to KAM could invoke the dynamic capabilities recommended by the paradox literature (Smith and Lewis, 2011) by ensuring each client account team considers the separate and specific needs of their clients but in a way maintains a connection between the clients in the portfolio. This might involve providing CRPs with a broadly similar set of core training and development opportunities (inputs) with which to analyze their client or run their account team but that, when applied, then result in different outcomes. In effect, CRPs would be provided with a framework in which they and their teams can apply tools and techniques in a way that is right for them and their client before reflecting on the outcomes and further iterating their approach. This action learning based approach styled on Kolb's learning cycle (Vince, 1998) also provides an experiential context for leadership formation.

Creating an action learning based culture of continuous learning in City law firms will not be without challenge. Chief among these, and raised elsewhere in this study, will be encouraging CRPs and lawyers to engage in non-technical legal training in cultures that place a primacy on fee earning. In addition, the type of consultative selling based approach suggested above will require some CRPs to make a mind-set shift from a default of imposition (of the 'right' answer) to one of enquiry; which will be quite a transition for some CRPs who were trained in an era in which the lawyer must always seem to have the answers.

5. Acceptance and Resolution. A strengths based approach to CRP selection and development

Findings suggest firms would be well advised to move on from the Owner, Manager, Producer, paradigm that has characterized the governance of City law firms for so long. Rather than assume every partner should have strengths in each area of Owner, Manager and Producer, firms could benefit from taking a strengths based approach to identify the unique strengths of each CRP (Zenger *et al.*, 2012). In addition to a cultural shift away from the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm, this strengths based approach will require more proximate leadership, more effective processes and better quality data; all of which have been identified as necessary areas for focus and development elsewhere in this study.

This approach would require City law firms to accept that the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm may no longer serve their firm well and that few CRPs can be consistently effective in all three areas. This would then necessitate these firms to resolve the tensions around, for example, the need for more proximate leadership or more and better data, processes and systems in order to identify the unique strengths and contributions of each CRP. With this insight, firms can then carry out proactive, formal assessments of CRP capability (based on their strengths) and match them to appropriate client relationships (embracing the portfolio

based approach). Building on the findings of this research, partners might also be routinely assessed for the qualities of cognitive and behavioral complexity, emotional equanimity and the other critical elements of paradoxical leader behaviour when performing the CRP role. Currently, there appears to be no evidence of Client Relationship Partners being assessed for these qualities.

6. Exploration and Exploitation (4e). Role model how to connect and integrate competing structural and other demands

Findings to this study suggest firms would benefit from thinking more strategically and in a future oriented way about the competencies and behaviours of CRPs. In short, to invest in the development of qualities that will enable firms to thrive in a legal market that is markedly different from the one in which they operate today. This will place a great demand on CRPs who are skilled in the competencies identified in Chapter 4.3.4. But it will also place great demands on a firm's leadership, culture, processes, systems and structures too; to enable the development of a new breed of CRP. This investment in the future, the exploration of what qualities may be required moving forward, must be matched with an ongoing investment in the here and now. In effect, the simultaneous focus on the present day must look to EXPLOIT the opportunities currently available to City law firms and will include a rigorous commitment to the development of high quality technical legal skills.

This study does not suggest that City law firms should vacate their focus on developing strong technical (legal) CRPs in favour of less technically able lawyers; but rather develop lawyers who are just as skilled in a range of leadership approaches. What this study does most assuredly suggest is that this should not be a dichotomy; an either / or choice. Positional leaders and CRPs should use SIRCLp to role model new approaches and behaviours and to show others how to accept and embrace contradictions (such as Exploration and Exploitation) in complex environments like City law firms (Graen and Scandura, 1987; Shamir *et al.*, 1993; Fang, 2005).

By exploring ways in which to connect and integrate competing structural and other demands, leaders can model how to develop persistent learning processes and use fresh perspectives to examine seemingly incompatible challenges and pursue continuous improvement beyond the status quo. They can also show others how to be flexible when adjusting conventional approaches, or even radically exploiting unconventional approaches (Parker *et al.*, 2006). In short, positional leaders and CRPs can role model to others how to be open, learning oriented, and flexible to work proficiently, adaptively, and proactively in a new legal market (Zhang *et al.*, 2015).

Summary

Focal Area Four of SIRCLp **supports** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Corroborates practitioner and management consulting literature that an over supply of corporate law firms has, combined with other factors, shifted the power dynamic in favour of the clients of City law firms (Mayson, 2012)
- II. Confirms that firms have committed few resources to developing leadership capability and as such lawyers and City law firms are not exposed to the latest research in various fields, including KAM (Lorsch & Tierney 2002; Mayson 1997)
- III. Substantiates a view that a culture in City law firms that places a primacy on fee earning acts as a break to leadership development (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002; Maister and McKenna, 2002; Mayson, 1997)
- IV. Provides support for the value of positional leaders role modeling paradoxical behaviours to accept and embrace contradictions (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993; Fang, 2005) and to adjust conventional approaches or even radically exploit the unconventional (Parker et al., 2006)

Focal Area Four of SIRCLp **questions** the literature in the following ways:

- I. Challenges the Owner, Manager. Producer, paradigm and suggests its cultural appropriation in City law firms may restrict a critical assessment and evaluation of many of the characteristics of firms that do not serve them well e.g. ineffective processes, systems, and data (Maister, 2003)

Focal Area Four of SIRCLp **extends** the extant literature in the following ways:

- II. Provides different interpretations and applications of the KAM as nexus role in the unique context of City law firms (Wilson and Millman, 2003)
- III. Suggests an opportunity for a more forensic examination of the extent to which CRPs and lawyers more generally are receiving training and development to enable them to stay abreast of recent developments in legal delivery (e.g. legal technology and legal project management)
- IV. Suggests an opportunity for strengths based development and the identification of the unique strengths of individual lawyers (Zenger *et al.*, 2012)
- V. Makes a case for an action learning based approach as a context for leadership formation (Vince, 1998)

5.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings from this study (presented in Chapter Four) in relation to the key areas of literature presented in Chapter Two and in the Theoretical Framework (see Figure 1.2). In so doing SIRCLp framework is intended to serve as a purposeful way of presenting a dialogue between the myriad of findings in this study and the current literature while addressing the Research Problem, Research Aim, Areas for Research, Research Issues and Research Questions (see Conceptual Framework in Table 2.7).

The author has attempted to demonstrate throughout this chapter how SIRCLp is intended to serve as a framework for both surfacing tensions and then attending to those tensions using a range of management responses. In so doing, SIRCLp does not prescribe one approach, instead it provides CRPs and positional leaders with the framework, mind-set and development opportunities to deliver transformational changes that create exponential impact but which cannot be delivered by extrapolating methods from the past. This inherent flexibility is particularly important in a sector that is facing profound change and in which new approaches are required to meet new challenges and opportunities.

This chapter has therefore positioned SIRCLp not only as a useful framework but also as the basis for a new operating system for CRPs and City law firms. Informed by paradox theory, the intention is for the SIRCLp to herald both a fundamentally new approach to leadership in City law firms and to provide a series of practical tools for CRPs and City law firms to succeed.

The SIRCLp framework calls for all parties to recognise and embrace the uncertainty and tensions in the environment in which they now operate. In so doing they will need to resist the seductive temptation to engage in the Aristolean logic of choosing between contradictory but seemingly valid alternatives that pervades decision making in the legal sector. Though it will be no easy task, the successful City law firms of tomorrow will undertake the hard work required to learn how to embrace and work with these now salient tensions.

Given the various tensions at play in City law firms, the findings of this study suggest the management approaches advocated here (virtuous cycles; dynamic capabilities; and acceptance and resolution) are likely to be highly relevant in helping to address both the Research Aim. Moreover, as identified by Smith and Lewis (2011, p.393) "Individuals, groups, and firms will achieve short-term excellence while ensuring that such performance fuels adaptation and growth enabling long-term success". However, to reach this point, this study suggests that the majority of Client Relationship Partners, positional leaders and City law firms will have to undertake profound, transformational change from their current position. When viewed through the perspective of the literature on paradox theory and

specifically the DEM, this study suggests the need for a radical shift in how leadership is perceived. SIRCLp is intended to provide all parties with the tools necessary to make this shift.

Having established the relevance of the SIRCLp framework, Chapter 6 will consider the contributions of this study to theory and practice make the case for how the integrative focus of SIRCLp offers a more valuable perspective to address the myriad tensions in City law firms than any one area of literature can on its own. The Chapter will also address the role of personal reflexivity in academic research, the limitations of this study and potential areas for further research.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The **Research Problem** that frames this study is:

How City law firms can respond to commercial pressures by establishing a competitive advantage through the effective management of their relationships with key clients?

For the reasons set out in Chapter One, a focus on key client relationships in City law firms places great emphasis on the leadership role performed by the Client Relationship Partners (CRPs) who lead these complex, boundary spanning relationships. The time these CRPs spend on internally focused activities can be greater than the time they spend with the fee-paying client. In this context, there is value in understanding what enables and impedes a CRP when attempting to align the activities of their key account team. Of specific interest is alignment at the peer level (partner to partner) where conventional hierarchical relationships between leaders and followers are replaced in law firms by more ambiguous relationships amongst professionals (Lorsch, 2008; Higgs, 2003; Empson, 2007; Lorsch and Tierney, 2002).

The **Research Aim** of this study is therefore:

To identify what factors affect the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of peers on a key account in a City law firm

A systematic review was therefore undertaken and several areas of supporting literature were identified. This gave rise to the first field of literature: the characteristics of City law firms (see Chapter 2.2). This literature identified slow progress in recent years in considering, from an academic perspective, the effect of the structure and systems of City law firms on leadership; though there were some notable exceptions, including the work of Empson and Alvehus (2019). The literature also highlighted why it is problematic to import into the legal profession theory that has largely been developed with reference to corporate entities.

The literature on Key Account Management was then assessed in the context of helping CRPs and City law firms deliver a competitive advantage (see Chapter 2.3). This literature identified the qualities of a good Key Account Manager, but also identified the need to consider structural and systemic factors too. The role of leadership in KAM was also emphasized, however this role was predicated on an assumption of leader - follower relationships that are not present between peers in City law firms.

KAM therefore led to a third field of literature: leadership. As explored in Chapter 2.4, a systematic review of the literature on leadership identified a dominant paradigm (transformational leadership) and again a focus on leader – follower relationships. The review also highlighted the area of collective leadership as showing some promise for helping to explain the phenomenon under investigation. However, the literature from both the field of Leadership and the field of KAM was predominantly based on studies in corporate settings, which proved problematic for extrapolating or extending the findings and insights into the unique context of City law firms.

As no single area of literature provided satisfactory answers to the Research Problem or Research Aim, a fourth area of literature, Paradox Theory, was consulted in an attempt to make sense of the disparate areas of enquiry. Paradox theory, and in particular the Dynamic Equilibrium Model, was considered appropriate due to its potential to help CRPs and positional leaders to attend simultaneously to the multiple, sometimes conflicting demands they face and to which there are often no cut-and-dried choices. Specifically, the DEM provided a framework for identifying issues and tensions and advocated a range of management strategies for attending to the same.

The fields of literature and how they inform the Areas of Research were positioned as part of a Theoretical Framework (Figure 1.2), the purpose of which is to act as a blueprint or guide for the research (Osanloo and Grant, 2016). The thorough examination of the literature then gave rise to seven Research Questions (Chapter 2.6) to help further frame the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). To help ensure congruence between these various parts of the research, the Conceptual Framework in Table 2.7 was developed and is central to this study.

Chapter Three set out in detail how the Research Questions are explored through the development of the Research Design, Methodology and Research Methods. Chapters Four and Five present the empirical material in response to the Research Questions and sets out how the development of the SIRCLp framework brings together the four key areas of literature, the Research Problem, Research Aim, Areas for Research, Research Issues and Research Questions to bring a fresh perspective to the phenomenon under study. This final chapter summarizes the implications of the research findings for both theory and practice and offers suggestions for future research to both validate and extend the new knowledge identified by this study. This Chapter also provides the author's reflections on his learning journey undertaking this research before drawing an overall conclusion on the contribution of this study.

6.2 Contributions to theory

This section builds on Chapter 5 that demonstrated how the findings of this study support, question or extend existing theory and how the SIRCLp framework relates to the main domains of literature identified in the Theoretical Framework (Figure 1.2). A review of the literature (Chapter 2) demonstrated that no single academic domain (i.e. KAM; leadership; the characteristics of law firms; or paradox theory) provided satisfactory answers to the Research Problem or Research Aim of this study. As a consequence, this study adopted a multi-disciplinary, multi method approach to address the phenomenon under study. This approach was necessary because the phenomenon is complex, messy, understudied and multifaceted.

Based on the range and volume of literature that was consulted as a consequence of adopting a multi-disciplinary, multi method approach, it was helpful to closely follow the guidance of Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) for analysing, synthesizing and interpreting the findings. This process involves attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, considering different meanings, and offering potential explanations and conclusions. The process involves ensuring a close relationship between the findings and extant literature and is consistent with a Phenomenological study in which one attempts to develop a rich textural and structural understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). This convergence, or consilience of academic disciplines, enabled the development of SIRCLp as a CRP centred framework (see Figure 4.2) and, with it, new insights and theoretical contributions to extant literature.

SIRCLp addresses the increasing multitude of complexities and tensions in City law firms. While preeminent leadership models may be effective in traditional corporate structures, SIRCLp provides a framework for helping academe better understand and explore the complex and dynamic environments in which positional leaders and CRPs operate in City law firms. SIRCLp offers a framework for surfacing and attending to tensions *at* and *between* levels of Individual and Structural; demonstrating how paradoxical principles apply in practice. In so doing, SIRCLp responds to the call for research into paradox effects at different levels (Schad *et al.*, 2016) and constitutes a response to calls for new leadership paradigms (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). In short, a SIRCLp broadens the theoretical perspective regarding leadership in complex and dynamic environments generally and specifically in City law firms and in so doing makes a contribution to theory.

In addition to providing a holistic, integrative framework to help surface and attend to tensions at and between individual and Structural levels, SIRCLp also makes a theoretical

contribution to each of the main academic domains on which it is built (i.e. KAM; leadership; the characteristics of law firms; and paradox theory), each of which will be discussed in turn.

Theoretical contributions of SIRCLp to the literature on KAM

While the extant literature on KAM has some relevance to the phenomenon under study, what is patently clear from the findings is that the KAM literature cannot be transposed wholesale into City law firms. Culture, governance and issues of professional identity in City law firms have been shown to have a significant mediating effect on the efficacy of practices and approaches developed on KAM studies based largely in traditional corporate settings. Fortunately, this study demonstrates how, when a paradox inspired approach and the wider SIRCLp framework are combined, new insights emerge that are specific to the context of City law firms and which extend the extant literature on KAM. This includes, for example, how a focus on simultaneous exploration and exploitation can enable positional leaders to play a prominent role in marshalling a firm's resources and ensure that appropriate strategies can be applied to individual customers (McDonald et al., 1997; Woodburn and McDonald, 2011) through the implementation of a portfolio based approach to KAM. A combination of the literature on KAM and paradox theory also demonstrates how, through the application of SIRCLp, positional leaders and CRPs can create virtuous cycles through the systems and processes they implement in their firm.

Findings also demonstrate the very significant differences between how CRPs conceive and practice the Key Account Manager role compared to their cousins in corporate counterparts. This includes a need for CRPs to be seen as acting *primus inter pares* with peers and practising prominent, visible leadership while simultaneously recognising the autonomy of peers. That the short-term orientation of firms may act contrary to the long-term interests of effective KAM and compromise the efforts of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers on key account activities is also another significant finding of this study. This challenges the field of KAM to respond to more compressed timelines for a return on investment than the corporate settings in which KAM has typically been studied.

Moreover, while there has been considerable discussion in the field of KAM around the desired skills and capabilities of a Key Account Manager (Wotruba and Castleberry, 1993; Sengupta et al., 2000; Ryals and McDonald, 2008), with a few notable exceptions, such research has largely overlooked the attitudes and behaviours of individual Key Account Managers when it comes to influencing peers (Ulaga and Sharma, 2001; Wilson and Millman, 2003; Guenzi et al., 2007). This is particularly problematic for the application of KAM to the setting of City law firms. SIRCLp fills this gap and more by addressing not only the behaviours on the part of the CRP that are perceived as essential for securing the

involvement of peers on key account activities but also takes account of the situational and contextual factors in which the act of influencing others occurs. It should be noted however that the combination of behaviours and situational factors identified by the SIRCLp framework may be specific to City law firms and therefore further research is required as to how transferable the findings of this study are to other settings (i.e. back to traditional corporate environments).

While this study demonstrates the challenge of attempting to import wholesale the extant literature on KAM into City law firms, it does also provide partial support for all of the three main clusters on which the field of KAM has been characterised in recent years: a customer centric approach (Zupancic, 2008; Homburg *et al.* (2002); (Zupancic, 2008); a strategic, portfolio-centred approach (McDonald *et al.*, 1997; Woodburn and McDonald, 2011); and a third cluster focused on the role performed by the Key Account Manager (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011); McDonald *et al.* (2000). In addition, there is also partial validation for the Key Account Manager as nexus model within the context of a City law firm (Wilson and Millman, 2003). Indeed this study demonstrates that the Key Account Manager role, in the form of CRP role, is just as important in the context of City law firms (in terms of influencing activities around a key account) as it is in other sectors (Woodburn and McDonald, 2011; Ryals and McDonald, 2008; Brehmer and Rehme, 2009; Chuang *et al.*, 2013; Davies *et al.*, 2010; Guenzi *et al.*, 2009; Georges and Eggert, 2003; Guesalaga and Johnston, 2010).

In summary, this study extends the extant literature on KAM into a previously understudied sector (i.e. City law firms) while simultaneously raising serious questions around the suitability and veracity of the literature to that sector if transposed uncritically. Thankfully, the integration of KAM with the other domains in SIRCLp provides this critical examination and in so doing help makes the extant literature on KAM relevant to City law firms.

Theoretical contributions of SIRCLp to the literature on leadership

This study highlights the paucity of academic research on leadership in City law firms, specifically at the level of the CRP. Prior to this research there was a very limited understanding in academe on how CRPs make sense of leadership, how they perceive those colleagues in formal leadership positions and their cognition on what constitutes an effective relationship between CRPs and positional leaders. This study addresses these gaps in the literature and more.

In addition, this study contributes to the leadership literature by challenging the primacy placed on leader–follower relations and demonstrates how, in the absence of followership, CRPs enact a form of leadership that involves them acting *primus inter pares* and the various

means through which this is achieved. This study has highlighted how the dominance of transformational leadership theory, a disproportionate focus on the leader-follower dyad and the study of leadership in largely traditional corporate structures render it problematic to import into City law firms large swathes of leadership literature. Based on the popularity and reach of dominant leadership theories such as transformational leadership, and following studies of leadership in other sectors, it would have been understandable to use a behavioural description questionnaire or other such instrument to examine the attitudes of CRPs to leadership against a predetermined list of behaviours. However, to have uncritically transposed prominent approaches to leadership research (such as transformational leadership theory) into the realm of City law firms would have been an error. The unique characteristics of City law firms negated a simple 'lift and shift' of extant literature on leadership research to this study and, combined with a paucity of academic research at the CRP level, circumstances demanded that a fresh perspective be taken to this research (Hinkin and Tracey, 1999; Van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013; Yukl, 1999). As a consequence, findings from this study demonstrate that, via the development of SIRCLp, leadership in City law firms is best studied as an examination of tensions at and between organizational and individual elements (the four Focal Areas of SIRCLp) unconstrained by complex, ambiguous leadership models or dominant leadership theories.

Relatedly, the study also contributes to the literature on leadership by showing that in order to fully appreciate the intricacies of the leadership process in an under studied area such as City law firms, an interpretive, inductive approach was necessary. This allowed for the discovery of organizational and individual factors relevant to specific situational and contextual circumstances. This study therefore goes some way to redress the balance of leadership research that has been dominated by positivist approaches (Collinson and Grint, 2005; Ford, 2010); approaches that, through their use of behavioural description questionnaires, may have contributed to an outsized focus on leader agency and a lack of consideration of wider factors such as organizational culture and context (Bryman, 2004). This ontological dominance may have restricted the ability to consider leadership as a complex, co-constructed, fluid process, involving multiple actors, and intertwined with contextual and situational factors (Bryman, 2004; Ford, 2010). In response, and in recognition of the multidisciplinary foundations of this research, this study consciously adopted an interpretive, inductive approach to enable the discovery of new insights to address the phenomenon under study from an exploration of several fields of research. As such, it provides the field with a deeper and richer understanding of the meaning of leadership in City law firms.

Finally, this study also makes a contribution by calling in to question the assumption in much leadership literature that positional leadership and authority are synonymous. This study shows that the reality in many City law firms is less clear-cut and that those in formal leadership positions (e.g. Managing Partner) can often have no more or less power than their fellow partners that they have been elected to 'lead'.

Theoretical contributions of SIRCLp to the literature on the characteristics of law firms

This study has laid bare the paucity of academic literature on City law firms and how, in the context of leadership, the speed of change in City law firms is making redundant, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. Empson), large swathes of the literature that does exist.

This study is the first to focus on leadership and peer influence at the level of the CRP in City law firms. In so doing a number of insights have emerged that question or extend the wider literature on PSFs. By taking a paradox inspired approach in the context of SIRCLp, this study highlights how once latent tensions regarding the suitability of the partnership model are now salient. Environmental factors (i.e. plurality, change and scarcity) are calling in to question the suitability of the partnership model to face the dynamic competitive landscape in which City law firms now operate. Results suggest that most City law firms have moved well beyond the P2 type organization referred to in Chapter 2.2 and that the characteristics of the MPB organization (see also Chapter 2.2) are present to a large extent in each firm. This indicates more than a creeping corporatisation referred to by some market commentators and suggests a need to look again at the archetype theory of governance in City law firms and the related impact on the roles performed by CRPs and positional leaders.

By adopting a paradox inspired lens, this study suggests that many of the taken for granted assumptions in the literature on the characteristics of law firms, including the dominant Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm, are now out of date with reality. Furthermore, SIRCLp provides an opportunity to iterate and extend the research of the limited number of academics that have kept abreast with developments in City law firms in recent years. Most notably, this study suggests that leaders (and CRPs) may not be acting politically as posited by Empson and Alvehus (2019) but in fact paradoxically. This finding points to the potential for the further development of Empson's model. Further refinements to the model could also include taking into account the perspective of the client in terms of determining the legitimacy of a CRP (given the significant weighting placed on a client's view in City law firms).

Findings from this study also open entirely up new theoretical lines of enquiry on the characteristics of law firms. For example, a paradox inspired lens to this research has identified the previously hidden from view existence of the role of values in a partnership and

how they can serve as a guide to social norms and act as a basis for greater dynamic capability. In so doing, this study contributes a new dimension that would benefit from further research on the role that values play in influencing partner behaviour.

Theoretical contributions of SIRCLp to the literature on paradox theory

Findings demonstrate an important role for paradox theory as a central force in the SIRCLp model and as a lens through which to identify meaningful insights from diverse fields of literature (e.g. leadership; KAM; characteristics of law firms). Specifically, this study finds support for the role of the Dynamic Equilibrium Model (in the context of SIRCLp) in helping to both surface tensions in City law firms and then propose strategies for attending to those tensions (Smith and Lewis, 2011); which suggests that City law firms may be particularly well suited to realizing the benefits of paradox theory (Cappelli, 1991; Pillai and Meindl, 1998; Smith and Lewis, 2011).

The work of Zhang et al. (2015) on paradoxical leader behaviour (PLB) is one study that has proven to be particularly relevant to the phenomenon under study. However, while there is some linkages between the model of PLB and this study there are also areas of notable divergence. In particular, the work of Zhang et al. focuses on the role of the paradoxical leader in the context of follower attribution, with the following example being representative of how PLB behaviour is interpreted by Zhang (p.538):

“We find that the extent to which supervisors engage in holistic thinking and have integrative complexity is positively related to their paradoxical behavior in managing people, which, in turn, is associated with increased proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity among subordinates.”

As discussed several times throughout this study, this focus on leadership from the perspective of follower attribution is problematic in the context of City law firms; where very few partners would classify themselves as a follower of a peer.

The work by Zhang et al. does also suggest a number of areas of paradoxical leader behaviour that would benefit from additional consideration and acknowledges the opportunity for other studies to expand the nomological network to further validate PLB. The paper specifically references that “beyond holistic thinking and integrative complexity as antecedents, future researchers might include constructs such as open-mindedness, learning orientation, and cultural values, including uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation, as well as contextual factors such as environmental uncertainty and complexity, type of work, job characteristics, and firm and industry types” (Zhang *et al.*, 2015, p.558).

SIRCLp addresses a number of the extensions to the focus of follower attribution proposed by Zhang, most notably the role of contextual factors specific to City law firms. In so doing SIRCLp appears to address specific gaps in the paradox literature, including the need to integrate "...paradoxes that arise at both macro (organizational) and micro (Individual) levels and addressing the weighting of research that has predominantly focused on macro-level paradoxes" (Vera and Crossan, 2004). As commented on by Pearce *et al.* (2019), "although there has been significant attention to paradoxical leadership in the organizational sciences, we know much less about how leaders manage multiple, and in particular, nested paradoxes." Pearce *et al.* (2019) discuss how leaders often fall into the trap of dealing with specific paradoxes, while overlooking other important paradoxes, potentially sparking even more tensions (Schad *et al.*, 2016). They go on to advocate the need for meta-paradoxical approach to address these nested paradoxes to enable leaders to become more conscious of overarching paradoxes rather than simply focusing on managing a single paradox.

Through SIRCLp, this study therefore provides new directions for academics to address organizational paradoxes and to address effective leadership practices at multiple levels, responding directly to the calls for further research by Schad *et al.* (2016) and Pearce *et al.* (2019). In effect SIRCLp provides consilience not only between paradox theory and other academic domains, but also acts as an integrating framework in the paradox field specifically; serving as an antidote to the thin slicing of the theory that has occurred via other studies.

However, like the other theoretical domains that underpin SIRCLp, the literature on paradox theory cannot be applied to City law firms uncritically. A number of aspects proposed by proponents of paradox theory, while suitable for traditional corporate structures, are highly unlikely to be accepted in City law firms without adaptation. This includes, for example, the claim by Smith and Lewis (2011) that leaders can employ strategies of both acceptance and resolution over time in what they describe as a consistently inconsistent pattern of decision-making. This study sides with the view of Cialdini *et al.* (1995), Wang and Pratt (2008) and Cha and Edmondson (2006) that the practice of consistently inconsistent decision making is likely to be negatively perceived, particularly by partners in City law firms. The situational and contextual factors at play in City law firms therefore challenge some of the core tenets of the DEM model as first proposed by Smith and Lewis (2011). Thankfully, by including paradox theory and the DEM alongside the other domains set out in the Theoretical Framework (see Figure 1.2), SIRCLp provides the necessary adaptation of both paradox theory and the DEM to make it relevant to City law firms. The overlay of SIRCLp onto the literature on paradox theory therefore simultaneously enables new insights and helps to make relevant to City law firms the canon of extant literature in the field.

The findings of this study squarely support the view of Smith and Lewis (2011) that the future of paradox theory is bright and that considerable opportunities exist for the literature on paradox theory to help deliver more creative outcomes in a variety of settings. Smith and Lewis (2011, p.397) suggest: “doing so could entail developing pedagogical material that includes conceptual and theoretical understandings of paradox.” This study and SIRCLp lends empirical weight to the optimism of Smith and Lewis] by showing how, in combination with the other theoretical underpinnings of SIRCLp, City law firms can provide the context for the development of such pedagogical material in the field of paradox theory.

The empirical developments provided by this study over the position stated in the literature are welcome and a clear signal of the need for academic research to catch up with recent developments in City law firms. The contributions to theory made by this study have been made possible only by combining, through SIRCLp, the literature on paradox with the literature on KAM, leadership and the characteristics of law firms in a way that enriches all theoretical bases and helps explain many of the challenges in City law firms. This extension and clarification of the theoretical understanding of how CRPs influence the activities of peers presents a number of opportunities and challenges for City law firms that are considered in the next section.

6.3 Contributions to practice

This study has the potential to help CRPs and positional leaders learn how to make sense of complexity and in so doing to add even more value to their firms.

Findings suggest that in the new legal landscape those CRPs and law firms that become the most adept at recognizing and exploiting contradictions and uncertainty (i.e. paradoxical situations) have the potential to be the most successful. Conversely, those CRPs and firms that try to subjugate the contradictory forces of paradoxical situations have the most to lose.

In their study of paradoxes, Zhang et al. (2015) observed that line managers who engage in holistic thinking and who are able to adopt seemingly inconsistent principles in an integrative fashion are better able to manage people. As more legal work becomes commoditized and competition further intensifies, equipping CRPs and positional leaders with the skills and supporting systems to navigate complex, paradoxical solutions will be a most important goal.

As a consequence, this study suggests that the way forward for CRPs and firms is to use SIRCLp as an integrative framework for developing paradoxical solutions to paradoxical situations. In effect, SIRCLp can act as a roadmap for how CRPs and positional leaders can surface, embrace and navigate tensions *at* and *between* the four Focal Areas. When

engaged with in the right way, these paradoxical situations can provide a spur for creative solutions that enable CRPs and positional leaders to find new ways to navigate both long-standing and recently salient tensions. Like a tectonic plate moving toward eruption but never quite doing so, paradoxical tensions can enable CRPs, positional leaders and firms to become stronger as the tension builds.

SIRCLp: a key contribution to practice

This study makes eight major contributions to practice in the form of the paradox-based principles set out in Table 6.1. The principles build on the findings and discussion in Chapters 4 and 5 and are intended to provide much needed guidance to CRPs and positional leaders looking to address the Research Aim and Research Problem.

As referenced above, SIRCLp provides a holistic framework to respond to the multitude of salient tensions now facing City law firms. This study has demonstrated how past attempts by CRPs and positional leaders to address the Research Aim have often been piecemeal and with very limited success. A key contribution of this study is that future efforts by practice should avoid the temptation to address issues in a siloed or linear way and instead should engage all four focal areas of SIRCLp simultaneously and as an integrated whole.

In that context, it is not intended that SIRCLp should be developed into a to set of prescribed policies specifying how CRPs and positional leaders should act in relation to every conceivable situation at or between the four focal areas. Providing policy with respect to human behaviour poses great challenges. For example, how do you create policy for enough, but not too much, emotion in the decision making process. Similarly, this study highlighted the extent to which situational and contextual factors matter to the leadership process. Therefore, it would not be wise to create universal policy based on situational and contextual leadership behaviours. Rather, in direct response to the four areas of SIRCLp, what does emerge is a set of principles for how practitioners might think about complexity, contradictions and tensions to deliver superior results. These paradox-based principles (Table 6.1) represent a significant contribution to practice.

Table 6.1: Paradox-based principles

Principle	Focal Area of SIRCLp	Summary description of recommended actions
1. In order to build, first tear down. Consistently revise and renew to thrive in the future as it emerges	1	Proactively embrace contradictions and tensions between old and new forms of governance
2. Empower CRPs by placing more power in the hands of positional leaders	1	Embrace the willingness of CRPs for positional leaders to play a more interventionist role in the management of key client relationships
3. Forward momentum requires significant stability	1	Use the values in operation in a partnership as a basis for dynamic change
4. Liberate talent and drive cultural change through better, broader, more balanced measures	1	Develop a clear set of metrics that act as visible beacon in navigating tensions, communicating strategy, driving change and shaping partner behaviour.
5. Liberate the CRP role by divesting non or low value adding activities	2	Make conscious, evidence based decisions on the key responsibilities the CRP is uniquely placed to perform and divest all other activities
6. Deliver enterprise wide competitive advantage by focusing on one CRP at a time	2	Systematically consider and respond to the needs and strengths of each partner
7. Develop better 'lawyers' by focusing on the development of non-technical legal skills	3	A strong technical lawyer is a minimum requirement in City law firms. Place greater emphasis on developing leadership competencies
8. Provide just in time skills through a culture of continuous learning	4	Inculcate a culture of life-long, continuous learning with a focus on developing paradoxically enabled lawyers.

1. Principle One: In order to build, first tear down. Consistently revise and renew to thrive in the future as it emerges

Principle one makes a contribution to practice by building on the key findings under focal area one of SIRCLp. Specifically, this study suggest that practice should systematically question taken for granted assumptions and, using the SIRCLp framework, be prepared to proactively embrace contradictions and tensions between old and new forms of governance. This study has demonstrated that, based on the responses of participants, there is more openness to a corporate structure of governance than that previously suggested by the literature. This has considerable implications for City law firms and suggests more centralised, hierarchal decision making may be possible. In turn, this suggests an opportunity for a greater range of models of ownership and even the potential for investment from outside of the partnership e.g. from private equity or in the form of a public listing.

This study also substantiates a view that City law firms are chronically short of the talented leaders required to effectively fill their management positions; particularly in the face of profound change affecting the sector (Lorsch and Tierney, 2002). Findings suggest this deficit of leadership may be due, in part, to the process of identifying, electing and assessing positional leaders; a process that remains unchanged despite the shift by a number of City law firms to the MBP archetype and the apparent openness of CRPs to a more corporate structure of governance. As discussed in Chapter 5.2, partners continue to be promoted to leadership positions on the basis of their technical capability and / or due to a strong track record as a high fee-earning lawyer. This proxy for a lawyer's ability to lead and influence peers remains problematic. This study also corroborates extant literature (Hinings *et al.*, 1991; Mintzberg, 1998) and highlights a further barrier to change by stressing that positional leaders continue to have only contingent authority and maintain fragile power only as long as their peers perceive him or her to be serving their interests. A contribution of this study to practice is that in order for City law firms to shake themselves free from the vestiges of their past and reimagine themselves for the dynamic market in which they now operate, they should be open to identifying and electing positional leaders through non-traditional methods. This may include appointing non-lawyers to senior leadership positions (i.e. Managing Partner, Senior Partner, CEO) and / or bringing in talented leaders from others sectors. In turn, to mitigate the challenges of contingent authority, this may necessitate partners delegating responsibility for identifying and hiring senior leaders to a sub-committee rather than current one vote per partner approach for senior level appointments.

Consequently, in order to thrive in the new legal landscape, practice may need to first tear down out dated models of governance.

2. Principle Two: Empower CRPs by placing more power in the hands of positional leaders

This study has demonstrated a desire among CRPs for a more prominent, interventionist role by positional leaders and central management. A key contribution to practice is how, through the adoption of SIRCLp, firms can paradoxically empower CRPs by placing more power in the hands of positional leaders. This might include central management assisting CRPs in helping to address the investability equation (see Chapter 4.3.2) through the effective operation of a strategic, portfolio-centered approach to the management of key accounts. This study has demonstrated how such an approach is highly compatible with the DEM model of paradox theory and its advocated management strategy of simultaneous exploration and exploitation to address salient tensions. A portfolio based approach enables central management to play a prominent role in marshaling a firm's resources and ensuring that appropriate strategies can be applied to individual customers (McDonald et al., 1997; Woodburn and McDonald, 2011). Appendix E shows the type of guidance that firms operating a portfolio of key accounts might provide to CRPs, which includes providing direction around the amount of non-chargeable hours a CRP should invest in a key account. A key contribution to practice of this study is therefore an appreciation, for the first time, of the willingness of CRPs for central management to play a more interventionist role in the management of key client relationships and, through the application of SIRCLp, the framework and tools with which this can be delivered. Consequently, City law firms could empower CRPs by placing more power in the hands of positional leaders

3. Principle Three: Forward momentum requires significant stability

Rampant change in the absence of key elements of stability causes chaos, particularly in the typically change resistant and conservative cultures of City law firms. In response, positional leaders and CRPs should place stakes in the ground to guide change when implementing the findings of this research. Moreover, this study provides fresh insight into how CRPs and positional leaders may be able to use the values in operation in their partnership as a basis for this dynamic change. This study has shown, firstly, the existence of previously hidden from view values in a partnership (Chapter 5.2) and, secondly, how these values can be molded to positively influence the behaviour of CRPs. By demonstrating how positional leaders and CRPs can implement transformational change while simultaneously emphasizing stability through a partnership's enduring values is therefore a key contribution of this research.

4. Principle Four: Liberate talent and drive cultural change through better, broader, more balanced measures

Findings show that CRPs and positional leaders are hampered in their efforts by incomplete, partial or unavailable data and Management Information (MI) (Chapter 4.3.5 and Chapter 5.2). Firms should enable CRP talent by developing a clear set of metrics that act as visible beacon in navigating tensions, communicating strategy, driving change and shaping partner behaviour. This includes providing more transparency around the process of CRP reward and remuneration; particularly with regard to the relative value of the non-direct income generating aspects of the CRP role. Additionally, this study suggests it is essential for firms to take a long-term view of investment in key client relationships; avoiding the temptation to focus only on the short-term opportunities for billable work that each client presents. This study makes a contribution to practice by demonstrating that only when firms provide better, broader, more balanced measures will CRPs have confidence in the role they are being asked to perform. If employed in combination with the wider SIRCLp framework, City law firms should then realize the benefits of a focus on key client relationships that is promised by the literature on KAM.

5. Principle Five: Liberate the CRP role by divesting non or low value adding activities

Findings affirm the importance of the CRP role in managing fundamental tensions between collective and individual interests (Smith & Lewis, 2011). However the study also clearly identifies that many of the activities performed by CRPs are administrative. In light of this finding, a key contribution of this study to practice is that firms should clearly specify those activities of legal practice that must be carried out only by expensive partner level resource. All other aspects of legal delivery that can be carried out by non-legally qualified resource or process should divested from the CRP role. This study calls for firms to make conscious, evidence based decisions on the role a CRP should perform moving forward and to recognise the opportunity costs if they persist with the current model. This is likely to deliver a more meaningful role for the CRP and enable the true value adding activities that they carry out to be properly recognised. In turn, City law firms can then focus their training and development efforts for CRPs on those areas where they are uniquely placed to add value.

6. Principle Six: Deliver enterprise wide competitive advantage through individualized consideration

This study has demonstrated an important role for CRPs in recognising the contributions of service lines partners on their account while at the same time projecting a unified and coherent vision for the account overall. In turn, at the firm level, the literature on dynamic capabilities suggests an important role for a firm's leadership in recognising the individual needs of CRPs while projecting a unified vision for the wider portfolio of key accounts. In this context, this study has identified for the first time that age affects CRP perception of their role and a view among CRPs that there is a lack of support for partners as they transition through different stages in their career. Findings show that, by adopting the SIRCLp framework, firms and CRPs can develop metrics that simultaneously recognize the contributions of both the individual and the team. This would necessitate firms being more flexible and sensitive to the different perspectives of CRPs in their leadership development and KAM related efforts.

A further contribution to practice of this study is a recommendation that firms should systematically and proactively assess CRPs for their on-going suitability to lead a key account. This study has highlighted that a number of CRPs occupy the position as a consequence of inheriting it from a superior or because of their long-standing position as an adviser to a client. Neither of which are predictors of how well a CRP will perform; particularly as the needs of the client change over time. To help ensure the right CRP with the right skills is leading the right client relationship at the right time, firms should position a CRP as a custodian of a key client relationship as opposed it being perceived as a job for life. CRPs should then be prepared to move between key client relationships based on the outputs of a regular assessment of their fit with the current and anticipated needs of the client.

In summary, findings suggest an opportunity for firms to deliver enterprise wide competitive advantage by systematically considering and responding to the needs and strengths of each individual partner.

7. Principle Seven: Develop better 'lawyers' by focusing on the development of non-technical legal skills

This study has demonstrated how CRPs operate in dynamic environments where complex client demands require both coordinated team-member interactions and individual autonomy. Accordingly, CRPs embody many of the central challenges of managing paradox. This study makes a significant contribution to practice by, firstly, highlighting the need for CRPs and firms to place a greater emphasis on developing the non technical legal skills of lawyers and, secondly, by providing, through SIRCLp, the framework to do so.

Contributions to this study suggest that being a strong technical lawyer is considered to be a basic minimum requirement in City law firms. What will really differentiate effective CRPs in the new legal landscape is their ability to operate with paradox, complexity and a myriad of tensions. Accordingly, a key contribution to practice of this study is the recommendation that CRPs adopt a SIRCLp based framework to identify salient tensions in respect to their role and to then employ a range of management strategies (advocated in this study) for attending to those tensions. In effect, this study has shown how CRPs who proactively embrace tensions and paradoxical situations can build resilience, leverage innovation, engage in disciplined collaboration and be more adaptable, all while positively influencing the activities of peers on their account. Moreover, this study makes an additional significant contribution to practice by showing, for the first time, the paradoxical behaviours on the part of CRPs that are perceived as essential for securing the involvement of peers on key account activities. As set discussed in Chapter 5.4, this includes: harmonizing uniformity and individualization; creating a psychologically safe space while facilitating flexibility and autonomy in individual service lines; embracing tensions with a positive outlook / abundant mind-set; and crafting a compelling narrative in relation to a client account.

8. Principle Eight: Provide just in time skills through a culture of continuous learning

The final key contribution of this study to practice is the identification of an urgent need for a greater focus on the development of leadership capability in City law firms at both the level of CRP and those in positional leadership. Findings show that both positional leaders and CRPs are often wholly unprepared for the leadership roles they are expected to perform. While the theory of law firm management suggests that, traditionally, lawyers look with skepticism on leadership development programmes and that the primacy of fee earning presents a substantial barrier to their adoption and implementation, findings from this study present a more optimistic view. This study suggests that, while these barriers are present, there is an appetite on the part of many interviewees to benefit from structured development opportunities that enable them to practice the behaviours that will lead to them being more effective in leadership roles. As a consequence it is no longer possible for theorists to generalize that lawyers look with suspicion on talk about leadership. Instead the conversation should move on to how CRPs and City law firms will overcome these barriers. Thankfully, as discussed in Chapter 5.5, SIRCLp provides the basis for such development. Equipping lawyers, at all levels, with a much greater range of tools, practices and cognitive frames with which to assess and navigate the environment in which they operate will be key to the successful development of CRPs.

This study makes a further contribution to practice by demonstrating that any training provided to CRPs should be done in such a way that the content can be immediately applied by CRPs to their key account in the form of an action learning based approach. Additionally, training and development should adopt a strengths based approach that recognizes the unique combination of strengths of each CRP and, once and for all, dispenses with the unrealistic aspirations of the Owner, Manager, Producer paradigm.

In effect, the opportunity for City law firms in relation to CRP and positional leader development is to inculcate a culture of life-long, continuous learning with a focus on developing paradoxically enabled lawyers.

SIRCLp makes a significant contribution to practice by reimagining how City law firms can respond to the Research Problem and Research Aim that frame this study. Findings demonstrate that previous attempts to address the Research Aim have been piecemeal or sequential at best. Conversely, SIRCLp shows how the phenomenon can be addressed holistically and simultaneously by addressing tensions *at* and *between* each of the four focal areas of SIRCLp. SIRCLp therefore provides practitioners with a new framework through which to surface and then address a myriad of tensions and, as a result, can be considered a philosophy (a way of thinking), a set of principles and a set of specific tools (e.g. guidance around a key client portfolio) to be employed by CRPs and positional leaders in City law firms to affect change.

6.4 Limitations and areas for further research

The amount of time that CRPs were able to commit to the study was a major consideration throughout the research. Equivalent to senior executives or board members in a traditional corporate structure, CRPs typically measure their work output in six-minute blocks of chargeable time. As a result, they give very careful consideration to the opportunity costs involved in how they spend their time.

The author therefore considered it essential to develop a Research Design that would minimise the amount of time required by research participants while still delivering rich insight into the research questions. Paradoxically, based on direct experience of working in City law firms over a number of years, the author took the view that direct researcher participation in the data collection in the form of face to face interviews would yield a better response rate than asking CRPs to complete a survey. This assumption was tested and in both the pilot study and main study interviews, where a number of CRPs confirmed that it

was unlikely they would have completed and returned a survey. A concern by the author as to the availability of participants was present throughout the research. An issue that was compounded by author's decision to use three methods of data collection. As discussed in Chapter 3.3.2, Critical Incident Technique, Repertory Grid and Semi Structured Questions were used to help provide a rich phenomenological account from the perspective of the research participants and to help mitigate bias from the use of a single method. It was, however, a considerable challenge to apply all three methods in the time available with each participant. When applying the Critical Incident Technique, there was time to explore, on average, only one or two critical incidents per interview. On reflection the author would have worked hard to negotiate more time with participants instead of electing to drop one of the three data collection methods in some interviews. The author strongly believes that the use of multiple methods, while challenging, enabled the rich descriptive findings that emerged and which are crucial to a phenomenological, inductive enquiry.

A further limitation to this work relates to its geographical and cultural setting. As leadership is socially constructed (Meindl, 1985), it has been found that the perception of certain leadership behaviours can be generalized across cultures while other behaviours may be perceived differently, and displayed in different frequency, in other cultures (Leong and Fischer, 2011). Given this, the author acknowledges that a focus on City law firms in the current study may unintentionally lead to a Westernised interpretation of the findings based on the sample. As with any research, caution must therefore be applied in generalizing the results of this study to a larger population.

A final limitation of this research is an understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the CRP only. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, an a priori selection of which CRP behaviours to analyse (e.g. a deductive approach) was not adopted. Rather, an inductive approach, whereby the respondents chose which significant situations were most relevant and a subsequent discussion of the leadership process was believed to be the most appropriate approach for the current research. This allowed for previously unknown insights in the empirical material to come to the fore, ultimately allowing for the discovery not only of leadership behaviours among CRPs, but also the discovery of other influences and the development of the SIRCLp framework itself. However, there is a clear limitation to this. Future research could therefore look to complement the experiences of CRPs with those of positional leaders, clients or respondents at various levels of seniority within a CST to gain additional perspectives on how CRPs influence peers. Future studies might also focus on trying to establish a causal relationship between those CRPs that are more effective at influencing peers and positive financial outcomes (or other metrics).

Areas for further research in relation to theory

It has been difficult to set and keep boundaries in which to contain the study across the numerous theoretical domains it touches. It is not feasible within one study to address all the claims made by authors in each of the fields outlined in the Theoretical Framework (see Figure 1.2). This meant the author that had to consciously exclude studies based on alternative propositions or theories no matter how interesting or enticing they appeared to be along his research journey. Future research could look to incorporate some of these alternative propositions, theories and domains. Based on the findings, adjacent domains to which the author would choose to turn his attention to next include the literature on: motivation, particularly in the context of recognition and reward systems; status driven versus network driven organisations; and the role of Power.

In addition to incorporating new domains, deeper research is also warranted on theories and perspectives covered in this study, but which findings suggest could be extended or developed in some way. Most notably substantiating a link between the 'legitimizing' indicators highlighted by Empson and Alvehus (2019) research and effective leadership i.e identifying tangible, quantifiable measures of success. Relatedly, this study suggests that CRPs may not be acting politically as posited by Empson but in fact paradoxically; something that merits further investigation.

Finally, and most importantly, the SIRCLp framework requires both theoretical and empirical testing. Further research could investigate the implications of surfacing latent tensions and attending to these using the management strategies advocated in this study, many of which are new to City law firms.

Areas for further research in relation to practice

Findings raise a number of interesting areas for further research with a practitioner focus. These include the development of a diagnostic tool to help City law firms consider their preparedness as a firm to engage with the opportunities presented by SIRCLp and the wider findings of this study.

Further research might also include an assessment of how behaving paradoxically taxes leaders' cognitive resources and whether, as posited in some of the literature on paradox theory, paradoxically oriented leaders may experience more psychological stress. Relatedly, further research could expressly explore the potential downsides of operating paradoxically in a City law firm and whether the benefits outweigh the costs (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Certainly transitioning to a more paradoxically fluent culture will require an enterprise wide

approach in City law firms and require, in some firms, significant cultural change and political capital.

Findings also point to opportunities for future studies to explore a causal link between paradoxically enabled CRPs and the profitability of key accounts, happier clients or more engaged CSTs. Additionally, practice would no doubt welcome studies that look to build on the findings of this research by developing a CRP role specification and an exemplar programme of development for CRPs and positional leaders. The potential for the gender of a CRP to impact their perceived level of effectiveness is also an interesting finding that merits further exploration. Results make a case for a further study to investigate whether the behaviours of highly effective CRPs, identified in relation to Research Question Four (Section 4.3.4), correlate more closely with female CRPs.

A dark side of CRP leadership in which there is the potential for a CRP to misuse the power and status of their position to serve their own interests also emerged from the findings. The activities and responsibilities attributed to CRPs can theoretically provide them with considerable positional and informational power over fellow partners. This study has highlighted examples where CRPs use this advantage to serve their own interests over and above those of their colleagues or firm. Further research on this topic to explore the prevalence, impact and potential ways to mitigate this dark side of leadership would be most welcome.

There are also possibilities for further research beyond City law firms. It is likely that the findings to this study have wider relevance given that some non-City law firms (e.g. regional law firms), law firms in other jurisdictions and other professional services firms (e.g. accounting and consulting practices) share similar characteristics to City law firms. Repeating this study beyond its intentionally limited scope (i.e. City law firms) would therefore be an interesting and important area for further research.

Summary

Before concluding this section on the limitations of this study and areas for further research, it is important to note that the findings are based on the perceptions of only thirty-one interviewees. The insights that have emerged from this study raise the question that, if thirty-one CRPs across twelve City law firms have demonstrated such variance with the extant literature, how many other new insights can be found from studies that build on or complement this research? From this inductive study there is now an exciting opportunity to develop several hypotheses for further research; potentially in a quantitative study.

6.5 Personal reflexivity

Self-reflexivity is the view that knowledge relates to the identity of the subject that produces it. Literature suggests that the question of self-reflexivity often comes up in discussions of interpretivism, social constructionism and phenomenology. These approaches do not inevitably involve, as is sometimes thought, foregrounding analysis with descriptions of the researcher's personal motives, background and relationship to the research context. Nor do they imply that the knowledge produced by the research represents the unique perspective of the researcher, or the interaction or co-construction of the researcher and the research subjects.

Phenomenology, the epistemological approach adopted by this study, aims to understand objects 'out in the world', or some aspect of an 'essential' reality as an intuitive act of human consciousness. However, if the knowledge produced reflects individual subjective accounts, individual identity, or an idiosyncratic snap shot in time, it is not phenomenological because it would not tell us anything meaningful about the social world or human experience of it. When drawing phenomenological inferences, phenomenologists must be alive to their own personal experiences in order to guard against bias and to bracket out cultural and other factors that are part of the lived experiences of the researcher as opposed to the research participants.

Adopting Mason (2002) view of reflexivity, the author therefore gave critical thought to the role and purpose of the study, including frequently confronting and challenging his own assumptions, often through discussions with his doctoral supervisors. This required the author to reflect on the nature of his involvement in the research process and the way this shapes its outcomes. An illustrative example of practicing a reflexive approach concerns a passage from the interview with Rachel where the respondent states: "I would say we are friends and have a good relationship. Friendship I think really played a part in it and I trusted her to do the right thing". On reviewing this passage, the author intended to identify 'friendship' as a Child node, being representative of an antecedent factor that may impact the ability of a CRP to influence the activities of a peer. However, no examples could be found in the other transcripts to support this position. Despite this, for a period of time the author still intended to include 'friendship' as a theme in the coding framework. Only when consciously practicing a reflexive approach was the author able to recognize this was a preconceived assumption he held and for which he was looking to find confirming data to support his position.

The author also acknowledged while his years spent working inside City law firms drove his interest in the research subject, contributed to his knowledge of the phenomenon under study and enabled him to quickly demonstrate credibility and build rapport with research

participants, it also had the potential to influence his interpretations of the data. To mitigate the opportunity for bias, the author therefore went to great lengths to practice reflexivity. This included consciously building a Research Design that utilised multiple methods of data collection. In hindsight, the author would have requested in advance more time with each interviewee to allow ample space to explore all methods in each interview. The author acknowledges that this may have led to some participants declining to be involved due to the amount of time they would need to commit.

Paying particular attention to the threat of bias was also prominent through the long period of data analysis (as set out in Figure 3.2). Here the author was conscious of bracketing his own experiential perspective and to focus on inductively interpreting the data through the voice of the participants. Here the audio recordings were valuable in helping to ensure descriptive validity, a term used by Maxwell (2008), to refer to the factual accuracy of what the researcher reports having seen or heard.

In a conscious attempt to further minimise bias, the author also went to great lengths to ensure the research adhered to the highest standards of academic research. This included spending countless hours reviewing texts on research methodology, taking multiple online courses to ensure the appropriate use of software and processes critical to the study (e.g. Nvivo and WebPlus) and attending in person training sessions on qualitative research provided as part of his doctoral programme.

These efforts and the author's prior considerable experience of conducting interviews and research as part of consulting assignments in FTSE 250 organisations meant the author felt confident, as a first time academic researcher, utilising research methods such as CIT and Repertory Grid; that are positioned in academic the literature as being challenging to conduct and best when used by a trained and skilled interviewer (Chell and Pittaway, 1998).

References

- Abernathy, W. J. & Clark, K. B. (1985). Innovation: Mapping the winds of creative destruction. *Research policy*, **14** (1), 3-22.
- Abratt, R. & Kelly, P. M. (2002). Customer–supplier partnerships: Perceptions of a successful key account management program. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **31** (5), 467-476.
- Ackroyd, S. & Fleetwood, S. (2005). Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies.
- Ackroyd, S. & Muzio, G. D. (2004). Understanding change in the professional organisation: more evidence and argument based on the experience of the British legal profession.
- Adner, R. & Helfat, C. E. (2003). Corporate effects and dynamic managerial capabilities. *Strategic management journal*, **24** (10), 1011-1025.
- Ahmed, P. K. & Rafiq, M. (2003). Internal marketing issues and challenges. *European Journal of Marketing*, **37** (9), 1177-1186.
- Allan, S. M., Faulconbridge, J. R. & Thomas, P. (2019). The fearful and anxious professional: Partner experiences of working in the financialized professional services firm. *Work, Employment and Society*, **33** (1), 112-130.
- Alvehus, J. & Empson, L. (2014). Leading autonomous followers: indirect, overt and covert leadership practices in professional services firms. *Working Paper CPSF - 012-2014*, Cass Business School.
- Andrewartha, G., Armstrong, H. & Carlopio, J. (1997). Developing management skills. *South Melbourne: Longman*.
- Archer, M. S. (1995). *Realist social theory : the morphogenetic approach*. Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Åstedt-Kurki, P. & Heikkinen, R. L. (1994). Two approaches to the study of experiences of health and old age: the thematic interview and the narrative method. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **20** (3), 418-421.
- Avolio, B. J. & Bass, B. M. (1999). Re-examining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, **72** (4), 441-462.
- Balogun, J. & Johnson, G. (2004). Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking. *Academy of management journal*, **47** (4), 523-549.
- Bannister, D. & Fransella, E. (1986). *Inquiring Man: the psychology of personal constructs* 3rd edn. Dover, Croom Helm.
- Barker, R. A. (1997). How can we train leaders if we do not know what leadership is? *Human relations*, **50** (4), 343-362.
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, **17** (1), 99.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, **18** (3), 19-31.
- Bass, B. M. (1996). A new paradigm of leadership: an inquiry into transformational leadership. *US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences*.

- Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational Leadership And Organizational Culture. *Public Administration Quarterly*, **17** (1), 112-121.
- Bass, B. M. & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior. *Leadership Quarterly*, **10** (2), 181.
- Batistič, S., Černe, M. & Vogel, B. (2017). Just how multi-level is leadership research? A document co-citation analysis 1980–2013 on leadership constructs and outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **28** (1), 86-103.
- Bennis, W. G. (2001). Leading in unnerving times. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, **42** (2), 97-102.
- Bennis, W. G. & Nanus, B. (1997). *Leaders: the strategies for taking charge*.
- Bennis, W. G. & Thomas, R. J. (2002). *Geeks & geezers: How era, values, and defining moments shape leaders*. Harvard Business Press.
- Berg, B. L. & Lune, H. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* 6th edition. Pearson;
- Bernard, H. R. & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bhaskar, R. (1978). *A realist theory of science*. Hassocks, Suss.; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: The Harvester Press ; Humanities Press.
- Blake, R. R. & Mouton, J., S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co.
- Blenkinsopp, J. & Zdunczyk, K. (2005). Making sense of mistakes in managerial careers. *Career Development International*.
- Bligh, M. C., Kohles, J. C. & Pillai, R. (2011). Romancing leadership: Past, present, and future. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **22** (6), 1058-1077.
- Bloomberg, L. D. & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation*. 2 ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Boies, K. & Howell, J. M. (2006). Leader–member exchange in teams: An examination of the interaction between relationship differentiation and mean LMX in explaining team-level outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **17** (3), 246-257.
- Bolen, W. H. & Davis, R. J. (1997). Overreaching for mass retailers. *McKinsey Quarterly*, 40-53.
- Bono, J. E. & McNamara, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ—Part 2: Research Design. *Academy of Management Journal*, **54** (4), 657-660.
- Bradley, C. P. (1992). Turning anecdotes into data—the critical incident technique. *Family practice*, **9** (1), 98-103.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, **3** (2), 77-101.
- Brehmer, P.-O. & Rehme, J. (2009). Proactive and reactive: drivers for key account management programmes. *European Journal of Marketing*, **43** (7/8), 961-984.
- Brewer, J. & Hunter, A. (2006). *Foundations of multimethod research: Synthesizing styles*. Sage.
- Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E. & King, N. (2015). The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research. *Qualitative research in psychology*, **12** (2), 202-222.
- Bryman, A. (2004). Qualitative research on leadership: A critical but appreciative review. *Leadership Quarterly*, **15** (6), 729-769.

- Bryman, A. (2011). Mission accomplished?: Research methods in the first five years of Leadership. *Leadership*, **7** (1), 73-83.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods 4e*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Burns, J. M. (2003). *Transforming Leadership*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Butterfield, L. D., Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E. & Maglio, A.-S. T. (2005). Fifty years of the critical incident technique: 1954-2004 and beyond. *Qualitative Research*, **5** (4), 475-497.
- Cameron, K. & Lavine, M. (2006). *Making the impossible possible: Leading extraordinary performance: The Rocky Flats story*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Camp, W. (2001). Formulating and evaluating theoretical frameworks for career and technical education research. *Journal of Vocational Education Research*, **26** (1), 4-25.
- Campbell, N. C. & Cunningham, M. T. (1983). Customer analysis for strategy development in industrial markets. *Strategic Management Journal*, **4** (4), 369-380.
- Cappelli, P. (1991). The missing role of context in OB: The need for a meso-level approach. *Organizational Behavior*, **13**, 55-110.
- Carson, J. B., Tesluk, P. E. & Marrone, J. A. (2007). Shared leadership in teams: An investigation of antecedent conditions and performance. *The Academy of Management Journal* **50** (5), 1217-1234.
- Cha, S. E. & Edmondson, A. C. (2006). When values backfire: Leadership, attribution, and disenchantment in a values-driven organization. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **17** (1), 57-78.
- Charmaz, K. & Belgrave, L. L. (2007). Grounded theory. *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*.
- Chell, E. (2011). 'Critical Incident Technique' in C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.
- Chell, E. & Pittaway, L. (1998). A study of entrepreneurship in the restaurant and café industry: exploratory work using the critical incident technique as a methodology. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, **17** (1), 23-32.
- Chenail, R. J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing instrumentation and researcher bias concerns in qualitative research. *Qualitative Report*, **16** (1), 255-262.
- Chreim, S. (2015). The (non) distribution of leadership roles: Considering leadership practices and configurations. *Human Relations*, **68** (4), 517-543.
- Chuang, C.-H., Jackson, S. E. & Jiang, Y. (2013). Can Knowledge-Intensive Teamwork Be Managed? Examining the Roles of HRM Systems, Leadership, and Tacit Knowledge. *Journal of Management*.
- Cialdini, R. B., Trost, M. R. & Newsom, J. T. (1995). Preference for consistency: The development of a valid measure and the discovery of surprising behavioral implications. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, **69** (2), 318.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*.
- Cohen, M. (2019). *Big Money Is Betting On Legal Industry Transformation*. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2019/10/07/big-money-is-betting-on-legal-industry-transformation/>.

- Cohen, M. D. & March, J. G. (1974). Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president.
- Cohen, W. M. & Levinthal, D. A. (1990). Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. *Administrative science quarterly*, 128-152.
- Collier, J. & Esteban, R. (2000). Systemic leadership: ethical and effective. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, **21** (4), 207-215.
- Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap--and others don't*. London: HarperBusiness.
- Collinson, D. (2005). Dialectics of leadership. *Human relations*, **58** (11), 1419-1442.
- Collinson, D. & Grint, K. (2005). Editorial: The Leadership Agenda.
- Collinson, D., Smolović Jones, O. & Grint, K. (2018). 'No more heroes': Critical perspectives on leadership romanticism. *Organization Studies*, **39** (11), 1625-1647.
- Collis, J. & Hussey, R. (2014). *Business research : a practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. Basingstoke : Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cooper, D. J., Hinings, B., Greenwood, R. & Brown, J. L. (1996). Sedimentation and Transformation in Organizational Change: The Case of Canadian Law Firms. *Organization Studies (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG.)*, **17** (4), 623.
- Cope, J. & Watts, G. (2000). Learning by doing—an exploration of experience, critical incidents and reflection in entrepreneurial learning. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
- Corbin, J. M. & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crabtree, B. F. & Miller, W. F. (1992). A template approach to text analysis: developing and using codebooks.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3 ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cridland, E. K., Jones, S. C., Caputi, P. & Magee, C. A. (2015). Qualitative research with families living with autism spectrum disorder: Recommendations for conducting semistructured interviews. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, **40** (1), 78-91.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *Foundations of Social Research : Meaning and perspective in the research process*.
- Cullen, K. & Yammarino, F. J. (2014). Special issue on collective and network approaches to leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **1** (25), 180-181.
- Cyert, R. M. (1990). Defining leadership and explicating the process. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, **1** (1), 29-38.
- Daft, R. (2006). *Organization theory and design*. Cengage learning.
- Dasborough, M. T. (2006). Cognitive asymmetry in employee emotional reactions to leadership behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **17** (2), 163-178.
- Davies, I. A. & Ryals, L. J. (2009). A stage model for transitioning to KAM. *Journal of Marketing Management*, **25** (9/10), 1027-1048.
- Davies, I. A., Ryals, L. J. & Holt, S. (2010). Relationship management: A sales role, or a state of mind?: An investigation of functions and attitudes across a business-to-business sales force. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **39** (7), 1049-1062.

- De Hoogh, A. H. B., Den Hartog, D. N., Koopman, P. L., Thierry, H., Van den Berg, P. T., Van der Weide, J. G. & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Leader motives, charismatic leadership, and subordinates' work attitude in the profit and voluntary sector. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **16** (1), 17-38.
- De Jong, A., De Ruyter, K. & Lemmink, J. (2004). Antecedents and consequences of the service climate in boundary-spanning self-managing service teams. *Journal of Marketing*, **68** (2), 18-35.
- Dearnley, C. (2005). A reflection on the use of semi-structured interviews. *Nurse researcher*, **13** (1).
- Dember, W. N. & Penwell, L. (1980). Happiness, depression, and the Pollyanna principle. *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, **15** (5), 321-323.
- Denicolo, P. & Pope, M. (2011). *Transformative professional practice: personal construct approaches to education and research*. Wiley.
- Denis, J.-L., Langlely, A. & Sergi, V. (2012). Leadership in the plural. *The Academy of Management Annals*, **6** (1), 211-283.
- Denison, D. R., Hooijberg, R. & Quinn, R. E. (1995). Paradox and performance: Toward a theory of behavioral complexity in managerial leadership. *Organization Science*, **6** (5), 524-540.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research : 4th ed.*
- DeRue, D. S. & Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will Lead and Who will Follow? a Social Process of Leadership Identity Construction in Organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, **35** (4), 627-647.
- Dixon, J. A., Gibbon, D. P. & Gulliver, A. (2001). *Farming systems and poverty: improving farmers' livelihoods in a changing world*. Food & Agriculture Org.
- Donaldson, T. & Preston, L. E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of management Review*, **20** (1), 65-91.
- Druskat, V. U. & Wheeler, J. V. (2003). Managing from the boundary: The effective leadership of self-managing work teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, **46** (4), 435-457.
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. Ebury Publishing.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. (2008). *Management Research*. 3 ed. London: Sage.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Lowe, A. (1991). *Introduction to Management Research*. Sage, London.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative science quarterly*, **44** (2), 350-383.
- Edwards, P. K., O'Mahoney, J. & Vincent, S. (2014). *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*. OUP Oxford.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, **14** (4), 532-550.
- Empson, L. (2007). *Managing the Modern Law Firm: New Challenges*.
- Empson, L. (2010). Beyond dichotomies: a multi-stage model of governance in professional service firms. *Working Paper, Cass Business School*.
- Empson, L. (2017). *Leading professionals: Power, politics, and prima donnas*. Oxford University Press.

- Empson, L. (2020). Ambiguous authority and hidden hierarchy: Collective leadership in an elite professional service firm. *Leadership*, **16** (1), 62-86.
- Empson, L. & Alvehus, J. (2019). Collective leadership dynamics among professional peers: Co-constructing an unstable equilibrium. *Organization Studies*, 0170840619844291.
- Empson, L. & Langley, A. (2013). Leadership and professionals. *Working Paper CPSF - 010-2013, Cass Business School*.
- Empson, L., Muzio, D., Broschak, J. P. & Hinings, C. R. (2015). *The Oxford handbook of professional service firms*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Fairhurst, G. T. (2001). Dualisms in leadership research. *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods*, 379-439.
- Fang, T. (2005). From "onion" to "ocean": Paradox and change in national cultures. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, **35** (4), 71-90.
- Faulconbridge, J. & Muzio, D. (2008). Organizational professionalism in globalizing law firms. *Work, Employment & Society*, **22** (1), 7-25.
- Fayol, H. (1911). General and Industrial Management (Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd., 1949). *Chapter XI*, 7-13.
- Fiedler, F. (1967). *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*. McGraw-Hill.
- Fiol, C. M., Pratt, M. G. & O'Connor, E. J. (2009). Managing intractable identity conflicts. *Academy of Management Review*, **34** (1), 32-55.
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, **51** (4), 327-58.
- Flynn, F. J. & Chatman, J. A. (2001). Strong cultures and innovation: Oxymoron or opportunity. *International handbook of organizational culture and climate*, 263-87.
- Ford, J. (2010). Studying leadership critically: A psychosocial lens on leadership identities. *Leadership*, **6** (1), 47-65.
- Galbraith, J. R. (1973). *Designing complex organizations*. Addison-Wesley Longman Publishing Co., Inc.
- Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S. & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC medical research methodology*, **13** (1), 1-8.
- Gammack, J. G. & Stephens, R. A. (1994). 'Repertory Grid Technique in Constructive Interaction', in C. M. Cassell and G. Symon (eds), *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.
- Gardner, W. L., Lowe, K. B., Moss, T. W., Mahoney, K. T. & Cogliser, C. C. (2010). Scholarly leadership of the study of leadership: A review of The Leadership Quarterly's second decade, 2000–2009. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **21** (6), 922-958.
- Georges, L. & Eggert, A. (2003). Key Account Managers' Role Within the Value Creation Process of Collaborative Relationships. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, **10** (4), 1-22.
- Ghemawat, P. & Ricart Costa, J. E. I. (1993). The organizational tension between static and dynamic efficiency. *Strategic management journal*, **14** (S2), 59-73.
- Gibson, C. B. & Birkinshaw, J. (2004). The antecedents, consequences, and mediating role of organizational ambidexterity. *Academy of management Journal*, **47** (2), 209-226.
- Goffee, R. & Jones, G. (2000). Why Should Anyone Be Led by You? (cover story). *Harvard Business Review*, **78** (5), 62-70.

- Goffee, R. & Jones, G. (2010). Think again: what makes a leader? *Business Strategy Review*, **21** (3), 64-66.
- Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. & Foster, P. (2000). *Case study method: Key issues, key texts*. Sage.
- Graeff, C. L. (1997). Evolution of situational leadership theory: A critical review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **8** (2), 153-170.
- Graen, G. B. & Scandura, T. A. (1987). Toward a psychology of dyadic organizing. *Research in organizational behavior*.
- Graen, G. B. & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **6** (2), 219-247.
- Grant, M. J. & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, **26** (2), 91-108.
- Grant, R. M. (1996). Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, **17**, 109-122.
- Greenwood, R., Deephouse, D. L. & Li, S. X. (2007). Ownership and Performance of Professional Service Firms. *Organization Studies*, **28** (2), 219-238.
- Greenwood, R. & Empson, L. (2003). The professional partnership: Relic or exemplary form of governance? *Organization studies*, **24** (6), 909-933.
- Greenwood, R., Hinings, C. R. & Brown, J. (1990). "p2-form" strategic management: corporate practices in professional partnerships. *Academy of Management Journal*, **33** (4), 725-755.
- Gregory, R. J. (2004). *Psychological testing: History, principles, and applications*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Greiner, L. E. (1998). Evolution and revolution as organizations grow. *Harvard Business Review*, **76** (3), 55-68.
- Gremler, D. D. (2004). The Critical Incident Technique in Service Research. *Journal of Service Research*, **7** (1), 65-89.
- Grix, J. (2015). The foundations of research.
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **13** (4), 423-451.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, **2**, 163-194.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research' in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) 'The Landscape of Qualitative Research'. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guenzi, P., Georges, L. & Pardo, C. (2009). The impact of strategic account managers' behaviors on relational outcomes: An empirical study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **38** (3), 300-311.
- Guenzi, P., Pardo, C. & Georges, L. (2007). Relational selling strategy and key account managers' relational behaviors: An exploratory study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **36** (1), 121-133.
- Guesalaga, R. & Johnston, W. (2010). What's next in key account management research? Building the bridge between the academic literature and the practitioners' priorities. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **39** (7), 1063-1068.

- Guest, G., Bunce, A. & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, **18** (59).
- Gummerson, E. (2000). *Qualitative Methods in Management*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hansen, M. (2009). *Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground, and Reap Big Results*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Harris, K. J., Wheeler, A. R. & Kacmar, K. M. (2009). Leader-member exchange and empowerment: Direct and interactive effects on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **20** (3), 371-382.
- Hayes, T. & Mattimoe, R. (2004). To tape or not to tape: Reflections on methods of data collection. *The Real Life Guide to Accounting Research*. Elsevier.
- Heizmann, H., Mastio, E. A. & Ahuja, S. (2020). Stuck in defensive professionalism: Undermining organizational change in an intellectual property law firm. *Journal of Professions and Organization*.
- Hernandez, M., Eberly, M. B., Avolio, B. J. & Johnson, M. D. (2011). The loci and mechanisms of leadership: Exploring a more comprehensive view of leadership theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, (0).
- Higgs, M. (2003). How can we make sense of leadership in the 21st century? *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, **24** (5), 273-284.
- Hinings, C. R., Brown, J. & Greenwood, R. (1991). Change in an autonomous professional organization. *Journal of Management Studies*, **28** (4), 375-93.
- Hitt, M. A., Bierman, L., Shimizu, K. & Kochhar, R. (2001). Direct and moderating effects of human capital on strategy and performance in professional service firms: A resource-based perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 13-28.
- Homburg, C., Jr, J. P. W. & Jensen, O. (2002). A Configurational Perspective on Key Account Management. *Journal of Marketing*, **66** (2), 38-60.
- Hooijberg, R., Hunt, J. G. & Dodge, G. E. (1997). Leadership complexity and development of the leaderplex model. *Journal of Management*, **23** (3), 375-408.
- House, R. J. (1996). Path-goal theory of leadership: Lessons, legacy, and a reformulated theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **7** (3), 323-352.
- Hunt, J. G. (1996). *Leadership: A New Synthesis*. London: Sage.
- Hunt, J. G. & Conger, J. A. (1999). Charismatic and transformational leadership: Taking stock of the present and future (part II). *Leadership Quarterly*, **10** (3), 331.
- Huy, Q. N. (2002). Emotional balancing of organizational continuity and radical change: The contribution of middle managers. *Administrative science quarterly*, **47** (1), 31-69.
- Iacobucci, D. & Ostrom, A. (1996). Commercial and interpersonal relationships; Using the structure of interpersonal relationships to understand individual-to-individual, individual-to-firm, and firm-to-firm relationships in commerce. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, **13** (1), 53-72.
- Itami, H. & Roehl, T. W. (1991). *Mobilizing invisible assets*. Harvard Univ Pr.
- Ivens, B. S. & Pardo, C. (2008). Key-account-management in business markets: an empirical test of common assumptions. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, **23** (5), 301-310.
- Jankowicz, D. (2004). *The easy guide to repertory grids*.

- Johnson, P. & Duberley, J. (2000). *Understanding management research*. London; Thousands Oaks; New Delhi: Sage publications.
- Karp, T. (2013). Studying subtle acts of leadership. *Leadership*, **9** (1), 3-22.
- Katz, R. L. (1974). Skills of an Effective Administrator. An HBR Classic. *Harvard Business Review*, **52** (5), 90-102.
- Keatinge, D. (2002). Versatility and flexibility: Attributes of the critical incident technique in nursing research. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, **4** (1-2), 33-39.
- Keaveney, S. M. (1995). Customer Switching Behavior in Service Industries: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of marketing*, **59** (2), 71.
- Kelly, G. A. (1955). *The Psychology of Personal Constructs: Volumes 1 and 2*. New York: Norton.
- Kempster, S. & Parry, K. W. (2011). Grounded theory and leadership research: A critical realist perspective. *The leadership quarterly*, **22** (1), 106-120.
- Kets De Vries, M. F. R., Vrignaud, P. & Florent-Treacy, E. (2004). The Global Leadership Life Inventory: development and psychometric properties of a 360-degree feedback instrument. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, **15** (3), 475-492.
- King, N. (2011). 'Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of Text' in C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds) 'Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research'. London: Sage.
- King, N., Carroll, C., Newton, P. & Dornan, T. (2002). "You can't cure it so you have to endure it": the experience of adaptation to diabetic renal disease. *Qualitative Health Research*, **12** (3), 329-346.
- King, N., Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (2004). Using templates in the thematic analysis of texts. *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. SAGE.
- Klenke, K. (2008). *Qualitative research in the study of leadership*. Emerald group publishing.
- Klimoski, R. (2013). Commentary: When it comes to leadership, context matters. *The Oxford handbook of leadership*.
- Kotter, J. P. (1990). *A force for change: How leadership differs from management*. Free Pr.
- Kotter, J. P. (2001). What leaders really do. *Harvard Business Review*, **79** (11), 85-98.
- Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2003). *Encouraging The Heart, A Leader's Guide To Rewarding And Recognizing Others*. Wiley-India.
- Krause, D. E., Gebert, D. & Kearney, E. (2007). Implementing process innovations: The benefits of combining delegative-participative with consultative-advisory leadership. *Journal of leadership & Organizational studies*, **14** (1), 16-25.
- Krauss, S. E., Hamzah, A., Omar, Z., Suandi, T., Ismail, I. A., Zahari, M. Z. & Nor, Z. M. (2009). Preliminary investigation and interview guide development for studying how Malaysian farmers' form their mental models of farming. *The Qualitative Report*, **14** (2), 245.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological bulletin*, **108** (3), 480.
- Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: a phenomenological and hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, **14**, 171-96.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews : learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage.

- Kvarnström, S. (2008). Difficulties in collaboration: A critical incident study of interprofessional healthcare teamwork. *Journal of interprofessional care*, **22** (2), 191-203.
- Langer, E. J. (1989). *Minding matters: The consequences of mindlessness–mindfulness*. Elsevier.
- Lawrence, P. R. & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and environment: Managing integration and differentiation*. Irwin, Homewood, IL.
- Levin, K. A. (2006). Study design III: Cross-sectional studies. *Evidence-based dentistry*, **7** (1), 24-25.
- Lewis, R., Yarker, J., Donaldson-Feilder, E., Flaxman, P. & Munir, F. (2010). Using a competency-based approach to identify the management behaviours required to manage workplace stress in nursing: a critical incident study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, **47** (3), 307-313.
- Liehr, P. & Smith, M. J. (1999). Middle range theory: Spinning research and practice to create knowledge for the new millennium. *Advances in Nursing Science*, **21** (4), 81-91.
- Lord, R. G., De Vader, C. L. & Alliger, G. M. (1986). A meta-analysis of the relation between personality traits and leadership perceptions: An application of validity generalization procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **71** (3), 402.
- Lorsch, J. (2008). A contingency theory of leadership.
- Lorsch, J. W. & Mathias, P. F. (1988). When professionals have to manage. *Legal Econ.*, **14**, 51.
- Lorsch, J. W. & Tierney, T. J. (2002). *Aligning the stars: How to succeed when professionals drive results*. Harvard Business Press.
- Løwendahl, B. (2005). *Strategic management of professional service firms*. Copenhagen Business School Pr.
- Lüscher, L. S. & Lewis, M. W. (2008). Organizational change and managerial sensemaking: Working through paradox. *Academy of management Journal*, **51** (2), 221-240.
- Maister, D. H. (2003). *Managing the professional service firm*.
- Malhotra, N. & Morris, T. (2009). Heterogeneity in Professional Service Firms. *Journal of Management Studies*, **46** (6), 895-922.
- Mann, R. D. (1959). A review of the relationships between personality and performance in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, **56** (4), 241.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage publications.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* Sage Publications. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi.
- Matlin, M. W. & Stang, D. J. (1978). *The Pollyanna principle: Selectivity in language, memory, and thought*. Schenkman Pub. Co.
- Mavondo, F. T. & Rodrigo, E. M. (2001). The effect of relationship dimensions on interpersonal and interorganizational commitment in organizations conducting business between Australia and China. *Journal of Business Research*, **52** (2), 111-121.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2008). Designing a qualitative study. *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods*, **2**, 214-253.

- Mayson, S. (2012). The mirage of ownership. *Occasional thoughts about the legal services market* [Online]. Accessed].
- Mayson, S. W. (1997). *Making Sense of Law Firms: strategy, structure and ownership*. Blackstone Press.
- McDonald, M., Millman, T. & Rogers, B. (1997). Key Account Management: Theory, Practice and Challenges. *Journal of Marketing Management*, **13** (8), 737-757.
- McDonald, M., Rogers, B. & Woodburn, D. (2000). *Key Customers: How to Manage Them Profitably*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- McKenna, P. J. & Maister, D. H. (2002). *First Among Equals: A Guidebook for how Group Managers Can Manage the Unmanageable*. New York: The Free Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1996). *Phenomenology of perception*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishes.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (2009). *Qualitative data analysis : an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Millman, T. & Wilson, K. (1995). From key account selling to key account management. *Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science*, **1** (1), 9-21.
- Mingers, J., Mutch, A. & Willcocks, L. (2013). Critical realism in information systems research. *MIS quarterly*, **37** (3), 795-802.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The Structuring of Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Mintzberg, H. (1998). Covert Leadership: Notes on Managing Professionals *Harvard Business Review*, **76** (6), 140-147.
- Moon, M. A. & Gupta, S. F. (1997). Examining the Formation of Selling Centers: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, **17** (2), 31-41.
- Müller, A. & Schyns, B. (2005). The perception of leadership-leadership as a perception. An exploration using the Repertory Grid-Technique. *Implicit leadership theories: Essays and explorations*. Information Age Publishing.
- Mumford, M. D., Zaccaro, S. J., Connelly, M. S. & Marks, M. A. (2000). Leadership skills: Conclusions and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **11** (1), 155-170.
- Murnighan, J. K. & Conlon, D. E. (1991). The dynamics of intense work groups: A study of British string quartets. *Administrative science quarterly*, 165-186.
- Northouse, P. G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*.
- O'Mahony, S. & Bechky, B. A. (2006). Stretchwork: Managing the career progression paradox in external labor markets. *Academy of Management Journal*, **49** (5), 918-941.
- Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Index of Services*. URL: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/datasets/indexofservices> [4 May].
- Ojasalo, J. (2001). Key account management at company and individual levels in business-to-business relationships. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, **16** (3), 199-220.
- Osanloo, A. & Grant, C. (2016). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house". *Administrative issues journal: connecting education, practice, and research*, **4** (2), 7.
- Ospina, S. M., Foldy, E. G., Fairhurst, G. T. & Jackson, B. (2020). Collective dimensions of leadership: Connecting theory and method. *Human Relations*, **73** (4), 441-463.

- Pardo, C., Ivens, B. S. & Niersbach, B. (2020). An identity perspective of key account managers as paradoxical relationship managers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **89**, 355-372.
- Parker, S. K., Williams, H. M. & Turner, N. (2006). Modeling the antecedents of proactive behavior at work. *Journal of applied psychology*, **91** (3), 636.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.
- Peach, J. & Dugger, W. M. (2006). An Intellectual History of Abundance Putting Abundance in Context. *Journal of economic issues*, **40** (3), 693-706.
- Pearce, C. L. & Conger, J. A. (2003). *Shared leadership: reframing the hows and whys of leadership*.
- Pearce, C. L., Wassenaar, C. L., Berson, Y. & Tuval-Mashiach, R. (2019). Toward a theory of meta-paradoxical leadership. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, **155**, 31-41.
- Pegram, R. M. (1972). Selling and servicing the national account.
- Peng, K. & Nisbett, R. E. (1999). Culture, dialectics, and reasoning about contradiction. *American psychologist*, **54** (9), 741.
- Peshkin, A. (1993). The goodness of qualitative research. *Educational researcher*, **22** (2), 23-29.
- Peteraf, M. A. (1993). The Cornerstones Of Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based View. *Strategic Management Journal*, **14** (3), 179-191.
- Peters, L. H., Hartke, D. D. & Pohlmann, J. T. (1985). Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership: An application of the meta-analysis procedures of Schmidt and Hunter. *Psychological Bulletin*, **97** (2), 274.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (2008). *On studying managerial elites. The Value Creating Board*. Routledge.
- Phillips, D. D. C. & Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Postpositivism and educational research*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Pillai, R. & Meindl, J. R. (1998). Context and charisma: A "meso" level examination of the relationship of organic structure, collectivism, and crisis to charismatic leadership. *Journal of Management*, **24** (5), 643-671.
- Pina e Cunha, M., Campos e Cunha, R. & Rego, A. (2009). Exploring the role of leader—subordinate interactions in the construction of organizational positivity. *Leadership*, **5** (1), 81-101.
- Pinnington, A. & Morris, T. (1996). Power and control in professional partnerships. *Long Range Planning*, **29** (6), 842-849.
- Pinnington, A. & Morris, T. (2003). Archetype Change in Professional Organizations: Survey Evidence from Large Law Firms. *British Journal of Management*, **14** (1), 85-99.
- Plsek, P. E. & Wilson, T. (2001). Complexity, leadership, and management in healthcare organisations. *Bmj*, **323** (7315), 746-749.
- Poole, M. S. & Van de Ven, A. H. (1989). Using paradox to build management and organization theories. *Academy of management review*, **14** (4), 562-578.
- Pope, M. L. & Keen, T. R. (1981). *Personal construct psychology and education*. Academic Press.
- Porter, M. E. (1996). What Is Strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, **74** (6), 61-78.

- Quinn, R. E. & Cameron, K. S. (1988). *Paradox and transformation: Toward a theory of change in organization and management*. Ballinger Publishing Co/Harper & Row Publishers.
- Quinn, R. E., Faerman, S. R., Thompson, M. P. & McGrath, M. R. (1996). *Becoming a Master Manager* John Wiley & Sons. New York.
- Remenyi, D., Williams, B., Money, A. & Swartz, E. (1998). *Doing Research in Business and Management: An Introduction to Process and Method*. London: Sage.
- Richards, L. & Morse, J. M. (2007). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Blackwell Oxford.
- Rothenburg, A. (1979). The emerging goddess. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press*. Rush, MC, Thomas, JC, & Lord, RG (1977). *Implicit leadership theory: A potential threat to the internal validity of leader behavior questionnaires*. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, **81**, 756-765.
- Ryals, L. J. & McDonald, L. R. M. (2008). *Key Account Plans: The Practitioners' Guide to Profitable Planning*.
- Sagie, A., Zaidman, N., Amichai-Hamburger, Y., Te'eni, D. & Schwartz, D. G. (2002). An empirical assessment of the loose-tight leadership model: quantitative and qualitative analyses. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, **23** (3), 303-320.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th ed. England: Pearson.
- Sayer, R. A. (1992). *Method in social science a realist approach*. London: Routledge.
- Schad, J., Lewis, M. W., Raisch, S. & Smith, W. K. (2016). Paradox research in management science: Looking back to move forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, **10** (1), 5-64.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. *Handbook of qualitative research*, **1**, 118-137.
- Senge, P., Kaeufer, K. & Kellerman, L. R. M. (1999). Communities of Leaders or No Leadership at all. *Chowdbury, S. Management in the 21c*. London.
- Sengupta, S., Krapfel, R. E. & Pusateri, M. A. (2000). An empirical investigation of key account salesperson effectiveness. *The Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 253-261.
- Shamir, B., House, R. J. & Arthur, M. B. (1993). The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization science*, **4** (4), 577-594.
- Sharoff, L. (2008). Critique of the critical incident technique. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, **13** (4), 301-309.
- Shaw, J. (2010). Papering the cracks with discourse: The narrative identity of the authentic leader. *Leadership*, **6** (1), 89-108.
- Shi, L. H., Shaoming, Z. & Cavusgil, S. T. (2004). A conceptual framework of global account management capabilities and firm performance. *International Business Review*, **13** (5), 539-553.
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage.

- Sinclair, M. (2007). A guide to understanding theoretical and conceptual frameworks. *Evidence-Based Midwifery*, **5** (2), 39-40.
- Smith, C. & Elger, T. (2014). Critical realism and interviewing subjects. *Studying organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*, 109-131.
- Smith, J., Flower, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. London: Sage. Taylor & Francis.
- Smith, J. A. & Osborn, M. (2008). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Doing social psychology research*. The British Psychological Society and Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Smith, J. K. (1989). *The Nature of Social and Educational Enquiry: Empiricism vs. Interpretation*.
- Smith, K. K. & Berg, D. N. (1987). *Paradoxes of group life: Understanding conflict, paralysis, and movement in group dynamics*. Jossey-Bass.
- Smith, W. K. (2014). Dynamic decision making: A model of senior leaders managing strategic paradoxes. *Academy of Management Journal*, **57** (6), 1592-1623.
- Smith, W. K., Binns, A. & Tushman, M. L. (2010). Complex business models: Managing strategic paradoxes simultaneously. *Long range planning*, **43** (2-3), 448-461.
- Smith, W. K. & Lewis, M. W. (2011). Toward a theory of paradox: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing. *Academy of Management Review*, **36** (2), 381-403.
- Smith, W. K., Lewis, M. W. & Tushman, M. L. (2016). "Both/and" leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, **94** (5), 62-70.
- Smith, W. K. & Tushman, M. L. (2005). Managing strategic contradictions: A top management model for managing innovation streams. *Organization science*, **16** (5), 522-536.
- Solicitors Regulation Authority URL: <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/equality-diversity/key-findings/law-firms-2017/> [March 16th 2017].
- Steinmetz, G. (1998). Critical Realism and Historical Sociology. A Review Article. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **40** (1), 170-186.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1974). *Handbook of leadership: A survey of the literature*. New York: Free Press.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Sage publications Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Strube, M. J. & Garcia, J. E. (1981). A meta-analytic investigation of Fiedler's contingency model of leadership effectiveness. *Psychological Bulletin*, **90** (2), 307.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C. (1998). *Qualitative methods and analysis in organizational research. A Practical*.
- Symon, G. & Cassell, C. (2012). *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. Sage.
- Tan, F. B. & Hunter, M. G. (2002). The repertory grid technique: A method for the study of cognition in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 39-57.
- Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management* New York. NY: Harper & Brothers.
- The Lawyer (2010). UK 200 Annual Report.
- The Legal Services Board (2011). Research note on the UK legal sector.

- TheCityUK. *TheCityUK*. URL: <https://www.thecityuk.com/assets/2019/Report-PDFs/294e2be784/Legal-excellence-internationally-renowned-UK-legal-services-2019.pdf>.
- Tufford, L. & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative social work*, **11** (1), 80-96.
- Tushman, M., Smith, W. K., Wood, R. C., Westerman, G. & O'Reilly, C. (2010). Organizational designs and innovation streams. *Industrial and corporate change*, **19** (5), 1331-1366.
- Tushman, M. L. & O'Reilly, C. A. (1996). Ambidextrous organizations: Managing evolutionary and revolutionary change. *California management review*, **38** (4), 8-29.
- Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational Leadership Theory: Exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **17**, 654-676.
- Uhl-Bien, M. & Ospina, S. M. (2012). *Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives*. IAP.
- Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B. & Carsten, M. K. (2014). Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The leadership quarterly*, **25** (1), 83-104.
- Uлага, W. & Sharma, A. (2001). Complex and Strategic Decision Making in Organizations:: Implications for Personal Selling and Sales Management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **30** (5), 427-440.
- van Knippenberg, D. & Sitkin, S. B. (2013). A Critical Assessment of Charismatic—Transformational Leadership Research: Back to the Drawing Board? *The Academy of Management Annals*, **7** (1), 1-60.
- Vera, D. & Crossan, M. (2004). Strategic leadership and organizational learning. *Academy of management review*, **29** (2), 222-240.
- Vince, R. (1998). Behind and beyond Kolb's learning cycle. *Journal of Management Education*, **22** (3), 304-319.
- Von Nordenflycht, A. (2010). What Is a Professional Service Firm? Toward a Theory and Taxonomy of Knowledge-Intensive Firms. *Academy of Management Review*, **35** (1), 155-174.
- Waldman, D. A. & Bowen, D. E. (2016). Learning to be a paradox-savvy leader. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, **30** (3), 316-327.
- Walker, B. M. & Winter, D. A. (2007). The elaboration of personal construct psychology. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, **58**, 453-477.
- Wang, L. & Pratt, M. G. (2008). An identity-based view of ambivalence and its management in organizations. N. Ashkanasy, C. Cooper, eds. *Research Companion to Emotions in Organizations*. Edward Elgar, Boston.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Weick, K. E. & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Organizational change and development. *Annual review of psychology*, **50** (1), 361-386.
- Weitz, B. A. & Bradford, K. D. (1999). Personal Selling and Sales Management: A Relationship Marketing Perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, **27** (2), 241-254.
- Whiting, L. S. (2008). Semi-structured interviews: guidance for novice researchers. *Nursing standard*, **22** (23), 35-41.
- Williams, T. (2012). Death of a golden age? *LawBusinessReview.co.uk*.

- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. McGraw-hill education (UK).
- Wilson, K. & Millman, T. (2003). The global account manager as political entrepreneur. *Industrial Marketing Management*, **32** (2), 151-158.
- Wolff, S. B., Pescosolido, A. T. & Druskat, V. U. (2002). Emotional intelligence as the basis of leadership emergence in self-managing teams. *The Leadership Quarterly*, **13** (5), 505-522.
- Woodburn, D. & McDonald, M. (2011). *Key account management: the definitive guide*. Wiley.
- Woodward, J. (1965). *Industrial Organizations: Theory and Practice* Oxford University Press. London.
- Workman, J. P., Homburg, C. & Jensen, O. (2003). Intraorganizational Determinants of Key Account Management Effectiveness. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, **31** (1), 3-21.
- Wotruba, T. R. & Castleberry, S. B. (1993). Job Analysis and Hiring Practices for National Account Marketing Positions. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, **13** (3), 49-65.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications. Thousand oaks.
- Young, M. & Dulewicz, V. (2007). Relationships between emotional and congruent self-awareness and performance in the British Royal Navy. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, **22** (5), 465-478.
- Yukl, G. (1989). Managerial Leadership: A Review of Theory and Research. *Journal of Management*, **15** (2), 251.
- Yukl, G. (1998). *Leadership in Organizations*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *The leadership quarterly*, **10** (2), 285-305.
- Yukl, G. (2008). How leaders influence organizational effectiveness. *The leadership quarterly*, **19** (6), 708-722.
- Zenger, J. H., Folkman, J., Sherwin, R. H. & Steel, B. (2012). *How to Be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success By Magnifying Your Strengths: Drive Leadership Success By Magnifying Your Strengths*. McGraw Hill Professional.
- Zhang, Y., Waldman, D. A., Han, Y.-L. & Li, X.-B. (2015). Paradoxical leader behaviors in people management: Antecedents and consequences. *Academy of Management Journal*, **58** (2), 538-566.
- Zollo, M. & Winter, S. G. (2002). Deliberate learning and the evolution of dynamic capabilities. *Organization science*, **13** (3), 339-351.
- Zupancic, D. (2008). Towards an integrated framework of key account management. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, **23** (5), 323-331.

Appendix A

Interview protocol

	<p>Say: “many thanks for agreeing to meet me and to share your views on the factors that affect the ability of Client Relationship Partners to influence the activities of peers on a key account</p> <p>I would very much like to record what you say and I guarantee anonymity and confidentiality in reporting my results. An independent word processing specialist will transcribe the tape and has already signed a Non Disclosure Agreement. Should you wish to have a copy of the transcript I would be very happy to send you one.</p> <p>Altogether the interview will take 90 minutes.</p> <p>I would like to reassure you that we are not looking for any “correct” answers but seeking to hear your experience as a Client Relationship Partner.</p> <p>But first I need to get a few factual details if you don’t mind.”</p> <p>(Start tape)</p>
	Name:
	Sex:
	Age:
	Current position in the firm:
	Number of years in current position:
	Practice area:
	Practice specialism:
	Number of years as partner:
	<p>Bridging statement to introduce discussion of research issues:</p> <p>Say: “we are now going to get into the actual interview. First we will focus on your experience of leading peers on a key account. Are you happy to begin?”</p>
1.	Critical Incident Technique
Research Issue	How leaders make sense of leadership

Sub questions	<p>1.1 How do Client Relationship Partners perceive leadership in City law firms? (Kotter, 2001);</p> <p>1.2 How do City Partners perceive their own role in relation to leading peers on a key account?; and</p> <p>3.1 How do Client Relationship Partners develop their leadership capabilities? Graeff, 1997, Lorsch and Tierney, 2002, Empson, 2007, Empson, 2010, Mayson, 2012, Løwendahl, 2005)</p>
	<p>Say: "Please can you bring to mind a key client relationship that you have led in the last three years.</p> <p>In the context of leading that relationship, select a specific event where you had either a positive or negative experience of leading your peers.</p> <p><i>Prompt (if required) this could be in relation to a pitch; a panel review; day-to-day coordination of the account.</i></p> <p>Note - for each event ask the following:</p>
1.1	What was the event?
1.2	When did the event happen?
1.3	What circumstances led up to this event?
1.4	<p>What were you trying to achieve?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you see as the most important aspects of your role at this time? • How did you feel about your role as Client Relationship Partner at this time?
1.5	<p>What did your peer(s) say or do?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think peers expected from you? • How do you think your peers on the account viewed you?
1.6	<p>What did you say or do?</p> <p>Probe question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you see yourself as a leader? • What differences did you see between your role as a leader and a manager? • Was there anything you did in the past that helped prepare you for the leadership challenges you faced?

1.7	<p>What was the outcome?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues were most difficult to deal with? • To have been more effective, was there anything you could have done differently?
1.8	<p>How has the experience shaped how you now lead your peers?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe any regular practices in which you engage that help you reflect on past experiences like this one? • How has the firm helped you develop as a Client Relationship Partner? • Were it to occur now, how well equipped do for you feel to handle the situation?
2.	Repertory Grid
Research Issue	The mechanisms and foci of leadership
Sub questions	<p>2.1 How important is the role of the Client Relationship Partner in influencing the activities of peers on a key account?</p> <p>2.2 What behaviours on the part of the Client Relationship Partner are perceived as essential for influencing the activities of peers on a key account? (Iacobucci and Ostrom, 1996; Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001; Guenzi <i>et al.</i>, 2009).</p>
2.1	<p>Say: “this next section will focus on how Client Relationship Partners influence the activities of peers on a key account.</p> <p>You will be asked to select six partners on whom to focus your thoughts. You do not have to reveal their identity, but you will find it useful to note their initials on these blank cards.</p> <p>You can keep these cards. They are just a convenient way of focusing your thoughts during the interview.</p> <p>The six partners you select must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have led a relationship with a key account in the last three years • Be someone you know, or have known, well and at first hand • Differ in effectiveness. Select 3 Client Relationship Partners who, in your judgement, are effective at influencing the activities of peers on a key account • Select 3 Client Relationship Partners who are less effective at influencing the activities of peers on a key account <p>I’ll guide you through the process. Are you happy to begin?”</p> <p>Please allocate one card to each partner. Write only their initials. Please letter the effective performers A, B, C and the less effective performers D, E, F</p>

	<p>Start by extracting cards A, C and E. Put the other cards to one side.</p> <p>Fix your thoughts on the three partners and answer this question: “in their ability to influence the activities of peers in relation to a key account, which two seem most alike and different from the third?”</p> <p>Describing just one aspect of their behaviour, what do the pair have in common as opposed to the third? I am looking here for a bipolar expression – so a contrast between what the pair have in common and the third.</p> <p>[Since I am asking about behaviour, try to use sentences that contain a verb – for example planning, decision making, communicating powerfully and so on...]</p> <p>(Repeat)</p>
3.	Semi Structured Questions
Research Issue	The nature and concept of leadership development in City law firms
Sub questions	<p>2.3 How do the characteristics of a City law firm enable or impede a Client Relationship Partner in their efforts to influence the activities of peers on a key account?</p> <p>3.2 What are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?</p> <p>Say: “I would like to finish the interview by asking a couple of general questions. Is that ok?”</p>
3.1	<p>What helps or hinders a Client Relationship Partner when attempting to influence the activities of peers on a key account?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the effects of the partnership structure? • How do chargeable hours targets affect the situation?
3.2	<p>Given all that you have been saying about the role of the Client Relationship Partner, what are the implications for Client Relationship Partner development in City law firms?</p> <p>Probe questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should be targeted for training and development? • What are the kinds of strategies you think would be most successful in developing leaders?

Appendix B

Repertory Grid construct elicitation template

	CRP Name:	
	Pair in common	Single different
A C E		
B D F		
A B D		
C E F		
B C E		
A D F		
C D E		
A B F		

Repertory Grid scoring template

CRP name:

ITEM	EMERGENT CONSTRUCT	EFFECTIVE			LESS EFFECTIVE			CONTRAST CONSTRUCT
		A	B	C	D	E	F	

Appendix C

Coding framework

Parent Code	Child Code	Sub-Child Code	Description	Sources	References
Characteristics of law firms	Systemic, structural, processual and cultural factors that may effect the ability of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account			31	590
	Individual autonomy		The extent to which CRPs feel they have autonomy and are able to practice autonomously in their role	28	155
	Learning (knowledge)		References to the culture of learning / continuous learning within the firm	23	58
	Managerial authority		Views on the role / importance of positional leaders as critical success factor for City law firms in a highly competitive market	28	157
	Organizing (processes)		The systems and processes that support (either effectively or ineffectively) the activities of CRPs and positional leaders	31	262
	Partnership structure and governance		The perspective of CRPs on the merits and demerits of how law firms are structured and governed	27	178
	Performing (goals)		How goals / objectives at the CRP level are set and delivered against in City law firms	28	194
	Reward and recognition		Views on how the CRP role is recognised and rewarded	29	195
	Seniority and networks		The role and influence of partner / CRP seniority and networks in affecting the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers	27	90
	Size of firm		The extent to which the size of affirm affects the ease / difficulty CRPs have in	17	25

		securing the involvement of peers			
	Structure of KAM programme	How key account programmes are structured in firms and examples of what works well / does not work		28	350
	Support provided to CRPs	Examples of support provided specifically for / to the CRPs of a firm's largest accounts		28	167
	Training and development	--- This Parent code was ultimately used as a signpost to highlight the two Child codes below ---			
		CRP (not) - development and training needs	The training and development needs for lawyers generally (not specific to CRPs)	30	218
		CRP - leadership preparation and development	Examples of how CRPs prepared for / were trained for the role	30	261
	Values, culture and identity	The extent to which values, culture or identity of a firm were referenced as having some relationship to the ability of CRPs to secure the involvement of peers		28	232
CRP characteristics	Affective, cognitive, behavioural and trait factors that may effect the ability of CRPs to influence the activities of peers on a key account			31	734
	Affect - emotions and moods	The emotions and moods involved referenced by CRPs when trying to secure the involvement of peers		24	101
	Behaviours	Behaviours cited as either helping or hindering CRPs in their efforts to secure the involvement of peers		31	508
		Broadens the relationship	Examples of where CRPs actively attempt expand the relationship to other lawyers in the firm or conversely where they attempt to restrict expansion	29	130

		Coaches others	The extent to which a CRP coaches peers	20	44
		Communication	Examples of effective and ineffective communication by CRPs to / with peers	27	111
		Confidence, enthusiasm, passion	Instances when a CRP either does or does not display these qualities when attempting to secure the involvement of peers	27	117
		Develops self	The extent to which a CRP displays demonstrates a commitment to their on-going development as a CRP	19	40
		Empathy - EQ	Occasions on which the role of emotional intelligence / EQ is referenced	12	36
		Flexible	Cases when the perceived flexibility of the CRP towards peers is referenced	12	29
		Focuses on results	Incidents in which the role of the CRP being focused on results is referenced as important	18	48
		Hours invested as a CRP	The amount of non-chargeable hours invested by CRPs in leading / managing a key account	17	42
		Individualised consideration	The extent to which a CRP either does or does not tailor messages / communications to peers when seeking to secure their involvement	7	23
		Is client facing	Examples of where the CRP is or is not highly visible to / a key point of contact for the client	26	80
		Manages - coordinates	Examples of the CRP actively coordinating the activities of peers	21	76
		Recognise the	Instances of CRPs utilising (or failing to utilise) the	21	75

		strengths of others	strengths of peers in pursuit of key account objectives		
		Trust and openness	The degree to which a CRP does / does not display these qualities to peers on the client service team	26	94
		Vision, direction, planning	The role of setting a clear vision and strategy for an account in securing the involvement of peers	27	102
	Cognition - thoughts and sense making	Perceptions on how CRPs perceive / make sense of the role		31	546
		Belonging (identity and interpersonal relationships)	The extent to which identity and interpersonal relationships affect how CRPs perceive their role	26	83
	Traits	References to the role of traits in helping CRPs secure the involvement of peers		19	56
CRPs - responsibilities	The primary responsibilities and activities of CRPs			31	412
	External factors	Factors outside of a firm that may affect the CRP role and responsibilities of a CRP		18	36
	Ineffective	Examples of where CRPs were considered to be ineffective in an aspect of their role		31	259
Loci of leadership	Examples of how leadership arises in relation to the role performed by CRPs			30	272
	Collective - leadership in the plural	Examples of collective leadership		28	253
		Legitimizing	Ways in which CRPs become (and remain) legitimate in terms of their leadership role on an account	29	210

		Manoeuvring	Evidence of ways in which CRPs may be acting politically while colleagues perceive them as acting with integrity	25	112
		Negotiating	Examples of CRPs asserting control while colleagues simultaneously exercise autonomy	23	104

Appendix D

Braun and Clarke (2006): A 15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data has been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once over lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e., described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.

Appendix E

Portfolio strategy guidelines

Portfolio category	Strategic invest	Proactive maintenance	Selective Invest	Manage for profit
Overall Strategy for category	Prioritise investment for growth and future profit	Invest to maintain position and gauge competitive position over a given timeframe. Manage for return	Invest for specific strategic / opportunistic development and to increase business strength in key areas	Manage for short term financial returns
Ratio of investment from available business development budget	31-50%	6-15%	16-30%	0-5%
Share of accessible spend over life of account plan	Aim to increase dominance/volume	Maintain dominance of available legal spend but consider short-term profitability implications	Aim to increase dominance in certain key areas of available spend	Forgo share of available spend to increase profit
Pricing of firm's services	Creatively price to increase spend and service line expansion with a view to longer term enhancement of profit	Hold or raise prices to reflect perceived value	Creatively price to increase spend in certain areas and selective service line expansion with a view to enhancing longer term profit	Raise prices with a view to enhancing margin
Margin and leverage	Acceptable to have low contribution margin due to investment costs but should grow over time as ROI increases with economies of scale and efficiencies. Low leverage as significant investment in partner 'BD' time required	Aim for steadily higher contribution margin. Reduce investment costs where appropriate to increase margins over time. Medium to high leverage. Partner 'BD' time required but chargeable hours to be at a minimum	Lower margins acceptable to support opportunistic investment costs in profitable areas but should grow over time as ROI increases with economies of scale and efficiencies Low to medium leverage. Significant partner 'BD' time required.	Aim for high contribution margins. Aggressively reduce investment costs for maximum available margin. High leverage. Partner involvement likely to be unprofitable
Efficiency and process	Invest in improving efficiency and process and introduce new working practices as a priority	Follow best practice in efficiency and process do not invest. Introduce tried and tested methodologies to enhance margin	Invest in improving efficiency and process where appropriate and introduce new working practices	Follow best practice in efficiency and process do not invest. Introduce tried and tested methodologies to enhance margin
Time investment	CRP: 400-1000hrs	CRP: 200-600hrs	CRP: 250-750hrs	CRP: 200-500hrs

Portfolio category	Strategic invest	Proactive maintenance	Selective Invest	Manage for profit
BD approach	<p>Aggressive promotion and relationship development across decision makers and influencers</p> <p>Aim to make relationship: interdependent / integrated</p> <p>Focus: extend relationship into new territory / creative strategy</p>	<p>Limited promotion and focused relationship development/maintenance for key decision makers and influencers only</p> <p>Relationship: co-operative / interdependent</p> <p>Focus: nurture relationship planning; operational focus</p>	<p>Aggressive promotion and relationship development focusing on decision makers and influencers for selected opportunities</p> <p>Relationship: co-operative</p> <p>Focus: relationship building taking calculated risks; robust; pro-active</p>	<p>Minimized promotion and very focussed relationship building/maintenance with key decision makers only</p> <p>Relationship: basic</p> <p>Focus: tough on price negotiations; operational focus; efficient</p>
Service lines	<p>Differentiate service and aim for service line expansion</p>	<p>Begin to scale back less successful, less profitable service lines</p> <p>Use best practice elsewhere – do not invest in differentiation</p>	<p>Differentiate service where possible and aim for selective service line expansion</p>	<p>Use best practice elsewhere – do not invest in differentiation</p> <p>Aggressively scale back less successful, less profitable service lines</p>
Added value investment (incl. secondments)	<p>Available value account worth up to 15% of revenue target</p> <p>Opportunity cost of secondment v. % current or future profit p.a.</p>	<p>Available value account worth 5% of actual revenue</p> <p>Opportunity cost of secondment v. % current or future profit p.a.</p>	<p>Available value account worth 10% of revenue target</p> <p>Opportunity cost of secondment v. % current or future profit p.a.</p>	<p>Available value account worth 2/3% of actual revenue</p> <p>Opportunity cost of secondment v. % current or future profit p.a.</p>
CRP archetype	Business manager	Project manager	Entrepreneur	Tactician