An attention-based view on post-acquisition integration success

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A multiple case-study on middle management attention and focus during post-acquisition integration

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Acknowledgements

In 2008 when Staples acquired Corporate Express, at that time my employer, a rollercoaster ride of events took place in my working environment. That acquisition in combination with this study led to a fascination for the integration of organizations and finally became the reason to write my thesis on post-acquisition integration. From that very broad theme I wanted to take an angle that is of day-to-day relevance and is somewhat uncultivated. That angle is "attention"; how does a manager 'manages' his busy agenda, attends to a thousand-and-one issues and challenges, while taking care of his team during a busy period such as post-acquisition integration. And of course, this integration has to become a success.

Talking about success, I would not have been able to bring this thesis to a successful completion without the help of a number of people out of which I would like to name some to thank them.

First I want to thank my coaches at the Erasmus University. Raymond van Wijk, my first thesis coach who supported me to choose this ambitious research theme and has invested his time in building the basis for this research. I enjoyed his enthusiasm and experienced his thoroughness as a great motivator to present good work and progress every time we met. Unfortunately Raymond was not able to complete the task against his own choice. I wish him a good recovery and return to the university in great health.

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been my study partner from day one and from who I have learned a great deal, and of course I want to thank my "partner in crime" Rutger.

The closure of this preface on the one hand preludes the research I have conducted over the last nine months but on the other hand means the completion of my final assignment for my part-time MScBA/Drs. Bedrijfskunde study; an interesting contradiction. Without sounding too heavy; the end of this study will marks the beginning of something new. What that 'something new' will be, is an open question which I will explore in the time to come. At least I will have plenty of time!

Maartje van Tongeren
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Management summary

This research takes on the attention-based view as a research paradigm within the theme of post-acquisition integration in order to discover how the attention and focus of middle management affects how they coordinate and use incentives during a busy phase of integration. An individual is never able to oversee everything around him and therefore certain issues, challenges or projects get the attention above others (Simon, 1957). Therefore organizations assign specific jobs and tasks to their employees which makes coordination a necessary activity. Additionally organizations make sure their organizational members will adapt their decisions to the organization objectives by use of incentives. Neither has there been much research in which the attention-based view is combined with post-acquisition integration, nor including the specific role of middle management.

Based on a qualitative method, propositions that were derived from a theoretical background where tested in a multiple case study across five business units who have been through post-acquisition integration. Twenty interviews with middle management created empirical evidence which proved that during PAI middle management attention based on the context characteristics influences its way of coordinating activities. Tightly prepared and planned integrations make middle management coordinate in a formal manner and middle management involved in less prepared and planned integrations make them coordinate in an informal manner. Further results indicate that management focus does not impact the way middle management coordinates or what kind of incentives they use. An emerged insight showed that organizations can reach successful task integration without a successful human integration. Using a period of learning during which both organizations cooperate before they in a later stage combine and transfer their resources can result in a successful human integration.

1. Introduction

"Getting things done" is the worldwide bestselling book and contemporary time-management method by David Allen (Allen, 2001) offering a hand to busy managers to structure their mind and workload in order to cope with the day to day challenges of too much to do in too little time. In a steady-state business this is already challenging, let alone during post-acquisition integration where two previously separated firms come together and are reconciled into one organization. This multi-faceted process requires attention simultaneously in numerous areas (Epstein, 2004).

Post-acquisition integration (hereafter referred to as "PAI") is the phase where the actual value creation takes place and where synergy realization is created (Birkinshaw, Bresman, & Håkanson, 2000; Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Schweiger & Very, 2003). For many organizations, acquisition is a fast and efficient way to enter into new markets, expand or dominate in existing markets (Papadakis, 2005) and to bridge the gap between the resources of a firm today and its required resources for tomorrow (Hoffmann & Schaper-Rinkel, 2001). Yet, scholars prove overpromised but underperformed shareholder value and have found dramatic declines in employee and customer satisfaction leading to significant decrease in profitability (Barkema & Schijven, 2008; Cording, Christmann, & King, 2008; Epstein, 2004). The rootcause of these problems lie in the nuts and bolts of integration (Christensen, Alton, Rising, & Waldeck, 2011). Therefore, firms who acquire other firms push hard on making their integration to a success by setting ambitious integration objectives. These often complex and contradictory demands overload the organization during a situation of change and typically end in failure (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 2005). On top of that, research has shown that this heavy workload during PAI can take away the focus on these 'business as usual' operations and decisions which in turn can be exploited by competitors who will try to take advantage of the temporary inertia (Gall, 1993).

1.1. Problem definition

Almost fifty percent of mergers and acquisitions (hereafter referred to as "M&A") fail to fulfill their integration objectives which creates the desire of organizations to understand the psychological and behavioral effect of M&A on managers (Vaara, 2003). It is of interest for these organizations to understand how their managers 'manage' their work, where they focus on and how they disperse their attention. Do they attend to the right activities and how is their attention affected? The attention-based view of the firm elucidates when, why and how firms and their actors respond to or anticipate changes in their environment or internal processes and why they undertake some decisions and moves but not others (Ocasio, 1997).

With this effect of management attention in mind; how does an organization successfully integrate another organization when it is evident that an individual is never able to oversee everything around him? That is why organizations create an environment for its employees in which they have specific jobs and tasks assigned to them in order to make sure all the activities the organization needs to perform are attended to. Coordination is needed in that to determine "who does what and when". Coordination stems from division of labor (Barnard 1968, Simon 1957, March 1978) and serves managers to decompose tasks and to establish and communicate activities (Vlaar, Van den Bosch & Volberda 2007). During PAI coordination is crucial as two formerly separate organizations come together. An organization could be integrating two finance departments, two procurement departments and two sales departments. In PAI where a lot of change is on the agenda, formal and informal coordination is needed to follow the right sequence and pace of the changes, attend to the human aspects of change and make sure synergies are achieved while attending to the customer and the market environment. Formal coordination takes place through planning and procedures (Vlaar, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2007) and informal coordination is based on social interactions (Tsai, 2002).

Next to coordination it is of importance that organizations place the organization members in a psychological environment that will adapt their decisions to the organization objectives, and will provide them with the information needed to make these decisions correctly (Simon, 1957:79). For that reason incentives are important as no or unclear incentives will result in dissolution and failure of cooperation (Barnard, 1968). Especially during PAI which inevitably causes uncertainty for individuals involved (Nikandrou, Papalexandris, & Bourantas, 2000), providing purpose and setting incentives is important. Papadakis (Papadakis, 2005) showed in his work that the definition of financial and strategic objectives lead to succesful acquisition integration. Consistent with earlier studies we distinguish extrinsic incentives which are incentives where motivation is achieved by linking employees' monitary motives to the goal of the firm and intrinsic incentives where motivation is valued by the form of identification with the firm's strategic goals, shared purposes and the fullfilment of norms for its own sake (Baker, Jensen, & Murphy, 1988; Barnard, 1968; Eisenhardt, 1989a; Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

Top managers and middle managers in organizations coordinate and set incentives. They both have an important influence on strategy formulation and implementation (S. W. Floyd & Lane, 2000) and their management attention plays an important role in succesfull integrating two formerly seperated organizations. Top managers generally determine the objectives, set structures and think strategically (Hrebiniak, 2006; Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk, & Roe, 2011; Volberda, 1999) but it is middle management who implements that strategy. They translate it into action plans and individual objectives in order to

coordinate the various elements of strategic change (Currie & Procter, 2005) and play a key integrative role in generating and mobilizing ideas between technical and institutional levels of the organization (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). In their linking pin position, middle managers' actions have an upward influence that affects top managers' view of the organization and a downward influence that affects the alignment between the organizational subunits in the organizational context (S. W. Floyd & Lane, 2000), (S. W. Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992). Especially that unique position in the organizational hierarchy is central in this research.

1.2.   Research question

Considering that upward and downward influential position of the middle manager (S. W. Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992), their wide or narrow focus and their admissibility to the various context characteristics can impact the success of PAI. Thus, this research seeks to answer the following research question:

"How does time-constrained middle management coordinate and use incentives and contribute to the multi-faceted post-acquisition integration success?"

To answer this research question, the concepts of the aforementioned attention-based view are used to investigate how the organizational context in which middle management find itself determines what he focuses on. These concepts will be further introduced in the next chapter.

This research question results in the following sub research questions that are answered in this thesis:

1. How does attention and focus impact the coordination and use of incentives of middle management?

2. What is the influence of coordination and use of incentives of middle management on PAI success?

1.3.   Academic relevance

This research on attention and PAI adds to the existing literature in a number of ways.

Firstly, this research builds on the integration journey of Yu et al. (2005) who applied the attention-based view of the firm in a longitudinal research discovering what issues top managers pay attention to during an 8-year period of PAI. Their research is one of the few publications that investigate attention in the PAI context. As opposed to that research, the angle of this thesis is 'why' and 'how' manager's cope with the challenge of integration. Secondly, this research extends the existing research on the main contributors to PAI success in this research, being coordination and incentives. The distinction between informal and formal coordination has been discussed in the past (Simon, 1957; Tsai, 2002; Vlaar et al., 2007), but how the combination of these two concepts contribute to the success of PAI is not directly addressed. This counts as well for incentives; the concept of

incentives stems from the very early literature by Simon (1957) and Barnard (1968). Other literature has extended their 50's and 60's research by outlining how intrinsic and extrinsic incentives stimulate and motivate employees (Baker et al., 1988; Osterloh & Frey, 2000). However, the relation between incentives and PAI success has not been addressed before. As third, this research addresses specifically the middle managers' attention within the PAI context. Top management team attention and cognition to strategy formulation and strategic change has been addressed widely in the management literature (Cho & Hambrick, 2006; Kaplan, 2008; Yu, Engleman, & Van de Ven, 2005). Attention to the middle manager, who has an even more peculiar position in the organization, is lacking. In doing so, this study deepens the understanding of how the middle manager, in his 'sandwich position', behaves, and how his attention, or lack of, affects his coordination and his use of incentives to stimulate his team towards the organizational goals, and how that in turn impacts the success of PAI. Lastly, this research explores the middle managers' attention towards coordination and incentives that contributes to PAI success as opposed to the direct relationship between management attention during PAI and the outcome of acquisitions. The latter has been addressed thoroughly in previous research. Amongst others, (DiGeorgio, 2001) mentions that the attention of leaders is the number one factor contributing to successful PAI and Larsson and Finkelstein (Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999) reported that the lack of management attention to integration issues can cause serious impediments on PAI success.

1.4. Managerial relevance

The research problem as presented is of value to organizations who find themselves in PAI or who will enter into PAI and want to be successful in integrating the two formerly separate organizations. Organizations who are more conscious of the fact that the middle manager is an important management layer in the first place and who acknowledge their vital role in PAI, can learn from this research how that important role and the various projects, initiatives, situations, issues and challenges that face surface in PAI are tightly interlinked with his management focus. It explains which 'kind' of issues are prioritized over others and why. PAI is a busy phase with a high variety of issues and challenges that present themselves while business as usual already requires ample time and attention. Therefore is it is relevant to be aware of what a middle manager does attend to and which issue he let passing by.

Furthermore, this research illustrates how a middle manager operates and in what way his approach contributes to PAI. It can help organizations to better exploit the middle manager's position and to improve the integration process. Also, it highlights how the different type of middle manager distributes their attention which in turn helps to position those middle managers in a way which contributes to the overall success of the integration.

2. Theoretical background

The goal of this theory chapter is to outline the various theoretical concepts incorporated in the conceptual model introduced in the previous chapter. After setting the PAI context, the literature on attention and focus will be discussed. This is followed by the discussion of the two organizational mechanisms 'coordination' and 'incentives' with which the first four propositions of this research are presented. This chapter is concluded with the theory on human and task integration and poses the last two propositions which include the contribution of coordination and incentives on PAI success.

2.1. Post-acquisition integration

"All value creation takes place after the acquisition" (Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Vaara, 2003) is an important statement underlining the importance of post-acquisition integration (PAI). As the main reasons for organizations to acquire are increase of sales, obtaining needed competences and improving the image of the organization (Brouthers, van Hastenburg, & Van den Ven, 1998) thus to create value, we can state that PAI is a key determinant of acquisition performance (Cording et al., 2008; Schweiger & Very, 2003) and a critical phase within M&A.

M&A represents a theme that has attracted research from various management disciplines over the last thirty years (Cartwright & Schoenberg, 2006). However, the majority of these perspectives paid a limited amount of attention to the importance of PAI and the impact of behaviour of managers during that particular phase.

The strategic management perspective has studied M&A as a method of diversification, focusing on the motives for different types of combinations. It has reviewed performance of the acquiring and acquired firm and indicated positive impact of synergies based on economies of scale and scope (Birkinshaw et al., 2000; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Seo & Hill, 2005; Vaara, 2003).

From a financial economic perspective, studies have been executed on acquisition performance by relying on stock-market and accounting based measures, emphasizing economies of scale and market power as motives for acquisitions and wealth creation for shareholders (Birkinshaw et al., 2000; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Seo & Hill, 2005; Vaara, 2003). Also in this perspective, the behavioral side of PAI received no attention.

A research perspective that did bring PAI under the attention is the cultural perspective. This perspective highlighted culture clash and conflict resolution, indicating the impact of acquisition on individuals and organizational culture and highlighting complex cultural integration processes and cultural differences in organizations (Birkinshaw et al., 2000; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Seo & Hill, 2005; Vaara, 2003).

Even though the cultural perspective is involved with PAI and its side-effects, Vaara (2003) even states that the cultural perspective has become an overall explanation which is far too easy to return when attempting to understand PAI problems, difficulties and failures. Hence, the strategic perspective, financial economic perspective and also the cultural perspective offered no significant explanation of acquisition outcomes through PAI (Jemison & Sitkin, 1986; Pablo, 1994).

The human resource perspective did elucidate PAI from the behavioral side. From this perspective, scholars addressed PAI as complex and requiring considerable management time and attention to combining similar processes, coordinating business units that share common resources, centralizing support activities that apply to multiple units and resolving conflicts among business units (Barkema & Schijven, 2008). This supports the idea that the behaviour of managers and their decisions play a crucial role in PAI (Birkinshaw et al., 2000).

Often organizations view PAI as a rational process guided by a specific management agenda, steering committees and project teams and they expect integration to unfold in a rationalistic way (Vaara, 2003). However, research showed that human factors such as the level of organizational commitment, morale, trust and productivity are increasingly recognized as indicators influencing PAI (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 2005; Klendauer & Deller, 2009). The way managers should deal with those factors requires more research attention (Haleblian, Devers, McNamara, Carpenter, & Davison, 2009). Cording et al. (2008) even defined integration as the "managerial actions taken to combine two previously separate firms" which suggests that managerial actions play a leading role. Therefore, this research addresses these managerial behavioral aspects in PAI through the theoretical lens of the human resources perspective.

2.2. Attention

In order to understand how middle manager's attention affects his coordination and use of incentives and how that contributes to successful PAI, it is of interest to examine what factors influence the attention of middle managers which in turn determines what issues they attend to and what issues they do not attend to.

According to Simon (1957) the limit on individuals' attention capacity in combination with incomplete knowledge of action alternatives and their consequences results in bounded individual rationality. A middle manager is never able to oversee everything around him and to posses all the knowledge about potential courses of action. Organizations deal with this by division of labor, assigning authority levels, channeling information, setting structures that direct attention to certain topics and to keep their attention away from others (Simon, 1957).

During PAI, these 'divisions' of both organizations are being integrated which requires attention of the middle manager to other aspects than before the acquisition; attention to human and task

integration issues. From a human integration perspective, lack of attention to human resource practices impeded PAI success (Shield, Thorpe, & Nelson, 2002) and from a task integration perspective earlier research suggested more attention should be devoted to transition plans and transition teams at the business unit level and to earlier resolution of systems integration issues (Jeris, Johnson, & Anthony, 2002).

The attention-based view of the firm of Ocasio (1997) builds upon and extends Simon's work, posing that the way organizations behave is the result of how they channel and distribute the attention of decision-makers. Ocasio's (1997) theory is based on three interrelated premises. First, the structural allocation such as the organization structure of an organization which determines the distribution of attention of decision-makers by impacting the situation they find themselves in and consequently the attention they pay to it (principle of structural distribution of attention). This principle finds itself on the level of top management who determine the organizational structure and communication channels. Second, the characteristics of the situation or context in which decision-makers find themselves determine what they focus on (principle of situated attention). And third, the focus of attention of decision-makers determines what decision-makers do (principle of focus of attention). This interrelation is depicted in figure 1.
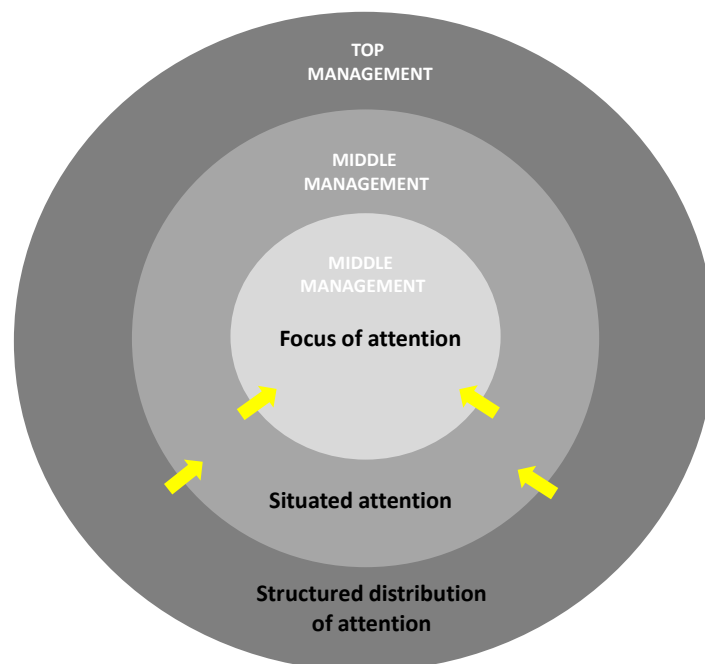

Figure 1. Interrelation principles attention-based view of the firm

 As this thesis wishes to investigate middle management attention, this research will be limited to the focus of attention and situated attention of middle management.

2.3.   Situated attention and coordination

As an individual is never able to oversee everything around him, earlier referred to as bounded rationality, coordination is an important aspect in daily business. Coordination stems from division of labor (Barnard, 1968; March, 1978; Simon, 1957); it serves managers to decompose tasks and to establish and communicate activities (Vlaar et al., 2007). In organizations coordination is a necessary activity as the wide scope of activities organizations perform requires coordination to be effective and efficient, "who does what", and inevitably coordination is affected by what gets the attention and what does not.

There is a wide variety of situations that require attention from middle management during PAI. Attention is needed to human integration and task integration issues (Birkinshaw et al., 2000), parallel to business as usual, customers and suppliers. Specifically, middle managers have the position to fulfill an important role as coordinator (Shi, Markoczy, & Dess, 2009). Floyd & Wooldridge (2008) define middle management as 'coordination of organizational unit's day-to-day activities of vertically related groups'. Their 'linking pin' role (Raes et al., 2011) gives them upward influence on top management's view of organizational circumstances and downward influence on alignment of organizational arrangements with the strategic context (Wooldridge, Schmid, & Floyd, 2008). From an upward perspective, middle managers are able to evaluate new information in the context of the overall organizational strategy, operations, and markets and with that direct the attention of top management to strategic issues (S. W. Floyd & Lane, 2000). Middle managers know better than anyone where the problems are as their position in the organization brings them closer to day-to-day operations, customers, and employees than top management. Their downward influence comes from the fact that middle managers stay tuned to the employee's moods and emotional needs and because of that can manage the tension between continuity and change (Huy, 2001). Inevitably, in PAI where even more issues and challenges present themselves simultaneously, the coordination by middle management is crucial.

During PAI, the organizational environment makes the decision maker focus his attention within the context the middle manager finds himself. This is where the previously introduced concept of situated attention comes into play.

Situated attention is determined by three aspects; the environmental stimuli for decision-making, the reflection of issues and answers in cultural symbols, artifacts and narratives and interaction amongst participants in the channel (Ocasio, 1997). It is the attention drawn by the context in which issues and answers present themselves (Johns, 2006). The characteristics of a context determines where attention is paid to and if the context changes it influences the attention; the situated attention and with that the behavior of the individuals involved.

The first aspect that determined the situated attention is the environmental stimuli resulting from the environment of decision in which organizational members find themselves. These stimuli can come from internal and external factors which influence individual's attention in an organization (Ocasio, 1997). These factors that are part of the environment of decision create stimuli that attract attention of the manager. Examples of the internal factors are rules, resources and social relationships (Ocasio, 1997) such as policies, procedures and employees. As this research is looking at the internal side of the integration of previously separated organizations, the external factors are excluded.

Secondly, cultural symbols, artifacts and narratives that are embodied in the issues and answers managers deal with (Ocasio, 1997) can also influence whether or not a middle manager attends to certain issues. Issues and answers are often the cultural and cognitive schemas that are available to managers in a firm. As during PAI the existing culture of both the acquired and acquiring organization is changing (Angwin & Vaara, 2005; Applebaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisle, & Hoeven, 2001), these cultural artifacts as part of the organizational memory will become less present for managers and hence their normal way of dispersing their attention can change. Responsibility for the acquisition, previous organizational and cultural backgrounds, and their role in the new corporation provides different frames for interpreting and attention to the integration issues (Vaara, 2003).

Lastly, the interaction amongst participants in the channel where the manager operates influences the attention to issues (Ocasio, 1997). These participants bring to the situation distinct knowledge, experience and interest and with that shape which issues receive more priority than others. The attention of a manager is dependent on how, where and when other managers, above and below in hierarchy, participate in the firm's procedural and communication channels where the manager is situated and depend on their time, energy and effort available and on their attention demands from other channels (Ocasio, 1997). These participant contribute with their knowledge of alternative courses of action based on their expertise or experience but they also bring their interests which shape which issues and answers become more salient (Ocasio, 1997).

The situated attention of middle management influences how they coordinate as coordination can be done in a formal and informal manner. The existing literature on coordination suggests two generic types of coordination; coordination by plan and coordination by feedback (March & Simon, 1958). Coordination by plan is also known as 'formal coordination' referring to the hierarchical structure such as centralization, formalization and specialization. Coordination by feedback or 'informal coordination' is coordination based on the informal relations in an organization (March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1957; Tsai, 2002). Formal coordination involves processes of planning and use of contracts eventuating from this planning process. This contractual planning primarily aims at

restraining opportunistic behaviour and installs control (Vlaar et al., 2007). Other forms of formal coordination are through programs, rules and procedures (Dekker, 2004). As an example; middle managers set up action plans to which they translate the overall organization's strategy (Currie & Procter, 2005).

However, the formal operation of an organization, as on paper, will always differ from reality (Simon, 1957). There are many interpersonal relationships existing in an organization affecting how things are actually done; they may even be in contrast to how it is supposed to function formally. This introduces informal coordination. This is coordination that relies on a personal approach with more voluntary and personal characteristics and occurs naturally through social interaction (Tsai, 2002).

The situated attention of middle management determines the way they coordinate during PAI. First, the internal environment for decision making of the organization such as rules will result in formal coordination (Vlaar et al., 2007). As an example, during PAI a project management office is installed to monitor the progress of the integration projects. All project leads need to report on a agree frequencies to the project management office with an agreed report format.

But also the social relationship between employees is part of that internal environment, which will more likely allow for informal coordination by middle management as social relations are the basis for informal coordination (Tsai, 2002). Even though PAI often changes the organizational structure, existing social relations will remain amongst which informal coordination will take place.

Secondly, the reflection of issues and answers in cultural symbols are part of the situated attention of middle management. That might also affect how a middle manager coordinates during PAI. Before the acquisition, the organization is used to their way of working where informal coordination is possible as everybody knows what is expected of them. However, during PAI these old schemes disappear and uncertainty presents itself which makes more room for formal coordination as employees need to know what is expected of them.

Thirdly, the interaction with participants in the channel during PAI also affects how a middle manager coordinates. How much time, effort and energy participants have available and what demands their attention from other channels can affect how middle managers coordinate. If there is less time available, which is often the case during a multifaceted process such as PAI, there is likely to be more informal interaction between the participants and therefore informal coordination. If there is more time available, there is time for following formal procedures and therefore formal coordination.

The aforementioned aspects of situated attention in connection with coordination indicate that the degree of 'situatedness' of the attention of middle management influences whether he coordinates in a formal or informal manner. When the middle manager's attention is highly situated, his attention is drawn to a limited number of specific situations. In PAI where organizations approach the

integration as a tight process or script, the 'rules' as mentioned before, it will be approached with formal coordination to assure the plan is followed. There will be a clear meeting structure in place which will allow time for participants to discuss the process and hence have the time to coordinate in a formal manner.

When a manager's attention is low situated, his attention is not drawn to just one situation or a selection of situations but to multiple situations simultaneously. During PAI, where organization work more on an ad hoc basis as opposed to a structured approach, the attention shifts from one situation to the other with less time which will allow informal coordination.

> ***Proposition 1:***
>
> a) Middle management with low situated attention coordinates predominantly informal while b) middle management with high situated attention coordinates predominantly in a formal manner.

2.4.   Focus of attention and coordination

As introduced in the previous paragraph, the characteristics of a context determine where attention is paid to. If the context changes, it influences the attention (the situated attention) and with that the behavior of the individuals involved which is referred to as the focus of attention. This illustrates the interrelation between situated attention and focus of attention.

Not only the characteristics of situations in which a middle manager finds himself determine where he pays attention to, also the cognition of the manager determines where he focuses attention on. Two basic assumptions of cognitive psychology underlie this principle of attention. These are firstly the mediation of individual's responses to stimuli by information processing and secondly the limited capacity of the information-processing system of an individual generating the need for a mechanism of selection (Kabanoff & Brown, 2008). Focus of attention is such a mechanism which enables an individual to deal with all the stimuli that present themselves. It indicates, first, that decision-makers are selective in the issues and answers they attend to at any one time, and second, that what decision-makers do, depends on what issues and answers they focus their attention on (Ocasio, 1997).

Individuals tend to see things consistent with their established frame of reference or 'cognitive structure'. Perceptions that are not consistent with their cognitive structure are filtered out before they reach consciousness, or are reinterpreted or removed (March & Simon, 1958). As this thesis addresses PAI and is seeking to discover how the time-constrained middle manager coordinates and sets incentives, it is of importance to understand the cognitive structure of these middle managers and hence to understand why they attend to certain issues and not to others.

A person's cognitive structure will shape his or her interpretation of information; it impacts how he acquires new knowledge (Huber, 1991). The knowledge structures of middle managers, influence strategic choices by affecting what managers subsequently focus on (Kabanoff & Brown, 2008). The cognition of a middle manager is shaped by his career, his experience and his knowledge. From a career perspective his cognition is shaped through his former employers, its culture and working climate and the roles he fulfilled in those organizations. His working experience has also influenced his cognition as to the variation of positions he fulfilled or if he has always been active within a specific discipline or specialism. For example, has he always been working in finance or marketing, or has he worked in different departments.

His knowledge is also a key influencer of his cognition. We differentiate if the middle manager has broad or deep knowledge. An individual's acquired knowledge makes an individual attend to certain stimuli and not to others (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990), hence focus on issues or not. Knowledge can be differentiated in knowledge depth and knowledge breadth as introduced by Zahra, Ireland and Hitt (2000). Deep knowledge is the knowledge a specialist holds, which is deep because the variety of activities and fields it can be applied to is limited but the knowledge is extensive and sophisticated. For example; a tax specialist in a multinational who is an expert in transfer pricing has deep knowledge. Broad knowledge is the knowledge a generalist holds which can be applied to a wide range of activities and fields, but the knowledge is less developed within a single field. As an example; a general manager of a temp agency holds broad knowledge. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) indicate that knowledge, either deep or broad, existing with an individual confers the ability to recognize the value of new information, to process it and apply it. The more knowledge of a certain topic is stored in the memory of an individual, the more readily new knowledge about that topic can be acquired by that individual and the more easily he can use it in new settings (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). This supports the train of thought that when a middle manager knows a lot about a limited selection of topics, he will gain more and more knowledge about those topics which makes him pay attention to those topics. A middle manager with broad knowledge will gain knowledge about that variety of topics and attend to a variety of stimuli but that knowledge will be less sophisticated (Zahra, Ireland, & Hitt, 2000).

The width of a middle managers' focus is dependent on whether or not he has fulfilled different roles within different functions in a variety of organizations. This is because these different roles, functions and organizations have given him the "baggage" to understand different contexts, different interests, and different organizational cultures and he has experienced a variety of organizational issues, challenges and problems. This variety of roles, functions and organizations also link with broad knowledge. Through his variety of roles and functions he has gained knowledge on various topics

which is a characteristic of broad knowledge. Hence, a middle manager who has fulfilled a variety of roles, within different functions and different organizations has a wide focus of attention as opposed to a middle manager with a narrow focus of attention who has worked within a limited number of organizations always within one function or role.

Within the division of labor which is earlier mentioned as the basis of coordination a person has a further selection of where he pays attention to – that is a result of his focus of attention. From the perspective of the different types of coordination that have been discussed in the previous paragraph, the focus of a middle manager also affects how he coordinates.

A middle manager with a wide focus of attention will be more open to his environment and notices what happens around him which will increase his ability to coordinate. Especially in PAI which is a multi-faceted event, this is an advantage for such a middle manager.

First, he has a wide view over the various issues that require attention across the whole organization which allows him to coordinate them informally. This wide view is caused by his variety of work experience through different roles, functions and organizations. Secondly, he has more informal relations within the organization as he is dependent on the knowledge from others in the organization (Podolny & Baron, 1997) since he only has broad knowledge about issues. For deeper understanding of issues he needs to appeal to his colleagues which enhance his ability to coordinate informally. Additionally, because of his wide social interactions in the organization he will stimulate social interaction amongst team members which consequently contributes to human integration (Birkinshaw et al., 2000).

On the opposite side, a middle manager with a narrow focus of attention has less of these informal relations because he has deep knowledge and hence, does not need to rely on others for knowledge. Also, because he has worked in limited roles, functions and organizations, he receives fewer stimuli other than the ones within his field of experience and knowledge field. Hence, he will coordinate formally.

> **Proposition 2:**
> a) Middle management with wide focus of attention coordinates informal b) middle management with a narrow focus of attention coordinates predominantly in a formal manner.

2.5. Situated attention and incentives

As Simon notes "one function that organizations perform is to place the organization members in a psychological environment that will adapt their decisions to the organization objectives, and will provide them with the information needed to make these decisions correctly" (1957:79). This quote introduces the connection between situated attention and using incentives as the latter can help to

reach those organization objectives. Situated attention is depending on the characteristics of the organizational environment and with that has its effect on how and what incentives are used.

Because of the important function of incentives in managing behavior towards the organizational objectives, incentives are used by various management layers in an organization. The organization benefits from the position of the middle manager in the organization in setting incentives. Because of his intermediary role and ability to translate strategy into action plans and individual objectives (Currie & Procter, 2005), they are able to use incentives effectively by making sure there is a causal link between an action and its performance outcomes. In this way individuals can better see the relationship between decisions and outcome (Cording et al., 2008). Especially in PAI, introducing intermediary goals is helpful considering the comprehensive process of integrating two companies. Attaching an incentive to a strategic objective to "improve operational margin by 10%" might not appeal to an IT-manager but "achieving synergy savings of 10 million euro in IT-hardware" might give direction to him. Management and employees need to be able to see where their roles in the total company add value to the integration.

Incentives are linked to the essential element of an organization; the willingness of people to contribute their individual efforts to the cooperative system; these contributions of effort take place because of incentives (Barnard, 1968). In exchange for money, an employee offers his time and effort. In the agency theory these incentives are projected as "contracts" used by a party (the principal) who delegates work to another (the agent) who performs that work (Eisenhardt, 1989a). These incentives are supported by either a behaviour-based contract where the behaviour of the agent is more readily determined (such as an hourly wage), or an outcome-based contract which motivates behaviour by aligning the agents' preference with those of the principal but at the price of transferring the risk to the agent (such as stock options) (Eisenhardt, 1989a).

Incentives contribute to maintaining morale and gaining the commitment of employees to the new corporate objectives which is a requirement for achieving overall corporate objectives through the newly acquired business (Shrivastava, 1993). Employees need the motivation to adopt these objectives and strive to achieve them. Motivation comes in several forms: improving incentives and compensation schemes, providing new opportunities for personal development, providing career opportunities, and improving the quality of work life (Shrivastava, 1993).

Incentives can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic incentives are incentives where motivation is achieved by linking employees' monetary motives to the goal of the firm (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). The simplest form of an extrinsic incentive an organization can offer is salary (Simon, 1957). On top of that, many organizations stimulate their employees through bonus-based incentives (Baker et al., 1988), or with other material inducements such as things or physical conditions (Barnard, 1968).

Incentives are intrinsic where motivation is valued by the form of identification with the firm's strategic goals, shared purposes and the fulfillment of norms for its own sake (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). They can be promotion-based incentives which are incentives provided through promotion opportunities (Baker et al., 1988), or feeling of importance, pride in workmanship, sense of adequacy (Barnard, 1968) or the simple pleasure derived from performing the task itself (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002).

One aspect of situated attention as mentioned before is the environment of the organization, and since this research takes place in the context of PAI, the internal environment. This effects how a middle manager uses incentives. Incentives and goals that a middle manager himself is assigned are part of his internal environment and will affect how he uses incentives towards his team members. If the superior of a middle manager sets him the goal to create a synergy saving of 27 million euro in three years for which he will be eligible for a bonus when achieving that goal, the middle manager will translate that goal to his team member with who he needs to perform the activities. Those aspects will support him to use extrinsic incentives with which he can set for example a bonus-based incentive when the team together reaches that goal. Also social relationships that exist will affect how he uses incentives towards his team members. If he has a social relation with his team members, he will more likely achieve a good atmosphere in the team which is a motivator to perform well.

The cultural aspect that influences the situated attention of a manager is incorporated how an organization is used to use extrinsic or intrinsic incentives. Some organizations have very clear goals and extrinsic incentives connected to that, other organizations try to motivate employees in an intrinsic manner.

The third component of situated attention is the interactions with participants in the environment. From the perspective of incentives there is a link with the superior of the middle manager which agenda and interests will determine where the middle manager pays attention to and hence affects the use of incentives. If a certain project or goals is top priority for the top manager, the middle manager might be more inclined to stimulate his team by using extrinsic incentives.

The attention of a middle manager influences his use of incentives. A middle manager, who has low situated attention, is involved in multiple activities and finds himself in multiple situations. These multiple situations and the issues and problems that present themselves to him will entail information that he can use as an incentive to his team or subordinates. In the various situations he is in, he hears about the organization, other opportunities and developments. As intrinsic incentives deal with the identification with the firm's strategic goals and shared purposes (Osterloh & Frey, 2000) but are also promotion-based incentives (Baker et al., 1988) a middle manager with low

situated attention who hears about strategic goals and career opportunities can use that information from the various situations for his team that contribute to their intrinsic motivation.

A middle manager with high situated attention has less of the information available from the organization as he is very dedicated to a few situations and issues. His attention is drawn by fewer situations than a middle manager with low situated attention and consequently has less information to share with his team to provide them with future perspective, strategic goals and further information that they need. For this middle manager it will be more appropriate to assign extrinsic incentives based on bonus or compensation targets.

> ***Proposition 3:***
>
> a) Middle management with low situated attention uses predominantly intrinsic incentives while b) middle management with a high situated attention uses predominantly extrinsic incentives.

2.6.   Focus of attention and incentives

There are two elements within focus of attention that play a role with regards to the use of incentives by a middle manager.

At first, it can be stated that a middle manager who has worked in a variety in roles, functions and organizations has learned from that experience and gained knowledge about people in various contexts and situations. This will most likely have helped him to be able estimate which of his subordinates need motivation, either through an intrinsic incentive or extrinsic incentive. A middle manager with a wealth of work experience in multiple organizations within different roles and disciplines will be better at that, than a manager who has always worked in one and the same organization within one discipline. Hence, such a middle manager can use the mix of intrinsic and extrinsic incentives.

Secondly, a middle manager who has worked in a variety in roles, functions and organizations has a wider view over the different parts of an organization. This enables him to be better able to translate the overall organizational objectives to intermediary goals. Those intermediary goals make it easier for a subordinate to know how his work contributes to the overall organizational objectives which is an important intrinsic motivator for employees (Cording et al., 2008).

The element of knowledge which also determines the wide or narrow focus of attention holds a third element of the link between focus of attention and use incentives. A person whose cognition is built on deep knowledge and with that has a narrow focus of attention will have fewer interactions in his organizational context and thus will receive fewer stimuli. A middle manager with deep knowledge will therefore less well notice if his subordinates need to be intrinsically motivated. He is

better able to determine a good extrinsic incentive and use that to stimulate his subordinates. However, since there ought to be a good balance between extrinsic and intrinsic incentives in PAI because that gives both the required attention to human and task integration, a manager with a narrow focus of attention will fall short. A manager with a wide focus of attention is receptive for more stimuli and can better judge when and for who to set intrinsic incentives and when extrinsic motivation is needed.

> **Proposition 4:**
>
> a) Middle management with wide focus of attention uses predominantly intrinsic incentives while b) a middle management with narrow focus of attention uses predominantly extrinsic incentives.

2.7.   PAI and coordination

Acquisition integration involves taking actions to secure the efficient and effective direction of organizational activities and resources towards the acquisition goals and common organizational activities (Pablo, 1994). It might sound simple but it clearly is not.

Managing PAI can be challenging because of organizational "fit" issues; differences in culture, practices and systems which can lead to conflict and tensions between the two organizations. (Datta, 1991; Jemison & Sitkin, 1986). Birkinshaw et al. (2000) categorized these integration challenges into human integration and task integration.

From the task integration perspective, the challenge of integration is to implement the strategy behind the acquisition by reconfiguring, realigning and rationalizing the acquired firms' resources, managing the interaction between the acquiring and acquired organizations' resources and realizing operational synergies (Cording et al., 2008). On top of that, management is to strike the right balance between integration and limiting disruptions to the "business as usual"; it affects the success not only of the integration but of the acquisition as a whole (Ranft & Lord, 2002; Zollo & Singh, 2004). Where a lot of projects and initiatives are focused on the integration, simultaneously paying attention to the customer and the market is challenging. If that focus is not in place it can cause serious impediments on PAI success (Cording et al., 2008; Epstein, 2004; Nikandrou et al., 2000; Thach & Nyman, 2001).

Parallel with these task integration challenges, an organization in PAI deals with employees' fears over loss of their job, resistance to change and anxiety for unfair treatment (Bryson, 2003; De Noble, Gustafson, & Hergert, 1988; Epstein, 2005). There are multiple stressors that present themselves during PAI that require management action towards human aspects (Seo & Hill, 2005). Amongst them gaining trust is one of the crucial aspects for a successful integration (Das & Teng, 1998; Nikandrou et al., 2000). Trust is gained through communication (Bryson, 2003; Thach & Nyman,

2001) as it enhances relations and with that trust which in turn results in more cooperation and collaboration (Ranft & Lord, 2002). A lack of communication can start the rumor mill and can confuse employees and customers (Applebaum et al., 2001; Epstein, 2004; Homburg & Bucerius, 2006). The middle manager should increase both formal and informal communication (Thach & Nyman, 2001). He can use formal communication to manage expectations of the individuals around him and can use informal communication to allow for a common atmosphere to evolve and to address concerns amongst his subordinates (Huy, 2001).

Various task integration components can be aggregated into an overall notion of PAI performance. It is the degree to which the targeted level of integration between the two organizations has been achieved in a satisfactory way (Brouthers et al., 1998; Epstein, 2004; Zollo & Singh, 2004). However, in order to achieve that level of PAI performance, the attention to human aspects is preconditional. Human integration is a requirement to facilitate task integration. Hence, the key to success in PAI lies in the attention paid by managers to human aspects, especially in the beginning, to provide the basis for integrating tasks and processes to achieve synergies and create the value that is hidden in the acquisition (Birkinshaw et al., 2000).

Coordination is an important concept that helps to achieve PAI success and help to overcome these aforementioned challenges. Coordination enables an organization to manage integration of departments by making use of the resources available to them and achieve actual integration of processes that used to be stand-alone in the formerly separated organizations. It also enables an organization to create a sense of mutuality and common atmosphere by listening to uncertainties and concerns present with the workforce.

Even though coordination is cumbersome during a multi-faceted process such as PAI as it requires simultaneous efforts in numerous areas (Epstein, 2004), existing research still suggests that considerable interaction and coordination are the primary approaches to integration of organizations. These activities are necessary to exploit the strategic interdependencies that may be present between two organizations engaged in an acquisition and to achieve the overall organization goals (Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999; Schweiger & Very, 2003; Shrivastava, 1993). Coordination enables balancing between human and task integration which is important to successfully integrate two organizations (Birkinshaw et al., 2000). The middle manager can bring together the various teams of both organizations and with that help to create a common atmosphere and identity by coordinating this process, both formal and informal, which helps integrating tasks and processes of both formerly separate organizations.

However, there is a dilemma between informal and formal coordination. A stable and predictable organization can function under formal coordination but more variety and unpredictability situations

hold, the better informal coordination applies (March & Simon, 1958). PAI can be characterized as a situation with high variety and unpredictability which would support the need for informal coordination. Also Tsai (2002) pleads for informal coordination as through social interaction formation of common interest gets stimulated that in turn supports the building of cooperative relationships and trust in the integrating organization. Social interactions provide much-needed interaction between employees from both sides and enable them to familiarize themselves with each other (Das & Teng, 1998). It increases knowledge flows within the organization through that social interaction (Tsai, 2002) which helps to integrate operations and consequently achieve synergies.

But depending too much on informal coordination has a downside. Informal coordination supports the achievement of trust which in turn reduces uncertainty makes a trustor to select one or a small number of desirable possibilities regarding the future behavior of the trustee. In that, ignoring a great number of other options that would also be worth considering (Bachmann, 2003). Hence, only informal coordination will also not deliver the best results. You need formal coordination for the actual integration of tasks (Zahra & Nielsen, 2002). In PAI, where sharing of knowledge and creation of common interest takes place, that knowledge needs to be transferred to the right activities and tasks that fit into the overall organizational objectives. Often this needs to be included into new procedures and role descriptions which is the formal aspect of coordination. Also, formal coordination is necessary to provide participants in an organization with a degree of certainty, stability and guidance to cope with uncertainty (Seo & Hill, 2005; Vlaar et al., 2007). A clear planning or procedure enables individuals in an organization to know what to expect. As there is a lot of uncertainty during PAI, this aspect of formal coordination is particularly important (Applebaum et al., 2001). But, formal coordination can entail overregulation, can become unmanageable and can include impersonal approaches (Vlaar et al., 2007). A middle manager who works from dashboards and reports can come across as bureaucratic and impersonal. Additionally, formal coordination suppresses flexibility that is needed when coping with ambiguous and unstable task situations in organizations which is often the case in PAI (Pete, Pattipati, & Kleinman, 1995; Vlaar et al., 2007). It also reduces initiative taking (Tsai, 2002) as individuals will refrain from providing its knowledge to new colleagues, unless a higher authority requests to do so. As formal coordination supports getting formal control on a situation, organizations are also dependent on the commitment to cooperation which is achieved through informal coordination (Bijlsma-Frankema, 2004). Too much control can damage that commitment to cooperation. Because of these specific downsides to formal coordination, and because PAI is a phase in which personal, human oriented attention is needed, and because knowledge needs to be exchanges between the two formerly separated organizations,

applying predominantly informal coordination contributes to human integration which in turn supports a successful task integration (Birkinshaw et al., 2000).

> **Proposition 5:**
>
> Middle management who applies predominantly informal coordination contributes to a)
>
> successful human integration and b) successful task integration.

2.8.   PAI and incentives

It has been proven that having a well planned M&A process, based on the corporate needs and accompanied by the definition of financial and strategic objectives, usually leads to a more effective PAI (Papadakis, 2005). Additionally, post-merger drift (a decline in organizational and individual productivity during the period following the acquisition) can play a role during PAI. The many integration-related issues can distract management attention away from the business operations of the organization (Ranft & Lord, 2002). With this danger lurking, is it very important to set the right incentives to keep the organization focused on the right tasks and strategic objectives. Incentives are important for organizational members to know what is expected of them, and to provide purpose. The uncertainty that inevitably will face an organization during PAI can be countered by setting the right incentives.

In PAI where the human integration is important to facilitate the task integration (Birkinshaw et al., 2000), intrinsic motivation is important to answer to the high uncertainty and anxiety of individuals in the organization (Applebaum et al., 2001; Bryson, 2003; Nikandrou et al., 2000; Papadakis, 2005). When employees feel they are stimulated to add value to the integration by sharing their expertise and when they are appreciated, their uncertainty and fear can decrease. However, as PAI in the end does need to deliver integrated processes and operational synergies, extrinsic rewards such as a bonus or stock options can be a better means to stimulate organizational members into the strategic direction as set by the organization and it enables them to prioritize accordingly.

Considering PAI, incentives need to be in line with the changing organization and the earlier mentioned human and task integration. When setting incentives during PAI it is important to distinguish extrinsic and intrinsic incentives and to be aware of the disadvantages.

Previous literature suggests that extrinsic incentives have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation because by extrinsic incentives an individual would perceive the locus of causality of behavior as external and so the feeling of self-determination would be underminded thereby reducing intrinsic motivation (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Additionally, extrinsic incentives, when set as aggressive pay-for-performance incentives, ultimately involve distinguishing workers on the basis of their performance. Treating employees differently is detrimental to employee morale (Baker et al., 1988).

Pay-for-performance can motivate employees to do exactly what they are told to do, but when that is not specified or clear enough it can be counterproductive (Baker et al., 1988).

Also intrinsic incentives have some disadvantages. Changing intrinsic motivation is more difficult and the outcome more uncertain than relying on extrinsic motivation. Also, intrinsic incentives are not a goal in itself but employees should be motivated to perform in a coordinated and goal oriented way. Intrinsic motivation can have an undesirable content, such as envy and vengeance, and cannot contribute to the organizational goals. In order to prevent this gap from developing, extrinsic measures are needed to discipline the effect of these undesirable intrinsic motivation (Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

PAI is a phase with a lot of change resulting from the merge of two formerly seperated organizations in which it is important that employees adapt to those changes. Extrinsic incentives used to motivate employees induces repetition of what already works (Amabile, 1998). In PAI this is not supporting change that will inevitable present itself. Also, extrinsic incentives lead to lower learning as the monitoring that is needed for extrinsic incentives will create pressure which slows down learning (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). As PAI already creates pressure in the organization, this additional pressure will work contraproductive. Furthermore, during PAI contracts for extrinsic incentives cannot completely specify all the relevant aspects of behaviour because of the changing environment and goals are often not even clear for management involved (Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

Therefore intrinsic incentives will have more effect and contribute to PAI succes.

> **Proposition 6:**
>
> Middle management who applies predominantly intrinsic incentives contributes to a) successful human integration and b) successful task integration.

As a summary to the posed propositions in the theory chapter, figure 2 depicts the conceptual model including all discussed relations.
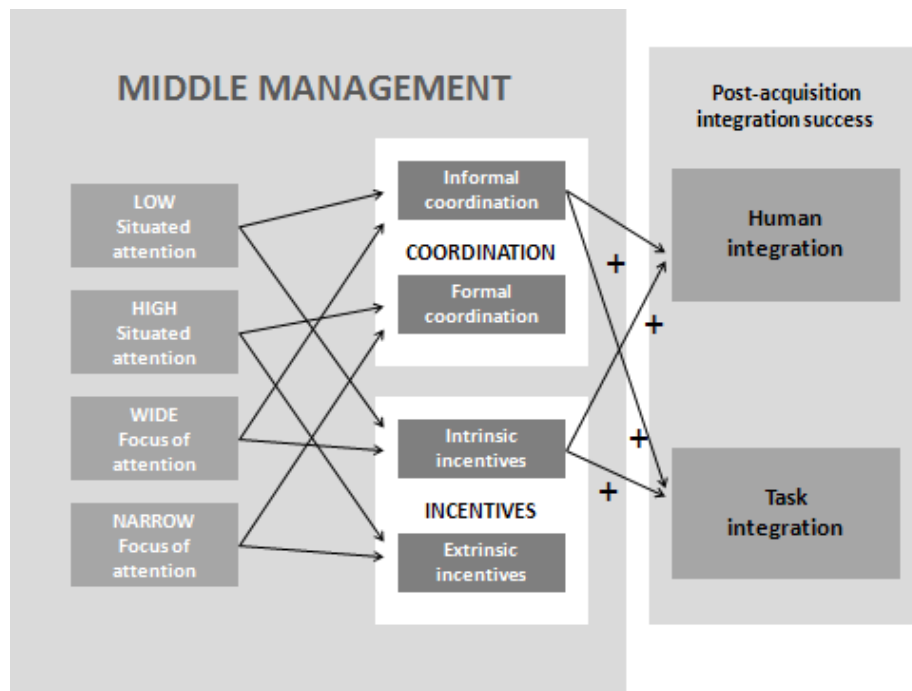
Figure 2. Conceptual model

3.   Methodology

Yu et al. (2005) 'Integration Journey' is the only previous research known, which looked at the influence of attention in the setting of PAI. Their research was of a longitudinal kind with a quantitative approach. As opposed to Yu et al.'s approach, this study on the effect of situated attention and focus of attention of the middle manager on PAI chooses a qualitative research approach.

The vast majority of acquisition research focused on corporate entities using mainly quantitative data which has limited scholars' abilities to get "inside" the phenomenon (Haleblian et al., 2009). As an example, Cho & Hambrick (2006) used company documents such as shareholder letters to determine the attention structures of the CEO. This quantitative approach does not allow understanding of intangible elements that are of relevance when referring to attention as a cognitive process (Cho & Hambrick, 2006). Since this research takes on the attention-based view as a research paradigm, the cognitive processes as introduced in the constructs of situated attention and focus of attention are tacit and difficult to capture. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to understand the particular context middle managers find themselves in and their cognition. Additionally, qualitative research can deliver unforeseen outcomes as it is more unstructured and leaves more flexibility in the research approach than quantitative research. In this research theme this is likely to play a role and by applying a qualitative research such information gets considered. Also, qualitative methods are especially qualified to study dynamic processes (Pettigrew, 1992) of which PAI can be referred to as such.

This thesis takes on a qualitative multiple case-study as the research strategy, for a number of reasons. At first, a case study has an empirical character and allows researchers to investigate certain phenomena in a real life setting (Yin, 1981). This is particularly relevant for this research question as attention of managers is something which can basically only be investigated in a life setting. Secondly, as this research includes three organizations, it fits very well with the characteristic of a multiple case-study strategy as it allows a researcher to analyze in-depth certain situations and circumstances in a number of cases. Furthermore, a multiple case-study aims at formulating a new theory, enables testing of propositions eventuating from the research and on top of that, underpins it by empirical findings (Eisenhardt, 1989b) which is also a goal of this thesis. Lastly, since the proposed research question in this study are of explanatory nature and are not to be investigated separately from the context, a case study is the appropriate research method to use. The type of case-study adopted in this research is a critical case for which clear defined propositions form the starting point.

3.1.   Level of analysis

Different levels of analysis can be applied in a multiple case-study. In this thesis the level of the business unit is chosen as level of analysis. It is the middle management attention to the various issues during PAI within the business unit which is the focal point of this research. The middle managers will bring the in-depth insights to the table with regards to how coordination and incentives contribute to PAI success and how their attention is dispersed; therefore the level of observation is the individual middle manager. In order to determine how the middle management layer within the business unit have contributed to the success of PAI, the successfulness of PAI of the business unit is adopted. This enables the middle managers to share their thoughts on the success of PAI close to their position and from within their circle of influence.

3.2.   Sample selection

A character of case-studies is the specific selection of cases based on the theory in order to contribute to the propositions (Eisenhardt, 1989b). Therefore, the main selection criterion used to select cases is that the cases create an understanding of the circumstances under which the propositions keep up (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The sampling strategy for this research is based on a set of three criteria. The first criterion is that the organizations to which the cases belong have gone through the PAI phase. This enables this research to take place in a setting where the various issues regarding the integration and business as usual have taken place and where attention was needed to human and task integration issues. Secondly, the organization included in the research should find themselves not too many years after the acquisition as the particular issues, problems, opportunities and threats preferably are still on the agenda or were recently on the agenda. It will enable the researcher to find respondents who work in the particular organization and have experienced PAI and it will enable the respondents to better refer to live examples to illustrate their answers. These first two criteria make it possible to investigate the research constructs in the intended PAI context and determine if the propositions derived from the literature are supported or not, and also why. The third criterion for this thesis is that the acquisitions included should all be referred to as horizontal or related acquisitions; acquisitions between companies in the same line of business. These acquisitions provide more potential synergies than unrelated acquisitions, hence the realization of these synergies require more changes, which also means more potential resistance to change. In its turn, that resistance can result in more internal problems, issues and challenges (Vaara, 1995) which creates the intended context for this research. Those cases also require more attention to human integration (Vaara, 1995) which as posed in the theoretical background is essential for succesful PAI (Birkinshaw et al., 2000).

Based on the aforementioned criteria, the cases selected for this study are part of the three organizations, Staples, Tempo-Team and Essent.

Staples is a global organization who acquired one of its main competitors, Corporate Express, in 2008 and has created many synergy savings due to combining their buying power and rationalization of support functions such as IT, Finance, and Human Resources in their European business. They are currently in their second wave of organizational restructuring in the European region as they are still looking to integrate tasks throughout the organizations in order to be more efficient and effective.

Tempo-Team is a daughter organization of the Dutch Randstad Holding, a global organization in staffing solutions, who merged with a large competitor, Vedior, in 2008. They managed to integrate in a speedy fashion, were focused on efficiency and won an Innovation award for their buddy system which helped to create a new Tempo-Team culture together with the former Vedior staff.

Essent was acquired by RWE, a German energy provider, in 2009. Although Essent was acquired, their top position in the Netherlands with 5.000 employees compared to RWE in the Netherlands with 200 employees, made it appear to be a reversed take-over.

It is fairly evident that these three organizations do not operate on the same scale or in the same line of business. However, the constructs that drive this research will not look at the business-content of decisions or activities; it looks at the issues and challenges in PAI where these organizations all dealt with. Therefore the different businesses these organization are active in, do not affect this research.

In order to be able to study the cases as in-depth as possible, it is important not to select too many cases, even though more cases contribute to the external validity of the research (Voss, 2002). For generalization purposes of this thesis to other organizations, Staples provided 3 different cases to be studied and from both Tempo-Team and Essent one case was included. This brings this multiple case study to 5 cases. In table 1 the cases included in this research are presented.

Table 1	Case description						
Case	Organization	Business unit	Integration	Date of acquisitions	Industry	Number and Function of Informants	Affiliation of Informants
Case 1	Staples	Staples Europe HQ	Staples Europe and Corporate Express Europe	July 2008	Office Supplies	4 Middle managers; 1 Business Intelligence, 1 Finance, 2 Merchandising	1 Acquiring, 3 Acquired
Case 2	Staples	Staples Advantage Benelux	Corporate Express Benelux into Staples Europe	July 2008	Office Supplies	4 Middle managers; 1 Supply Chain, 1 HR, 1 Customer Service, 1 Finance	3 Acquired, 1 Pos-Acquisition
Case 3	Staples	PlantinTetterode Benelux	Plantin Belgium and Tetterode the Netherlands	July 2008	Graphic Systems	4 Middle managers; 2 Finance, 1 Marketing, 1 HR	3 Acquired. 1 Post-Acquisition
Case 4	Essent	Essent Nederland	RWE the Netherlands into Essent the Netherlands	September 2009	Energy & Oil	4 Middle managers; 2 Sales, 1 Operations, 1 Finance	1 Acquiring, 3 Acquired
Case 5	Tempo Team	Tempo-Team	Vedior into Tempo-Team	April 2008	Staffing	4 Middle managers; 2 District, 1 HR, 1 Branche	3 Acquiring, 1 Acquired

Involving 5 cases within 3 organizations will create a certain variance in the variables as depicted in the conceptual model. Most likely the selected cases are part of organizations with a different level

of PAI success, different ways of coordinating human and task integration and a different view on intrinsic and extrinsic incentives. This will enable this research to clarify the role of situated attention and focus of attention by the middle manager on PAI success.

Within each business unit, the research will aim at investigating the effect of the attention of middle management on the success of the integration of that particular business unit into the total organization. This approach is supported by Vaara (1995) who claims that success cannot be predetermined by top management, it should be determined from the perspective of the actor involved, in this case the middle manager. Therefore success of PAI will be measured on business unit level where middle management is positioned.

3.3.   Data collection

The data collection is executed through semi-structured interviews with 4 middle managers of each case involved in this research. This makes a total of 20 interviews with middle managers. These 20 middle managers are chosen as informants to provide input about the role and contribution of the middle management layer to the PAI success of each business unit. The middle managers involved, also included in table 1, are representative because of a number of reasons. First, they have different functional roles in the organization, varying from Finance, to HR, to Sales and Operations. Secondly, their affiliation with the organization is from both the acquired and acquiring side, even with two middle managers that joined the organization in the post-acquisition phase. Lastly, their affiliation with either the acquired or acquiring organization varies from over 20 years to not even 1 year.

Since this research deals with intangible cognitive processes and contextual factors influencing the behaviour of the middle manager, the method of data collection through semi-structured interviews is well suited to explore middle manager's perceptions of these factors and to use probing to gain more information and clarification of answers (Barriball & While, 1994). Semi-structured interviews contain a standard structure which is to be applied in every interview in order to assure all required aspects are asked, while at the same time there is room for the researcher to dig deeper into answers of the interviewee and to let them explain their view and rational behind their answers (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Also, in contrast with a quantitative survey, a face to face interview enables a researcher to observe non-verbal indicators and ensures that the respondent is unable to receive assistance from others while formulating a response (Barriball & While, 1994). Each interview conducted for this research lasted on average one hour and was conducted in the physical work environment of the middle manager.

The middle managers that were interviewed are either the first level of supervision or the level above, but at least a level below the top management level of the business unit. The middle manager perspective is precisely chosen for its uniqueness which is their access to top management coupled

with their knowledge of operations (Wooldridge et al., 2008) as already elaborated on in the theoretical background.

In order to come to a list of questions as a guide during the interviews, the theoretical concepts were operationalized. This conversion table is included in table 2. The interview guide is included in Appendix A. The language a middle manager would be using would most likely not mirror the exact theoretical explanations or the construct included in this research, therefore the operationalization helped to make visible how an interviewee responded and was a support for the data analysis phase. On top of that, the interview guide would keep the interviewees from being influenced by the presumed relations between variables drawn from the literature.

The list of question was not necessary followed in the same sequence in each interview as some interviews emerged in such a way that a different order of the questions made more sense and kept the interviewee engaged in the conversation.

Table 2   Conversion table

Construct		Operationalization	Interview question
PAI success		- synergy savings - new culture "one family" - speed of integration - attention to customers during phase of change - little process disruptions	2
Middle manager		- lead a team - receive directions from upper echelons - translate strategic decisions into action plans - influencing above and below	3
Coordination	Informal coordination	- decisions taken outside of formal meetings - use of existing relationships with colleagues - issues discussed over informal get-togethers	5 a - b - c
	Formal coordination	- decisions taken during official meetings - clear formalized plans - use of contracts	
Incentives	Intrinsic incentives	- motivation by promotion - use of compliments - create sense of pride - make employees feel important	6 a - b - c
	Extrinsic incentives	- use of clear defined targets & KPI's - bonus & other financial compensation - materials or things	
Situated attention		- keeping multiple balls in the air at the same time - not being influenced by "we always did it that way" - managing different requests from different people at the same time	7
Focus of Attention	Background	- work experience - within or outside of this industry - variety of functions - people management - years of experience	8 + 9
	Knowledge	- generalist or specialist - deep/broad knowledge	

Each interview started by determining the view of the middle manager on how he defines success of PAI, how successful he feels the integration of his business unit into the total organization has been and how they feel that success has come together.

The next questions were on how they experienced the integration and how they experienced their role and position during the integration. Then, the day to day activities of the middle manager were questioned as a step towards how those activities were coordinated, informal and formal. After that, it was asked if there were specific incentives put in place to stimulate PAI performance and to motivate employees into directing their efforts towards the PAI objectives. The last part of the interview was about how they prioritized the various issues that played during PAI and what the characteristics were of the issues that did get attention, if they attended to issues simultaneously, and to try to determine what issues did not get their attention. This is to determine their degree of situated attention. Towards the closure of the interview they are asked to give some insight into their background and work experience to see how that impacts how and why they attended to the various issues during PAI.

3.4.   Data analysis

By studying the data derived from each interview from two perspectives, first from a within-case perspective and secondly from a cross-case perspective, the gathered data led to an outcome of each proposition and ultimately to an answer to the research question. Within-case analysis enables harmonizing the informants input to the case-level, clarifying patterns to make each case as clear as possible (Eisenhardt, 1989b) and consequently coming to a potential support of the posed propositions. Cross-case analysis enables analyzing the relevance or applicability of the findings to other similar settings and will help to answer the research question (Miles & Huberman, 1999).

The first step of the within-case data analysis included per informant transposing each taped interview into a full written script to become intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity (Eisenhardt, 1989b). As each interview was taped, it was played several times and a large selection of each interview was wordily detailed. This resulted in a thorough understanding of the important remarks, insights and answers. The interview data was structured by using headers and highlighting colors to indicate important quotes. This led to over 100 pages of interview transcript.

The second step of the within-case data analysis was reducing the data. Throughout the various interviews a richness of data was gathered in each interview. In that richness of data, the challenge is to reduce the data to such a degree that the key insights and responses to the investigated constructs become apparent (Huberman & Miles, 1983). By summarizing each interview into Microsoft Excel, it created a manageable overview of all relevant remarks during each interview and created a tool to analyze each case. In this overview, each response to a question referring to a construct or sub

construct was placed in a separate cell, but in the same row as all other cases. This visualized the input on one construct horizontally, and on all constructs per case vertically. As this approach was followed through to each case analysis and created a valuable database. This enforced further data reduction, made relations visible and in the end by following through on all the steps it gave a thorough understanding of each case.

Building on the database, tables were made as the third step in the within-case data analysis. The data was again further reduced by placing each interviewee in the different buckets per construct in order to come to one overall outcome per construct per case.

For the construct situated attention and focus of attention a short profile per respondent was drawn from the interview transcripts. The profiles created a short report on each middle manager on how they prioritized their work, attend to their team members, how they were shaped through their work experience and whether they considered themselves a generalist or specialist. From these profiles each respondent was indicated with high or low situated attention and for focus of attention the respondents were assigned wide or narrow focus of attention. When a profile showed that a middle manager attended to multiple actions simultaneously, not purely from a planning or script and when he attended to his team and their needs, the case was indicated with low attention. When a middle manager's profile showed he was only following planning's and procedures, and focusing on a small number of actions, he was indicated with high situated attention. For focus of attention not only the background of the respondent was studied, but also how he explained where his focus lies, if he attends to stimuli outside of his general scope of how he explained describing himself as a generalist or a specialist.

For coordination the respondents were indicated to apply predominantly formal coordination, predominant informal coordination or to apply a 50/50 balance of formal and informal coordination. For incentives the respondents were indicated to use predominantly extrinsic incentives, predominant intrinsic incentives or to use a 50/50 balance of extrinsic and intrinsic incentives. For these two constructs, these indications are supported by quotes from the interview transcripts.

The fourth step of the within-case data analysis, was to, based on step three, group the four informants of the five cases per proposition to enable cross-case analysis. Out of the four interviews per case their indications of situated attention, focus of attention, coordination and incentives were aggregated to one overall outcome per case. Based on that aggregated outcome, their level of support of the middle management to the proposition was indicated per case. Table 5a and 5b in the next chapter indicates whether a case supports the proposition or a part of it, rejected the proposition or a part of it, or was neutral about this proposition. Per case the acceptance or rejection is indicated which enables cross-case analysis.

The aforementioned steps made clear to what extend the propositions are supported. In order to base the acceptance or rejection of a proposition, the table 3 was used to harmonize the approach.

Table 3   Acceptance or rejection propositions

Outcome cases	Level of support	Result
0% of the cases provided support	unanimously not supported by all cases	proposition is rejected
20% of the cases provided support	supported by a few of the cases	proposition is rejected
40% of the cases provided support	supported by a minority of cases	proposition is rejected
60% of the cases provided support	supported by the majority of the cases	proposition is accepted
80% of the cases provided support	supported by most of the cases	proposition is accepted
100% of the cases provided support	unanimously supported by all cases	proposition is accepted

The aggregated profiles of each informant that were set up for the constructs of situated attention and focus of attention, and the tables that include supporting quotes on the constructs coordination and incentives, formed the explanations of the acceptance or rejection of the propositions. The approach for the results was to first elucidate on the within-cases findings. After that the cases were compared against each other to see what the differences were and how they are explained. The interview transcripts formed valuable supporting material to underpin why a case supported the proposition or not. Especially the cases that did not support certain propositions were important to highlight as that delivered insights that add to the existing literature. An example of a case analysis is included in Appendix B.

3.5.   Reliability, internal and external validity

Reliability is conceptualised as "demonstrating that the operations of a study, such as the collection procedures, can be repeated with the same results" (Yin, 2003: 34). Several means have been used to achieving reliability such as using a conversion table, using an interview guide, recordings of the interviews and making literal transcriptions. Especially making literal quotes from the interviews enabled this research to make a reliable reproduction of the responses from the case interviews and make the respondents "live" throughout the research analysis. It also decreases the chance of difference in interpretation which adds to the reliability of this research. However, this research does not strive for 100% reliability but attempts to create a clear understanding and clarification of the findings in the multiple case-study (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

The internal validity of this multiple case-study approach is dependent of the extent to which the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied are established (Yin, 2006) and is the subject of the study correctly represented by the research results (Collis & Hussey, 2009). As the components of the attention-based view in this research are challenging constructs, the approach of Brymann and Bell (2007) is adopted which is to use a conversion table, in which definitions from the

theory have been translated to practical wording. This translation approach made them researchable and consequently captured the validity. Also, the use of a pilot-interview for testing the quality of the interview protocol safeguarded the construct validity.

From the perspective of generalizability, external validity describes to what extent the findings of this study are applicable and therefore generalizable to other cases (Yin, 2006). As this research includes five cases from five different business units within three different organizations, there is level of generalization possible. The goal of this thesis is to provide research findings that can say something about other comparable cases. This is possible when throughout the research analysis a thorough understanding of the context, particularities and characteristics of the researched cases is created (Collis & Hussey, 2009). By using criteria to select the cases for this research and making sure all variables were covered, the representation of this research increased.

The above methodological considerations and choices are undertaken to create a reliable and valid research.

4.   Results

This chapter displays the findings from the empirical research conducted to test the theory as outlined in chapter 2. As PAI is the central theme of this research, firstly a description of the PAI phase of the involved cases is outlined in order to understand the context and set the PAI scene of each case. After that, the acceptance or rejection of each of the propositions is discussed and justified with quotes from the interviews conducted.

4.1.   Case descriptions

As introduced in the previous chapter, the three organizations involved in this research are Staples, Tempo-Team and Essent. The cases from these organizations included in this research all have their particularities which characterize their integration. These characteristics are schematized in table 4.

Table 4	PAI characteristics				
Case	**Organization**	**Business unit**	**Integration**	**Typology Integration**	**PAI characteristics**
Case 1	Staples	Staples Europe HQ	Staples Europe and Corporate Express Europe	HQ integration	- integration of 3 organization - slow - lack of clear goals - internal focus
Case 2	Staples	Staples Advantage Benelux	Corporate Express Benelux into Staples Europe	BU integration	- warehouse integration with Office Centre - difficult matrix organization structure - availability of tools from acquiring organization - not much change for employees
Case 3	Staples	PlantinTetterode Benelux	Plantin Belgium and Tetterode the Netherlands	Back office integration	- integration of back office functions - efficiency - system challenges - Belgian & Dutch culture clash
Case 4	Essent	Essent Nederland	RWE the Netherlands into Essent the Netherlands	Pacman	- blueprints - reporting and monitoring - no customer problems - reverse take over in NL
Case 5	Tempo Team	Tempo-Team	Vedior into Tempo-Team	Military exercise	- fast - detailed script for integration - tools for attention to human aspects - customer focus

In the following sub paragraphs the cases and clarification of these characterics are further introduced.

4.1.1.   Staples

Staples is the world's largest office products company and serves businesses of different sizes and consumers with office supplies, electronics, technology and office furniture as well as business services. The company is listed on the NASDAQ, has 91,000 associates worldwide and operates in 27 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

On the 15th of July 2008 Staples acquired Corporate Express, one of its main global competitors within the Office Products industry. Corporate Express was active in the contract channel or "business to business" (B2B) sector worldwide, serving customers with more than 100 office workers. In the years before this acquisition, Staples acquired various other companies to expand their geographical footprint in Europe. However, Staples was not yet active in that B2B channel but distributed its products through retail stores (f.e. in the Netherlands called "Office Centre") and mail order catalogues (f.e. in France and Belgium called "JPG"). The acquisition of Corporate Express made Staples active in Europe in 16 countries, with the sales channels Retail, Catalogue and Contract.

In this research, three Staples business units each represent a case. Staples Europe headquarter in Amsterdam, existing of the central functions in the organization such as IT, Finance, HR and Merchandising, overseeing the thirty business units across the different regions and channels. Staples Advantage Benelux, the former Corporate Express Benelux, located in Almere, serving the B2B market in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. PlantinTetterode Benelux, an organization which stems from the old Corporate Express organization and is active in the Graphic systems industry. The latter is the odd man out as being the only business part owned by the Staples organization not active in the Office Supplies industry.

Staples Europe headquarter

Staples' goal of the acquisition of Corporate Express was increase of market share by investing in business channels in Europe in which they were not active. This entailed a complex integration of the two organizations. Not only Staples and Corporate Express were to be integrated, also the previously by Staples acquired businesses in Europe were not integrated into one organization, prior to the acquisition of Corporate Express. This made the integration not an integration of two but of three companies. Due to that complexity, but also because of lack of clear goals in the organization, this integration is characterized as slow. Goals were not clear enough for the organization to work towards quick successful integration. Almost 3 years after the acquisition, there is still integration going on. Another aspect of the integration was the internal focus during the first phase of the integration. The first phase was aimed at building the internal organization in order to achieve the initial synergies. The second phase was to go back to the go-to-market models. The past three years the organization did not really look external and was too focused on reaching internal efficiencies.

Staples Advantage Benelux

The Staples Advantage Benelux business unit in Almere is an operational business unit with approximately 350 employees, which physically serves larger customer across the Benelux region.

Their organization exists of a sales department, a local merchandising team, a warehouse and the relevant support department such as HR, IT and Finance.

The first aspect regarding the integration of the Staples Advantage business unit into the European Staples organization is the physical integration of the Office Centre logistic process into the Staples Advantage warehouse which was a true tangible aspect of the integration and a synergy.

From the perspective of structure and tools, the acquisition resulted in a complex organization structure to become in place which on a business unit level appeared to be challenging. This structure initially positioned channels, regions and functions in one matrix and gave middle managers a functional and dotted reporting line. Recently the regional layer of the organization was removed but the matrix structure is still in place. The availability of tools within the Staples organization was experienced as an added value resulting from being part of larger organization. Tools such as recruitment tools, assessment tools and job grading are used to their advantage.

From the perspective of the employees, the acquisition did not change much. This was also a strategy of Staples to leave the local business units to their daily business and to distract them as little as possible. A different sign was put on the building but for the employees everything remained the same. As there was no real integration within the business unit, for example with a former Staples business unit, employees still feel Corporate Express employees.

Mid of July the integration became more apparent as the Staples Office Centre headquarter in Almere moved to the current Staples Advantage office also in Almere, at the moment literally separated by a canal. That will make the old Corporate Express business unit become closer to the old Staples business unit, also in a physical way.

PlantinTetterode Benelux

Plantin and Tetterode are part of the Printing Systems Division and since the takeover of Corporate Express by Staples also a Staples company. Plantin and Tetterode are positioned in the graphical industry in the Benelux region. They offer consumables and services for the prepress, press and post press. Plantin is based in Brussels and Tetterode in Amsterdam (moved to Almere in July 2011). The merger of Plantin/Tetterode is a combined result of the acquisition of Staples and the overall economic downturn. Staples reviewed their organization and demanded Plantin and Tetterode to become more efficient, being in the exact same business but only in a different country. On top of that, the economic downturn forced these two business units to work together, in order to reduce cost and increase efficiency. It led to a severe number of redundancies, the move of the warehouse from Amsterdam to Brussels and management to commute between Brussels and Amsterdam.

The integration of Plantin and Tetterode was focused on efficiency. All functions that existed on both sides were rationalized; Finance, IT, Logistics and HR. The Sales and Marketing was maintained in

both countries. The physical warehouse moved from Amsterdam to Brussels. This is where the majority of the efficiencies come from.

As in any organization, their IT systems are crucial for their business. It was decided to adopt the Plantin system even though the Tetterode system had more experience but also more corruption. This migration is a challenging aspect of the integration.

Besides the efficiencies and system challenges, the differences in the Belgian and Dutch culture play an important influencing role. Work ethics and the way people deal with problems between Belgium and the Netherlands is fundamentally different. These aspects have and additional complexity because of the cross border characteristic of this integration.

4.1.2. Tempo-Team

The second organization involved in this research is Tempo-Team. Tempo-Team is part of the Randstad holding which is the third largest staffing company in the world.

Tempo-Team is one of two staffing agency labels of the Randstad Holding (the other being Randstad temp agency) active in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany and Portugal. It offers staffing services which include finding temporary personnel (flex workers and interim professionals) from their branch offices but also through inhouse-solutions, but also recruit permanent employees for clients, offers pay rolling services and outplacement. Tempo-Team is the second staffing intermediar in the Dutch market with 300 branches.

Randstad Holding and Vedior agreed to merge in December of 2007 and upon that decision decided to integrate the Vedior brand name and branches into the Tempo-Team organization. However, it was not experienced as a merger because in the end it has become Tempo-Team. The back office of Tempo-Team was chosen as the basis and the branding of Vedior completely disappeared.

An aspect that stands out strongly in the integration of Vedior into Tempo-Team is the speed of the integration process. The branch network was done in a militaristic way. A period of three months was available for the branches to integrate which gave no room for discussion amongst the organization on how the integration should go; it was managed very tightly according to a predetermined script and planning.

In this speedy process, customers were a focal point of attention. There were no issues with any customers and no single customer was lost because of the integration which made it commercially to a success. Customers are impressed by the speed in which the integration progressed; Tempo-Team became famous for their successful integration.

Besides the speed and customer focus, there was a lot of attention to the human side of the integration. Tempo-Team won an innovation prize for the buddy system. This buddy system entailed that on all levels in the organization a Tempo-Team employee and Vedior employee were matched

and were each other's buddy. They got a diner voucher and were supported to go for dinner together. It was well perceived across the whole organization.

4.1.3. Essent

The third organization included in this research on post-acquisition integration is Essent. Essent is the largest energy company in the Netherlands. Essent supplies electricity, gas and heating to both domestic and business consumers and is active through the entire chain: from production of energy up to and including supply to end users. Essent employs approximately 5.000 employees.

On the 30th of September 2009 Essent and RWE Group announced to have completed the transaction of 100% of the shares acquired by RWE as already announced in the beginning of that same year. RWE is one of Europe's five leading electricity and gas companies, active in generation, trading, transmission and supply of electricity and gas. They have 66.000 employees across Europe.

It was decided that through the acquisition of Essent by RWE, Essent remained serving customers (B2B and consumers) in the Netherlands and Belgium and the Dutch part of RWE was integrated into Essent. In this research, the Dutch integration of Essent and RWE is included.

Thorough preparation and blueprints proved to be key for the integration of Essent and RWE in the Netherlands. Already a half year before the acquisition took effect; a detailed preparation took place. It became a manual which was shared in the organization in order to execute on it.

This approach resulted in a smooth transition for existing customers. The chaotic situation that could develop for customer from such an integration was prevented and managed very well. During the execution in the first months no strange things happened and customers remained calm.

During the PMI, as how Essent/RWE referred to their integration period, reporting was central topic to monitor the development of the integration. There was a PMI office with a monthly reporting cycle on Workers Council requests for advice and integration synergies. The synergies were tracked and traced and all directors accepted them upon accepting their new positions.

The human integration was not the most successful aspect of the integration between RWE and Essent. Where in the Netherlands Essent employed 5.000 people versus 200 employees at RWE it was experienced as a reverse takeover. Almost everyone of RWE dropped out, for the reasons of culture and distance. To illustrate the difference in culture, the building in Den Bosch has the size of a shopping mall which is different from the small size and homely atmosphere in the old RWE locations which were at a 150 kilometers distance. Additionally, staffing the new teams took long. Only 9 months after the decision to integrate people knew if they were still going to be in the company or not.

4.2. Propositions

The propositions as introduced in the chapter 2 follow the relations between the constructs as depicted in the conceptual model. These propositions are the step towards answering to the research question of this thesis. The first sub research question discusses the relation between situated attention and focus of attention and the mechanisms coordination and incentives. The second sub research question discusses the relation between coordination and incentives and PAI success.

In table 5a the results are presented in terms of the support to the propositions 1 to 4 posed in the theoretical background, belonging to the first sub research question. In the following sub paragraphs these four propositions, which include each a relation between two constructs, are introduced and discussed from the perspective of support. The discussion will lead to the final acceptance or rejection of the propositions, with reference to the supporting quotes from the empirical research.

Table 5a	Results propositions 1 - 4												
	Constructs					Support to propositions							
Case	Integration	SA	FoA	Coordination	Incentives	P1a	P1b	P2a	P2b	P3a	P3b	P4a	P4b
Case 1	Staples Europe and Corporate Express Europe	LOW	NARROW	Predominantly Informal	Predominantly Intrinsic	YES	-	-	NO	YES	-	-	/
Case 2	Corporate Express Benelux into Staples Europe	LOW	WIDE	Predominantly Informal	Predominantly Intrinsic	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-	YES	-
Case 3	Plantin Belgium and Tetterode the Netherlands	LOW	WIDE	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	NO	-	NO	-	YES	-	YES	-
Case 4	RWE the Netherlands into Essent the Netherlands	HIGH	WIDE	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	YES	NO	-	-	NO	YES	-
Case 5	Vedior into Tempo-Team	HIGH	WIDE	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	YES	NO	-	-	NO	YES	-
					Support / n	2 / 3	2 / 2	1 / 4	0 / 1	3 / 3	0 / 2	4 / 4	-
					Support	moderate	strong	weak	no	strong	no	strong	-
					Proposition supported	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	/

4.2.1. Relation between situated attention and coordination

The first proposition posed in this research involves the relation between situated attention and coordination. This proposition, existing of two statements, poses that middle management with low situated attention uses predominantly informal coordination (proposition 1a) while middle management with high situated attention coordinates in a predominantly formal manner (proposition 1b). Proposition 1a is accepted as two of the three cases, provided support for this proposition. Proposition 1b is also accepted since out of the two cases that provided input for this proposition, both cases provided supporting argumentation.

The Staples Europe headquarter integration, Staples Advantage Benelux integration and the Plantin/Tetterode integration provided input for proposition 1a as the situated attention of their middle management was low. Out of those three cases, the Staples Europe headquarter integration and Staples Advantage Benelux integration supported the relation between their low situated

attention and informal coordination. For these two business units the situated attention is low as the integration was not managed in a very tightly planned way which made their attention disperse towards a variety of situations. There was a lack in clear goals on how the integration should be done or where it should lead, as highlighted in the case description. Also, the respondents mentioned they were not strongly connected to their cultural legacy from their former organization. BI manager "There were some changes in the IT tooling. Well fine! The old tooling was not sacred. One should not be difficult about that". Category manager "I think we still feel the constant pressure of 'this is how we have always done it'. People do not see it or dare to do it differently. But when I change it around en show it once in a while, they say 'can we do it that way?' Of course! I challenge people to challenge the process". Also the latter is an indicator of low situated attention.

For the Staples Advantage Benelux also their organization culture did not change much. They went through a rebranding process but there was no drastic change for employees or in the actual business activities they performed. HR manager "There is different sign on the roof, but we still deliver office supplies to large businesses".

Because of their openness to new approaches, they did not need to apply formal coordination to prevent their culture from disappearing. Additionally, the old Corporate Express culture is fairly informal. BI manager of Staples Europe headquarter "Informal is how I prefer to work. Some things you need to do in a formal manner, but you should not do too many things formally. But being tough and formal, that will not help you to reach you goal. I often see that with formal approaches, people tend to dig their heels in the sand." Category manager of Staples Europe headquarter "You actually need more informal than formal coordination. Of course you need clear agreements; it gives them a frame in which they play around. That you need to let go of, than it becomes fun, then there is trust and they achieve successes and get intrinsically motivated." Finance manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "I do not even have formal control points. I do follow it from a distance. Dashboards and plannings, cut it out, that drives me crazy." Supply chain manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "Ad hoc, the majority of our activities are very ad hoc, which is also a characteristic of our dynamic business".

The Plantin/Tetterode case, with their middle management with low situated attention, did not coordinate predominantly informal but applied predominantly formal coordination. During their integration phase, they had a clear awareness that they also had to attend to their ongoing business operations while integrating. This makes them attend to a variety of issues and activities simultaneously which is a characteristic of low situated attention. HR manager 'The operation comes first! Every Monday morning, people come here to work and twice a month they need to get their paycheck, that wheel needs to keep on turning". Marketing manager "Everything which was about

the integration project was priority number one, unless it concerned a supplier or customer. And I made no concessions on that part". Because of these different contexts, on one hand the business as usual and on the other hand their integration activities, they had to coordinate their work in a formal manner. HR manager "Because in such short time there were so many people involved, in so many elements, you have to formalize it, to make reports and to plan it". Marketing manager "Situations in which we turned the process upside down, we needed to get the relevant people around the table and discuss about it".

Essent-RWE and Tempo-Team provided input for proposition 1b as their situated attention was high. Their integration was very tightly planned, with blue prints and scripts as indicated in the case description earlier in this chapter. This makes the spread of activities less wide and hence pushed their attention to the integration. Operations manager at Essent "I spent about 75% of my time on the PMI project and 25% on the business as usual". Their high situated attention made Essent-RWE and Tempo-Team supported this proposition. Because of the clear preparation, they used a formal approach to manage the integration. Value chain manager of Essent-RWE; "Managing an energy company demands knowledge and skills. Before you know it things start existing that actually makes no sense at all. We have seen that happening. Therefore you have to build this in a formal manner". District manager 1 of Tempo-Team "Certain things were very formal, that was also because of the time-related activities. We managed and monitored that very tightly. I believe that was necessary, even though not everybody agreed with that. When it has to be managed quickly and fast, the formal approach is necessary".

As a conclusion to the above analysis it can be stated that middle management with low situated attention coordinates in an informal manner during PAI because when there is no true change in organizational culture, or when middle management is not very connected to their former culture, the coordination does not need to be formalized or based on rules and procedures. Tightly managed integrations do influence the attention of middle management which makes them coordinate activities in a formal manner in order to maintain the planning and to stick to the script.

Hence, based on the empirical research on situated attention and coordination there is supporting evidence for the strong relation between middle management with low situated attention and informal coordination as well as the strong relation between high situated attention and formal coordination.

4.2.2. Relation between focus of attention and coordination

The second proposition posed in this research contains the relation between focus of attention and coordination. This proposition poses that middle management with wide focus of attention uses

predominantly informal coordination (proposition 2a) while middle management with narrow focus of attention coordinates in a predominantly formal manner (proposition 2b). The majority of the cases provided input for proposition 2a, but only one of the four cases supported this part of the proposition, therefore this proposition is rejected. Only one case provided input for proposition 2b as their focus of attention was narrow. That case did not support this proposition either.

The empirical research shows no relation between wide or narrow focus of attention and coordination. To begin with Staples Advantage Benelux, it appears their focus of attention and coordination is driven by their business operation which is very customer-oriented and where a close cooperation between the various departments is required. Manager Customer Service "I am a generalist manager. This is also required in this role as I am process manager of Order to Cash in which I overlap with almost all other departments because everything starts and finishes with the customer. I am involved in Transport, Logistics, Rebuying and Product Support; I touch all their processes". HR manager "I find it very interesting in what happens in other departments. I am involved in Logistics and I have weekly meetings with Sales because I want to know what happens there too. I do not want to sit in an ivory tower and refer people to the HR handbook." Supply Chain manager "My agenda is packed on a day with a lot of different issues in which I interact with different departments. Today I started with Finance, then I have a quick chat with an employee who is leaving and I want to keep him in the company, then I need to give a presentation to Customer Care, after that I have a call regarding a Belgian customer, than I need to dive into our ERP system, yet another call about deliveries to a customer, and then again financial forecasting".

Their core business does not allow for many formal meetings and plannings, but requires ad hoc and fast response. Supply chain manager "Ad hoc, the majority of our activities were very ad hoc, which is also a characteristic of our dynamic business". Finance manager "My attention is drawn by the operation, by logistics. I am very operational oriented. Whatever happens, the business needs to go on. I rather involve myself in a disruption in the warehouse than with a system issue in SAP".

The above example is followed by the Essent-RWE, Plantin/Tetterode and Tempo-Team/Vedior cases whose middle management has a wide focus of attention but mentioned to coordinate in a predominantly formal manner, which based on the proposition one would not expect. That wide focus of attention is a combination of a generalist profile as middle management, and attending to issues outside of their regular job responsibilities. District manager 2 of Tempo-Team; "All these branches have a very different dynamic. So I need to shift gears at different levels. That is also how my personality is, I am very flexible." Even though this illustrates his wide focus of attention, he does coordinate on the formal basis. "There has to be a balance between human and task elements, for

sure. But in the end I am focusing on the task elements. By that I mean that I follow very detailed what is agreed and how that is followed up." This was also the case at Essent-RWE. Finance manager; "I am the kind of guy who does 30 things simultaneously which makes this the ideal job for me. It is also what this role asks me to do. I tend to pick things up from outside of my primary responsibility". This is an example of his wide focus of attention. But his way of coordination is formal. "Essent has a strong informal circuit. I try to formalize certain activities; this is where I feel the organizational weaknesses are. It is all too informal, and too often they close a blind eye. I want to make things explicit and push a lot on this happening more and more." As illustrated by the above examples, it did not turn out that the profile of middle managers impacted the way of coordinating; it appeared to be resulting from the organization in which they work.

The Staples Europe headquarter integration illustrates that there is no support for the relation between narrow focus of attention and formal coordination, proposition 2b. The middle management in this business unit has a narrow focus of attention and coordinates in a predominantly informal manner. Finance manager "I am a specialist. This is hidden in my competencies and education which is Finance. I consider Finance as being the 'garden' in which I know the most. That is also what this job asks from me; it is expected from me that I posses the specialist knowledge in certain areas." His profile is marked as narrow focus of attention, but he does coordinate in an informal manner, as opposed to what proposition 2b poses. "What I have noticed since the acquisition is that it is easiest for me to manage informally, with my contacts of Staples international on the 4th and 5th floor. That is where the communication is with our corporate headquarter in Framingham. It is important for me to know what happens there. I could just take the stairs up to check what was really going on." BI manager "I am becoming more and more a specialist. I built a team from my role as an analyst, so I trained them from the job content; nobody could train or coach me, I invented everything myself! I know all the ins and outs, there are no surprises. Within Finance we are a very isolated team. I would like to change that though". Also his profile illustrates narrow focus of attention but his coordination is informal. "Informal is how I prefer to work. The distance between us here in Amsterdam and the Brussels team, does create some necessary formal coordination but it often does not support meeting the goals. Often a chat at the coffee machine or over lunch helps more".

Based on this analysis the conclusion can be drawn that middle management who have a broad view into the organization and are involved in many aspects do not coordinate in an informal manner. The choice of formal or informal coordination is either caused by the way of working in the organization as a whole, such as within the Staples Advantage business unit, or by how a middle manager himself has a preferred way of coordinating.

Hence, based on the empirical research on focus of attention and coordination as discussed above, there is no evidence for the posed relation between these two constructs.

4.2.3. Relation between situated attention and incentives

The third proposition posed in this research addresses the relation between situated attention and incentives. This proposition relates middle management with low situated attention and the use of predominantly intrinsic incentives (proposition 3a) and middle management with high situated attention and the use of predominantly extrinsic incentives (proposition 3b). The three cases that were identified with low situated attention were all supportive of proposition 3a, therefore this proposition is accepted. For proposition 3b, two cases provided input of which none of them provided support which makes this proposition to be rejected.

Staples Europe headquarter, Staples Advantage Benelux and Plantin/Tetterode are indicated with low situated attention as already addressed in paragraph 4.2.1. The integration of Staples Europe headquarter and Staples Advantage Benelux was not managed very tightly, suffered from a lack of clear goals and middle management was not strongly connected to former organizational culture. Plantin/Tetterode had a thorough awareness of the required attention to the ongoing business parallel to their integration project. The middle management in all these cases were to the opinion that the use intrinsic incentives was most appropriate because of the impact an organizational change such as the integration has on the employees in the organization. At Plantin/Tetterode this was commented by Finance & Control manager "From the Tetterode perspective the IT system was taken away, we got a Belgian Managing Director, we were moving to Almere; the changes were piling up and people see that as detrimental for their job satisfaction. Intrinsic incentives help to restore the fun in their job and to make them feel at home". Finance manager at Staples Europe headquarter; "You should take into account that at different levels, all the changes demanded a lot of energy and effort from people. It means a lot to them on a personal level and that it reflects on their own functioning. Attention to their intrinsic motivation is crucial".

As a second element that explains why they would use intrinsic incentives is because they do not believe in using extrinsic incentives, with distinct reasons.

Category manager at Staples Europe headquarter "Financial bonuses, I do not see them as an incentive. You need a grading and salary system. A raise today will be forgotten by tomorrow." Merchandising manager at Staples Europe headquarter "The downside of a bonus system is that it has a short span of influence. The intrinsic part is way more important." HR manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "Extrinsic incentives, it will help. But as an employer you need to make sure they are in place, in an accurate way. They should not be used to pull people on board; that will not work

in the long run". Customer service manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "That pot of money; people will get used to it. It is nice to introduce it, but after a certain moment the feeling is gone. You still do the same kind of work; it will not make you run any faster". Also at Plantin/Tetterode middle management echoed the aforementioned quotes. Finance & Control manager "You get perhaps 1.000 or 2.000 euro. You might think 'nice' and then you go over to the course of the day. It is a short-term stimulus". Marketing manager "To my experience, extrinsic motivators do not pay off when the intrinsic motivation is not in good shape". HR manager "Money does not help. Money has a very short effect. People get used to it immediately, and the effect is gone. When you give somebody an extra 500euro, it does not make him a better manager all of a sudden".

Essent-RW and Tempo-Team gave input for proposition 3b as their situated attention was high because of their tightly prepared and planned integration process. The middle management of Tempo-Team was to the opinion, even though there was a time sensitive and tight planning for the integration, intrinsic incentives were important and extrinsic incentives would not help. HR manager "I would never choose to do apply extrinsic incentives to keep people on board, in the end it is their choice to stay or not. You do need to respect that there are emotions involved. I would only use funding to supporting the team spirit. The buddy system was such an example. But there were also team sessions and coaches to support the process". District manager 1 "I do not believe in the financial incentive. It will help, but only for a very short moment. Intrinsic motivation is the 'why do I work here' and 'why do I enjoy it'. I played a role in that by giving attention to the people, handing out compliments and giving extra attention to successes. During the integration we even lowered some targets to make them meet them sooner and make the people feel more successful." At Essent-RWE middle management involved their people in the change process, also from the perspective of intrinsic motivation. Even though the blue prints were ready beforehand, the actual execution planning was a process in which they were heavily involved". Operations manager noted; "I am to the opinion that attention to the person is more important than a financial incentive. Therefore I involved my team into the process and did not behave any different than normal projects. When they achieve successes they get the credits. I did pay extra attention to the RWE people in my team". Sales manager also marked on that; "When someone had a good proposal within one of the sub projects, I would not copy it and write it down in a fancy way. They were to think with us in the process and so the biggest compliment you could give is to have them execute and document their own invented plan".

Based on the above analysis it can be concluded that the use of incentives, intrinsic or extrinsic, is not impacted by the low or high situated attention of middle management. There seems to be a common

opinion across all middle managers that the attention to intrinsic incentives is important as during PAI the changes in the organization have an impact on the well-being of employees in the organization. A tightly planned PAI process or one without clear goals does not change that. Additionally, middle management is to the opinion that extrinsic incentives do not often help as a motivator as they have a very short term effect.

Hence, based on the empirical research on situated attention and incentives there is support for the strong relation between middle management with low situated attention and the use of intrinsic incentives and no support for the relation between high situated attention and the use of extrinsic incentives.

4.2.4. Relation between focus of attention and incentives

The fourth proposition posed in this research involves the relation between focus of attention and incentives. This proposition poses that middle management with wide focus of attention uses predominantly intrinsic incentives (proposition 4a) while middle management with narrow focus of attention uses predominantly extrinsic incentives (proposition 4b). Proposition 4a is accepted as most of the cases provided supporting arguments for this posed relation. Proposition 4b is inconclusive as the only case that provided input did not provide support argumentation for the relation between their focus and incentives.

With regards to proposition 4a, the four cases that provided input for this proposition are Essent-RWE, Staples Advantage Benelux, Plantin/Tetterode and Tempo-Team/Vedior. These cases all have a wide focus of attention. The wide focus of attention for these cases results from the combination of the background of the middle management, their current role and the wide view they have in their organization. As for the Staples Advantage Benelux case, their wide focus is already highlighted in proposition 2, and as mentioned there is a result from their operations characteristic of their business unit in which they cooperated closely towards the final service to the customers as a primary focus. At the other cases, the following quotes illustrate also their wide focus of attention.

Operations manager at Essent-RWE "I am responsible for the operations process from the call centre until debt collection, including a data and quality team. The diversity is what I enjoy in my job and in which I have a wide variety of elements I need to attend to". Sales manager at Essent-RWE; "I am a generalist, also looking at my background. I have worked in an operation role, in my KPN period. I have been an entrepreneur in whom I was responsible for Finance, Commerce and Operations. After that I went into Sales and Marketing at Essent so I tasted everything along the way". District manager 1 at Tempo-Team; "I have about three customer visits a week. Call centres, production companies, logistics; a variety of organizations in which I address the basic process, providing flex workers. Next

to that, my challenge lies in my organizational activities, my span of control across the branches and Sales. The varieties of activities all take place on a generic level". Branch manager at Tempo-Team; "When you look at the role I have, managing people, serving my own customer portfolio and attending to everything that happens in my branch. There are many aspects to the job, a combination of a variety of issues and activities". Finance & Control manager at Plantin/Tetterode "You can make this job as variable as you want. At one moment I am involved in insurances, hire & purchase agreements, another moment I am working on booking service invoices. Even though it is connected to my primary responsibility it is a broad range of aspects". HR manager at Plantin/Tetterode; "I am a generalist. I am a business developer within an HR manager's position. This helps me a lot in my role as it keeps me in close contact with the operation. I connect easily to the reality of Finance, IT, Sales and Warehousing. I know their terminology".

These cases with wide focus of attention indicate that because of their wide focus they have a broad view into their organization and know where to attend to, also when it concerns the motivation of their team for which to use intrinsic motivation. Exactly this relation is confirmed by the following quotes. Operations manager at Essent-RWE "I stay in touch constantly with my surroundings. I can walk around on the work floor and just need to ask a couple of questions to know what the atmosphere is amongst the team. I have horns for that". HR manager at Plantin/Tetterode "This is the phase in which the people need attention. I see people drowning because the pressure is high. We need to approach them, stimulate them and motivate them. There I see the disconnection in what management expects and has written in their blue prints, and what the lower level actually thinks about that". HR manager at Tempo-Team; "I pick up a lot of things that happen around me. I can signal things within my team which enables me to notice it and address it".

For proposition 4b where was only the Staples Europe headquarter integration provided input because their focus of attention is narrow. This narrow focus of attention stems from a number of elements. Firstly, the specialist background which for this case is already outlined in proposition 2b. Also their work background is of influence. Merchandising manager "My background has been merchandising, in a period of 22 years. Not always in this industry but always in non-food". And thirdly, having an open view outside of their own job responsibilities and tasks. Category manager "I do have a wide view, but I deliberately keep myself away from many things that happen around me. I shut myself off from that. If I would have the time I would involve myself in those elements. Only when it pertains to my team or forcing quick decisions I will interfere, other waves I will not ride".

They are also indicated with intrinsic incentives as already explained in the previous proposition, but did not show specific supporting comments on that in relation with their narrow focus of attention. Therefore this part of proposition 4 is inconclusive.

This analysis confirms that middle managers who have a wide focus of attention are able to see broadly around them, they see what is going on during PAI and with that they use intrinsic incentives.

Hence, based on the empirical research on focus of attention and incentives there is support for the strong relation between middle management with wide focus of attention and the use of intrinsic incentives but there is no support for the relation between narrow focus of attention and the use of extrinsic incentives.

Propositions 5 and 6 posed in the theoretical background belong to the second sub research question. Both propositions pose the contribution of coordination and respectively use of incentives to a successful human and task integration. In table 5b the results are presented in terms of the support to proposition 5 and 6 across the different cases and the constructs.

Table 5b	Results propositions 5 - 6									
		Constructs			**PAI**		**Support to propositions**			
Case	**Integration**	**Coordination**	**Incentives**	**PAI**	**Human integration**	**Task integration**	**P5a**	**P5b**	**P6a**	**P6b**
Case 1	Staples Europe and Corporate Express Europe	Predominantly Informal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	Not succesfull	Inconclusive	NO	/	NO	/
Case 2	Corporate Express Benelux into Staples Europe	Predominantly Informal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	Not yet succesfull	Succesfull	NO	YES	NO	/
Case 3	Plantin Belgium and Tetterode the Netherlands	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	Not yet succesfull	Succesfull	-	-	NO	/
Case 4	RWE the Netherlands into Essent the Netherlands	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	-	Not succesfull	Succesfull	-	-	NO	/
Case 5	Vedior into Tempo-Team	Predominantly Formal	Predominantly Intrinsic	Succesfull	Succesfull	Succesfull	-	-	YES	/
						Support / n	*0 / 2*	*-*	*1 / 5*	*-*
						Support in %	*no*	*-*	*weak*	*-*
						Proposition supported	NO	/	NO	/

In the two remaining sub paragraphs of this chapter, these two propositions are discussed from the perspective of support, also with reference to the supporting quotes from the cases in order to lead to the acceptance or rejection of the proposition.

4.2.5. Relation between coordination and PAI success

The relation between coordination and PAI success is declared in proposition 5a and 5b. This proposition states the positive relation between the use of predominantly informal coordination by middle management and human integration (proposition 5a) and the positive relation between the use of predominantly informal coordination by middle management and task integration (proposition 5b).

Proposition 5a is rejected as neither of the two cases that are identified to apply predominantly informal coordination have a successful human integration. Proposition 5b is also rejected; only one case provided relevant supporting input. The other case was inconclusive about the task integration. As one case is not sufficient to reject or accept a proposition, proposition 5b is inconclusive.

The two Staples business units included in this research; Staples Europe headquarter and Staples Advantage Benelux, both use predominantly informal coordination. Within the Staples Europe head quarter, the majority of the middle management is from the old Corporate Express, an organization in which a more informal approach was part of the culture. This is also the case in the Staples Advantage Benelux business unit, who are 100% old Corporate Express. Finance manager of the headquarter "You could notice a clear cultural difference, within Corporate Express it was faster and more informal, while on the Staples side there was more need to formalize items in structured meetings". In the business unit this was also observed. Supply chain manager "These are two completely different cultures, Office Centre Retail and the old Corporate Express. We had a hard working atmosphere but in a relaxed way. Within Office Centre, we see more influence of hierarchy". Within both cases, the middle management was to the opinion that there was no successful human integration. Supply chain manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "Many things happen here on an ad hoc basis, which is in line with the dynamic environment in which our business operates. In that dynamic we did not put enough energy into the people. They are our pillars, our basis. They do not know enough about what Staples is all about". Also the Customer Service manager and the HR Manager at Staples Advantage Benelux agreed, "People still feel very Corporate Express. Now after the very recent move, the human integration will start I guess". HR manager "I think when you should ask the people here, three quarter will say the integration went well because they did not notice much of it".

At the Staples Europe headquarter; the human integration is at an early stage as it is a difficult process which takes time, especially in the complexity of Staples across the different channels and countries. Finance manager "The soft side of the integration is that you have organizations with legacy and people with legacy. That creates all sorts of implicit and explicit barriers; what can they do and what are they prepared to do. Integrating people is a process that takes a lot of time and still needs a lot of time." The human integration depends on the cultural differences between the companies that come together. These cultural differences between Staples and Corporate Express were evident and still play a role today. Merchandising manager "Corporate Express was built from a corporate office, while the two Staples head quarters were not much of a corporate office. Also the channels are different. That is why we are talking about integrating three organizations because not

only the dynamics but automatically the people are different in Retail, different in Direct and different in Contract. Making one story out of these differences with their backgrounds, that is not easy".

Informal coordination can have effect on human integration as it maintains the gap between the cultures as supported by the following example. Finance manager "When I needed to take a tough decision, I would check first, informally, with the people who I know from my legacy organization, which will give me an honest answer. I noticed I was inclined to check with my own blood group first". This can also be interpreted the other way around; informal coordination and decision making does not support human integration. The approach illustrated in the previous quote will maintain the existing gap between the two cultures and will not support integration of people.

Proposition 5b poses the positive relation between informal coordination and successful task integration. Here, we are confined solely to the input from the Staples Advantage Benelux business unit in which the task integration is indicated as successful. As mentioned earlier, it was the strategy of Staples to leave the business units to run their daily business and not worry too much about integration activities. However, there was one integration activity that illustrates the task integration at this business unit; the integration of the logistic process of the Retail organization in the Netherlands into the existing warehouse of Staples Advantage Benelux in Almere. They had to learn about Retail which was a different business than the Contract business Staples Advantage Benelux executed. Supply Chain director "We managed to get people from the stores to here who could explain to us what Retail was all about. For us it was completely new. With Advantage you have an order and off you go. Within Retail products need to be stacked in a certain order. That was a clear point of the integration for me and the team, very tangible. We see two streams running through the warehouse; it is cool to see that and the team is also proud of that".

At the Staples Europe headquarter the middle management did not address their task integration achievements during the interviews which makes this proposition 5b inconclusive.

Hence, based on the empirical research on coordination and PAI success, there is limited evidence to analyze this relation and draw conclusions. There is neither support for the relation between middle management who coordinates in an informal manner and successful human integration nor for middle management who coordinates in an informal manner and successful task integration.

4.2.6. Relation between incentives and PAI success

The last proposition of this thesis, proposition 6, discusses the relation between incentives and PAI success. The proposition states the positive relation between the use of predominantly intrinsic incentives by middle management and human integration (proposition 6a) and task integration

(proposition 6b). All five cases are indicated with using predominantly intrinsic incentive. Therefore there is maximum input that rejects proposition 6a; only one out of the five cases supports this. For proposition 6b, there are four out of the five cases that appear to support the proposition based on the constructs, but as the empirical research did not capture support from the middle management underpinning the specific relation, this proposition is inconclusive.

For proposition 6a, only Tempo-Team provided support. The empirical research brought some elements to light that helped Tempo-Team's integration with Vedior to become successful from the perspective of the human integration. First, the buddy system from which Tempo-Team won an innovation prize. This small incentive in the form of a diner voucher forces Tempo-Team and Vedior employees to get to know each other in an informal setting. HR manager "to make integration accessible we financed this small gesture which got them a buddy during the process too. It was decided for them who was their buddy so this was well facilitated". Another element that helped as an intrinsic incentive in the integration was the size and possibilities the Tempo-Team organization offered to the Vedior employees. District manager 1 "Tempo-Team was bigger. It had more functions outside of the "Tempo-Team uitzendbureau", we have inhouse, pay rolling, professionals. I think those perspectives grew for these people. I used that towards Vedior employees to make them aware of those opportunities and stimulated them to look around to see what else fitted." Also the different customer base of Tempo-Team versus Vedior created opportunities. Branche manager "It offered the possibility for employees to learn about other customers. Also Tempo-Team used more function types; people felt positive about that in terms of career opportunities".

Essent-RWE, Staples Europe headquarter, Staples Advantage Benelux and Plantin/Tetterode do not support 6a. Even though all middle management responded that they use intrinsic incentives over extrinsic incentives, they all commented on having missed out on actually applying it.
Value-chain manager of Essent-RWE "It is very simple, when you work in Hoofddorp and you need to go to Den Bosch, it means you need to move. I think we should have done more to stimulate this. They should have said 'look Essent-RWE is a great organization, there are more opportunities', when combined with compensation for removal cost it could have been a good story". Also at Staples Europe headquarter middle management showed some criticism. Finance manager "We underestimated the effect of the tension in the organization that for some people this is difficult to keep up with." Supply chain manager at Staples Advantage Benelux "I think we adopted the Staples TeamCare and Easy principle but explaining what Staples really is about and what it is in the US, we did not show that to the people. We were busy rebranding and putting a different name above the door, but for employees not much changed. By showing what Staples is that would have started to

live amongst the people, for sure". And also at Plantin/Tetterode this was mentioned. Finance & IT manager "Important is to show appreciation to the people. Unfortunately it is something that is quickly forgotten when busy with the integration and steering committee meetings". Finance & Control manager "You tend to put the most effort in elements that are urgent and of practical value which is often not the motivation of the personnel. It often are issue such as solving IT system problems and making sure we can issue invoices or can we do a month closing".

Based on this analysis it can be concluded that the tight planning and script that was used in the Tempo-Team/Vedior integration also enable attention to use intrinsic incentives to keep employees engaged with the organization in change which led to a successful human integration. Also, in this integration the Vedior branches were closed and integrated into the Tempo-Team branches which required attention to the human side of the integration as they were going to work physically in the same offices under the flag of Tempo-Team. This was included in the tight script of the integration. As opposed to the other cases, it did not get the proper attention during PAI. In the cases of Staples Europe headquarter, Staples Advantage, Plantin/Tetterode and Essent-RWE there was less of a mixture of the two different former separated organizations which did not generate the focus to give care for the human side of the integration and consequently they all admitted to have missed out actually applying intrinsic incentives.

Hence, based on the empirical research on incentives and PAI success, there is there is little support for the relation between middle management who uses intrinsic incentives and successful human integration. There is no empirical evidence for the relation between intrinsic incentives and successful task integration.

4.2.7.   Emerged insights

Proposition 5a and 5b looked at the relation between informal coordination of middle management and human and task integration. As outlined in paragraph 4.2.5, there was not enough evidence to support this posed relation. However, out of those concepts, an insight emerged as three out of the five cases that had successful task integration all used predominantly formal coordination.

Out of Essent-RWE, Plantin/Tetterode and Tempo-Team cases, two cases had an unsuccessful human integration but all three cases had successful task integration. Hence, this provides support for the positive relation between the use of predominantly formal coordination and task integration. A Finance & IT manager at Plantin/Tetterode said; "We outsourced the project management of the integration to an external agency. They coordinated that perfectly. Every week a conference call took place in which we went through 50 items. It gave you no chance to escape. Integration is such a complex process that you could lose the progress in it. Therefore, this was perfectly coordinated". A

branch manager at Tempo-Team noted; "There was a script at the basis of this integration which was very well managed. Everything was documented in a roadmap. We needed to finalize at point x, and counted back in weeks. You knew exactly each week what was expected of you. It was very clear; also for the people it was very clear. There were no loose ends, everything was prepared, and it was water-tight". And also at Essent this was supported; their Value Chain manager stated "the PMI office to which we needed to report on a monthly basis and the monthly board meetings were perhaps a little German, it was well organized. Many processes and formats, but it did work."

At the Staples Europe headquarter the middle management did not address many task integration achievements during the interviews which makes this proposition 5b inconclusive. However, there were some remarks that pleaded for more formal coordination to contribute to PAI success. Finance manager "I think that we should have been more decisive; this is how we are going to do it. We tend to listen too much to the people in the business units in order not to frustrate them. While people will benefit more from a clear 'no' which can motivate them more than a 'yes' or 'we will think about it". Merchandising manager "For Merchandising we choose from day 1 to start with an integration synergy project. That helped a lot for the people involved in that project. It gave them clarity about what the goals were".

From this empirical evidence it can be concluded that there is a positive relation between formal coordination and successful task integration.

Another insight that emerged during this research but was not discussed in the theoretical background was the connection between human and task integration. Four out of the five cases showed to have a successful task integration and three out of these did not have a successful human integration, or not yet. Middle management in the Plantin/Tetterode and Staples Advantage Benelux cases were to the opinion that task integration is the platform for the acquired and acquiring employees to get to know each other by working together on process alignments and synergy projects. Finance & IT manager Plantin/Tetterode "We now integrated the systems and processes successfully; it is now up to the people to start working together." Manager Customer Service Staples Advantage Benelux "the human integration has not taken place yet, that will happen now with the move". At Essent-RWE there was no successful human integration at all, despite of the successful task integration. Operations manager Essent-RWE; "When we look at what is realized with the change that is very successful. When we look at it from the perspective of the mix of blood groups the answer is no".

This additional insight shows that human and task integration do not have a strict sequence or that human integration is the basis for task integration.

4.3.   Adjusted model

Table 6 presents an overview of all the propositions with the acceptance or rejection as discussed in this chapter. This table shows that proposition 1 is the only proposition which is accepted in full.

Table 6	Acceptance / rejection propositions
Proposition	**Result**
1a	Accepted
1b	Accepted
2a	Rejected
2b	Rejected
3a	Accepted
3b	Rejected
4a	Accepted
4b	*Inconclusive*
5a	Rejected
5b	*Inconclusive*
6a	Rejected
6b	*Inconclusive*

Based on the empirical research the conceptual model is adjusted as presented in figure 3. It shows the relations obtained through the empirical research.

The posed connection between situated attention and coordination is visible through the relation between middle management with low situated attention and informal coordination and at the same time the relation between middle management with high situated attention and formal coordination. This is depicted through the bold arrows.

The posed relation between middle management focus of attention and coordination does not exist; therefore the adjusted model does not show that connection.

With regards to the posed relations between on the one hand situated attention and incentives and on the other hand focus of attention and incentives, there was only support for the relation between low situated attention and intrinsic incentives. However, all middle managers preferred to use intrinsic incentives. Therefore, even though a part of the relation seemed to keep up, the relation as a whole is not supported. Not for situated attention but also not for focus of attention.

The relation between informal coordination and PAI success was not supported. Not on the human integration as the two cases that did provide evidence they did not support the relation, and also not task integration. Therefore no connection depicted in the model. However, even though it was not initiated and posed in the theory, the research showed and emerged insight, being the support between formal coordination and task integration. For that reason, it is depicted as a bold arrow.

And lastly, the relation between incentives and PAI success, where there was only evidence, but not supporting evidence, for a positive relation between intrinsic incentives and human integration.

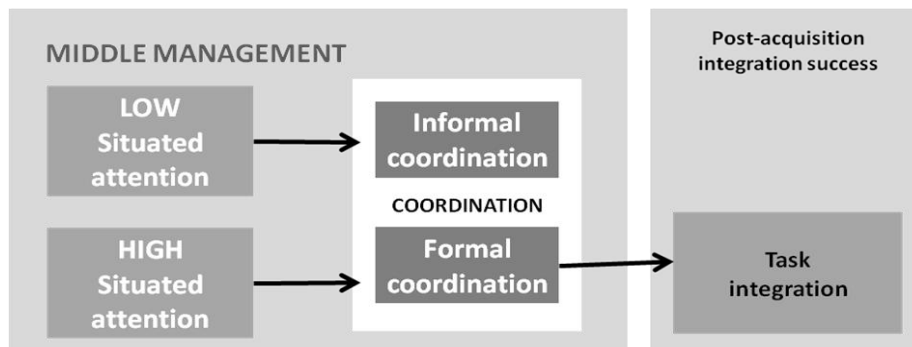There was no evidence for the relation between intrinsic incentives and task integration; it was inconclusive.

Figure 3. Adjusted conceptual model

5. Discussion & conclusions

The closing chapter of this thesis builds up towards the final conclusions that can be drawn from this research and where the results of this research can help organizations and management.

It starts by confronting the theory with the findings from the empirical research based on the previous chapter. Subsequently it reflects on the research by listing some of the limitations this research contains to finally answer the research question. As a closure, some suggestions are made for further research on this topic.

5.1. Discussion

The pivotal role of middle management in an organization had been discussed widely by a large group of scholars. They indicated that a middle manager is the person translating the organizational goals into personal objectives (Currie & Procter, 2005; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992; Floyd & Lane, 2000), fulfill the coordinating role between top- and operational management (Shi) and they stay tuned to the emotional wellbeing of employees (Huy, 2001). This empirical research confirms those role characteristics and specifically concerning incentives. Middle management was collectively to the opinion that intrinsic incentives and motivations are key during PAI and that extrinsic incentives are only a short term fix. However, middle management did open up that during a busy integration phase it is an element that does not always get the right priority.

The results from the empirical research with regards to situated attention and coordination strengthens the theoretical approach that middle management attention based on the context characteristics during PAI would influence its way of coordinating activities. As situated attention incorporates that the attention of decision-makers is situated in the firm's procedural and communication channels (Ocasio, 1997), this research confirms that the middle management who were part of a tightly prepared, planned and executed integration were forced into a formal coordination approach because of the desire for control and procedures (Dekker, 2004; Vlaar et al., 2007). The cases where the integration was less clear planned and executed, the attention of middle management was situated to various tasks, issues and problems, such as the Staples Europe headquarter integration. In those cases, middle management used informal coordination as they needed to find their way around in the organization integration themselves without scripts and guidance where they were more inclined to use social relations (Tsai, 2002) and experienced the integration as unpredictable which implies use of informal coordination (March & Simon, 1958).

The theoretical foundation with regards to focus of attention in connection with coordination introduced that the cognitive structure of middle managers influences what issues they attend to and that knowledge on a topic stored in a middle managers' memory, makes it easier to acquired

new knowledge about that topic (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). This would for example make a specialist middle manager focus on topics within his specialism (Zahra et al., 2000). However, empirical evidence proved that a middle manager who is classified as a specialist does not have the preference to coordinate in a formal manner or use predominantly extrinsic incentives or a middle manager who is classified as a generalist does not coordinate in an informal manner or use predominantly intrinsic incentives (Podolny & Baron, 1997).

The proposed positive relation between informal coordination and successful human and task integration was not supported by the empirical research (Bijlsma-Frankema, 2004; Birkinshaw et al., 2000; March & Simon, 1958; Tsai, 2002). Neither did the empirical research confirm the theory that indicated informal coordination to contribute to successful human integration because of trust building through social interaction (Tsai, 2002), nor has the empirical evidence proven that PAI is seen as an unpredictable situation which would imply informal coordination (March & Simon, 1958). Even though the relation between the use of predominantly formal coordination and task integration was not specified as a separate proposition, there was an emerged insight that indicated a positive relation between the two. This complies with the theory of Vlaar, van den Bosch and Volberda (2007) and Seo & Hill (2005) who state that formal coordination is necessary to create stability and guidance. The downsides to formal coordination, such as suppressing flexibility and reducing initiative taking (Pete et al., 1995; Vlaar et al., 2007) did not show throughout the empirical research but it was perceived as creating clarity for employees and taking away uncertainty.

The theory of Birkinshaw et al. (2000) indicated that successful human integration is a prerequisite for successful task integration as the emphasis on the task integration can take the attention away to the human integration. Another emerged insight indicated that even though the human integration was not successful or not successful yet, the cases did show successful task integration. Haspeslagh & Jemison (1991) prove that using a period of learning during which both organizations cooperate, with the goal to eventually combine and transfer resources can in the end result in a successful human integration. The latter is a possible reasoning for this insight. Whether or not Birkinshaw's further statement about a high level of completion of task integration in combination with a low level of human integration creates a mixed success when operational synergies are achieved at the expense of employees (Birkinshaw et al., 2000) is too early to conclude as for some of the cases the human integration is starting.

5.2.   Limitations

There are some limitations to be taken into consideration at this stage.

Firstly, the group of respondents for this middle management research on attention and focus were all middle managers. It would have been of value to have involved top managers, operational

managers and subordinates of these middle managers. This would enable this research to validate the responses of the middle managers. Some of the questions and topic are related to the functioning of the middle managers themselves, which answered by themselves might give an unreliable view of the reality.

The second limitation is concerned with the timing element of this research. The cases included in this research are all in a different stage after the actual acquisition took effect but were compared as if they are all in the same stage. Some cases were in a rather early stage to truly make a ruling on the successfulness of the task and human integration based on the findings from the empirical evidence. Those findings can look different in two or three year's time. As an illustration; this research reported that Staples Advantage has started integrating from a human perspective as per the move of Office Centre into their office building. For Plantin/Tetterode it was outlined that their processes and systems were integrated and that it is now time for the people to start working with it, also here human integration is to start.

Thirdly, cases involved in this research are active in a variety of industries, have different sizes of organizations and their coverage are different (national, regional and European). Overall the complexities are different. Even though these factors are excluded from the research, the results of the empirical evidence did highlight that those factors do influence the integration. For example in the case of Staples Europe headquarter integration which had a different complexity than the Essent-RWE integration. These differences do have an impact on how results can be generalized.

Also the way the constructs situated attention and focus of attention were configured in this research shows some limitations. The constructs have been fairly complex to specify in such a way to be able to be investigated that it would indicate and underpin the relation between them and respectively coordination and incentives. This is mainly because of the lack of available literature to use as a basis. By deepening these two constructs into more detailed components, derived from further literature research and testing them against coordination and incentives a clearer result can be expected.

Last but certainly not least, the chosen methodological approach holds also a limitation. The constructs in this research have been investigated in a qualitative manner, whereas a quantitative approach with the use of a questionnaire gives a higher certainty to capturing all data than through the semi-structured interview technique used for this research. Transcribing twenty one-hour lasting interviews into usable data requires data reduction which inevitably creates loss of data along the way that might have been of value to the research.

5.3.   Conclusion

The central research question that forms the basis of this research is: *How does time-constrained middle management coordinate and use incentives as well as contribute to the multi-faceted post-acquisition integration success?*

Based on the theoretical background and the empirical research the conclusion can be drawn that middle management in organizations that go through a well prepared, planned, fast and consequently executed PAI phase pay attention to issues and problems in a predominantly formal manner. The tight planning and prepared procedures leave little to no room for discussions on the side-line but forces everyone to follow through on the prepared approach in order to comply with the planning and procedures. This formal coordination leads to successful task integration as a formal approach enables clarity for organizational members to know what is expected of them, to act on it and for the total organization to monitor the progress of the integration.

The middle management of operational business unit or that is part of an organization that go through a PAI phase without a predetermined plan or clear goals, choose informal coordination. Operational business units need flexibility in their processes in order to work ad hoc and meet customer needs, also during PAI. Organizations that go through a less planned PAI phase and are not forced into a pattern or tightly planned process and use informal talks as they need to guide themselves through the process and find PAI an unpredictable phase. These organizations do not contribute to a successful human integration as the informal approach does not give employees the clarity they need during PAI which the formal coordination does give.

Middle management irrespective of the type of organization that finds itself in PAI chooses intrinsic incentives to support and motivate their subordinates towards reaching the organizational goals. They find it important because intrinsic incentives keeps the employees connected during PAI which for them is often a difficult phase with uncertainty and anxiety. From the attention perspective, it is something that easily gets snowed under during such a busy period as PAI. Their work background, former roles or specialist or generalist profile does not play a role in their choice of coordination or incentives.

5.4.   Management implications

From an academic perspective, this research has shown that on the level of situated attention and focus of attention more research is needed on how those two constructs can influence managers and consequently their role in an organization.

This research did bring new insights with regards to coordination and incentives as outlined in the discussion earlier in this chapter. This is of managerial value as it points out that a thorough preparation, clear goals and planning will be a prerequisite for successful task integration. It supports

managers to coordinate in a formal manner which in turn creates clarity for stakeholders involved, especially employees who are furthest away from the levels of decision making and deal with uncertainty. That success has its spinoff on success on the level of synergies, process and resource realignment.

From the perspective of incentives, this research demonstrates the preference of middle management to intrinsic motivation but at the same time indicates that the attention to the use of intrinsic incentives is lacking during a busy period such as PAI. Their attention is often drawn more towards practical and result driven activities, and not the motivation and well being of the employee. Hence, the organization needs to built in this aspect of intrinsic incentives into their integration process by putting it on the agenda, organizing events that are not focused on organization results but on the employees, and need to pay infinite time and effort in communication and listening to their employees.

Since formal coordination during PAI seems to deliver success with regards to task integration, organizations who are approaching an integration should take into consideration to draw up a detailed plan, determined rules and procedures and monitor it closely. This will take away uncertainty across the total organization and will create clarity for all involved about what is expected from them.

5.5.   Future research

Future research within the theme of this thesis can be of value when geared towards the following aspects.

Firstly, executing the same research but aiming it on the role of top management will give insight into their role, attention and focus and will enable comparisons with this research on middle management level. It can highlight specific elements in which top management is involved and how they coordinate and use incentives for their middle management. With that research it will further highlight the specific unique role of middle management.

A second suggestion, in line with the limitations introduced earlier in this chapter, is revisiting this research in three years time. It will enable validation for the cases that were in an early stage after the start of the integration how they see their integration after those additional years and whether or not their human integration that builds on the successful task integration was indeed successful. Thirdly, future research that aims to discover if the differences in size, coverage and complexity of integrating organizations influences the attention or focus of middle management differently. An approach could be to cluster the organizations based on size, coverage and level of integration and cross-analyze the clusters.

Further detailing situated attention and focus of attention and on top of that adding structured distribution of attention would add in two ways to this research. On the one hand it will validate and improve this research. On the other hand it would complete this research as structured distribution of attention is part of the attention-based view and influences situated attention.

Lastly, a methodological suggestion to combine a quantitative and qualitative approach as that would enrich and diversify the data. This improves triangulation and with that the reliability of this research. Potentially combining a quantitative approach to more specifically investigate the attention and focus aspects, with a quantitative approach on the PAI success could result in strengthening some of the results from this research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Appendix B: Case analysis example

Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. How would you define PAI success?

2. Would you qualify the integration of X into Y as a success?

    a. If yes - What where the key factors that made it to a success?

    b. If not - What was lacking?"

3. How would you describe your role in the organization during PAI and the forces that were present?

4. What kind of activities/tasks/challenges/issues where part of your daily agenda during PAI?

5. Coordination

    a. How were social interaction/ relations used in executing those activities?

    b. How were official planning, project management and procedures used to execute those activities?

    c. Which of the two (social interaction or official planning) appeared to be most important and effective and why?

6. Incentives

    a. What are the existing incentives within Y except salary? Are there specific incentives introduced related to PAI performance?

    b. What did you do additionally to motivate your subordinates during PAI?

    c. Which of the two (intrinsic or extrinsic) appeared to be most important and effective and why?

7. In case you did not have enough time to perform all your PAI tasks, then how are these tasks prioritized? Did your cultural legacy play a role in this? What were the situational characteristics of these tasks or activities that got priority?

8. What is your background? Former employers, job positions, etc.

9. Does your job involve a high variety of tasks and responsibilities or very specific knowledge?

Appendix B: Case analysis example

Case analysis – Situated attention & Focus of attention

Case	Informant	SA	profile Situated Attention	Prio's	Culture	FOA	profle Focus of Attention
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	1	LOW	Zijn prioriteiten worden gestuurd door de KPI's die gesteld zijn. Elke dag wordt daar gekeken "zitten we in lijn met budget". Er wordt gestuurd op zoveel mogelijk output met zo min mogelijk mensen en er wordt gekeken naar euro's versus Sales. Daarvoor is elke maandag een business review meeting om te kijken wat er in de operatie is gedaan in de week daarvoor. Dat soort is continue aan de orde van de dag. Ook krijgt zijn email prioriteit om te checken of er nog iets belangrijks is binnen gekomen. Terwijl hij zich ook realiseert dat dat misschien helemaal geen prioriteit heeft. Zijn baas eist veel voorrang omdat hij de richting bepaald en die aandacht krijg hij dan ook. Dus als zijn baas roept dit moet je doen dan in merendeel van de gevallen doet hij dat ook.	- prioriteiten zijn KPI' die gesteld zijn - email - zijn baas	- cultuur?	WIDE	Hij heeft Agrarische economie gestudeerd en bij Accenture aan de slag gegaan. Daar heeft hij een jaar of 5 gewerkt. Maar hij wilde medewerkers aansturen dus heeft hij het roer omgegooid en is voor AH gaan werken. Als teamleider, met zijn poten in de modder om daarna AH door te groeien naar een management functie. Vanwege een reorganisatie is hij naar de kaascentrale van AH gegaan en heeft daar 5 jaar gewerkt als teamleider op de vloer en daarna als manager van het inkoopgedeelte. Daarna kwam hij terecht als Warehouse manager bij Corporate Express, in maart 2007. En dus nu meer dan 2 jaar op deze plek. Hij ziet zichzelf als een generalist. Hij vindt het heel belangrijk dat hij het totale plaatje goed in de gaten houdt en heeft mensen zitten op de specifieke plekken. Terwijl hij soms van bepaalde dingen veel meer moet en wil weten, maar daar heeft hij dan weer geen tijd voor.
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	2	LOW	De prioriteiten worden gesteld aan de hand van de projecten die het meest belangrijk zijn en van groot impact zijn op medewerkers. Bijvoorbeeld de harmonisatie van de arbeidsvoorwaarden en de wijziging in de bonusregeling. Tegelijkertijd loopt nu de verhuizing van Office Centre naar het Staples Advantage pand als een rode draad door alles heen. Voor de verhuizing wordt naar een datum toegewerkt, en de andere zaken die via de OR lopen kennen ook vaste tijdslijnen. Hij deelt alles met zijn teamleden omdat hij het belangrijk vind dat zij op de hoogte zijn van dingen maar ook met de gedachte dat als hij een keer iets anders moet doen dat zij in ieder geval dat op kunnen pakken of een gedeelte van het verhaal kunnen doen. "Soms vindt hij het zuur om te zien dat iets wat wij hier hebben opgebouwd, dat je dat moet opgeven voor Staples proces. Terwijl het prima functioneerde voor iets wat nog niet helemaal af is. Dan krijg ik een soort reflex dat ik ga verdedigen wat ik had".	- projecten die van groot impact zijn op medewerkers	- soms zuur oude zaken te verliezen in nieuwe Staples cultuur	WIDE	Hij ziet zichzelf als een generalist, binnen HR. Hij vindt het leuk om heel dicht op de operatie te zitten. "Ik ben geen compensation & benefits man, net zo goed als dat ik geen recruiter zou willen zijn, of alleen maar met opleidingen bezig is". Hij vindt juist de combinatie in een omgeving als deze, op de operatie, dat past het beste bij hem. Hij vindt het interessant wat er in andere afdelingen speelt, hij heeft ook wekelijks overleg met Sales mensen, niet met allemaal maar met een aantal. Alles wat daar gebeurd wil hij wel weten, ook omdat hij het leuk vindt om te weten. Hij ziet het wel als een gevaar dat hij als generalist dat je te generalistisch wordt en nergens de diepte in gaat. "Wat ik belangrijk vind is dan ook de mensen om je heen verzamelen voor die diepte".
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	3	LOW	De drukte in haar werk is heel erg afhankelijk van specifieke momenten. Aangezien haar proces zich richt op de klant, komen veel zaken langs haar bureau. Ze is ook proces owner van een proces waarmee ze automatisch veel in aanraking komt met verschillende afdelingen en verschillende situaties. Ondanks die diversiteit heeft het voor haar afdeling altijd goed te weten wat er speelt binnen haar afdeling. De keren dat ze zich erg vastbijt in zaken is als ze bijvoorbeeld van haar baas bepaald rapportages beter op orde moet krijgen maar dat komt niet vaak voor.	- weten wat er speelt in haar afdeling		WIDE	Ze is 10 jaar geleden gestart bij DHL met Customer Service en is doorgegroeid in supervisor en manager functie. Daar heeft ze de integratie met VanGend en Loos meegemaakt. Binnen haar vakgebied van Customer Service weet ze over veel dingen iets maar binnen een organisatie zoals bij Staples Advantage ben ik de specialist Customer Service. Maar binnen de Customer Service branche ben ik een generalist. Ze zit nu zo'n 13-14 jaar op verschillende functies weliswaar maar wel altijd in die richting. Ze heeft oog voor andere processen in de organisatie als procesmanager. Van zo goed als alle processen die andere afdelingen overlappen is ze eigenaar omdat alles terugkomt op die klant. Dus ze weet en ziet veel van transport, heel veel van logistiek. Binnen deze organisatie in deze rol raak ik alle processen. – dus echt een generalist.
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	4	HIGH	Bij hem ligt de aandacht heel erg bij de operatie, het logistieke vindt hij het meest leuke. Je hebt mensen die echt hoofdkantoor minded zijn, maar hij is heel erg operationeel. Wat er ook gebeurt met de BU, de business moet doordraaien. "Ik houd me meer bezig met een storing in het magazijn dan een storing in SAP". Hij kijkt ook, wie kan ik een plezier doen. "Je hebt mensen nodig die bij je terugkomen. Je kunt niet altijd nee zeggen. Soms moeten de mensen ook door. Dat komt ook op je terug. Op die manier ga je ook prioritiseren, wat raakt je op dit moment het meest."	- operatie & logistiek proces - mensen minded "wie heb ik nodig"		NARROW	Hij is gelijk gaan werken bij PwC. Een jaar of 8 heeft hij daar gezeten. Vervolgens bij Staples. Daar heeft hij alle stadia doorlopen. Bij Staples heeft hij zowel op het hoofdkantoor gezeten, als in de divisie, alsook in de operatie. Als hij moet kiezen dan is hij meer een generalist. Hij kan heel erg gefocust zijn. "Ik kan mezelf voor een paar maanden heel erg op bepaalde dingen specialiseren. Ik kan me dus heel erg op een project werpen, dat in een keer er doorheen drammen. Daarin kan ik heel specialistisch zijn. Ik zie wel dingen gebeuren om me heen, maar als ik ze weg kan schuiven schuif ik ze weg, op ik dender ik er over heen". Hij loopt altijd ver voor de muziek uit - dus hij is altijd wel heel erg gefocust op het einddoel. Op het moment dat het doel bijna bereikt is, dan zijn de mensen bezig het project af te maken en is er hij twee straten verderop. "Ik ben wel heel sterk generalistisch maar wel sterk gefocust op het einddoel". Hij ziet eerder de grote lijnen maar over het algemeen laat hij zichzelf er niet zo door afleiden.

Case analysis – Coordination & Incentives

Case	Informant	Coordination	Supporting quote COORDINATION	Incentives	Supporting quote INCENTIVES
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	1	Predominantly informal	"Ad hoc, veel ad hoc. Ik het begin werd er geroepen, dat kunnen we doen en dat kunnen we doen en dat werd dan ook opgepakt maar echt precies van jongens hoe gaan we het doen. Dat ontbrak."	Intrinsic	"het is de kennis van de medewerker dat ze toch weten van 'jongens wij zijn ook belangrijk' en ook binnen Staples is de medewerker een belangrijk onderdeel van het hele bedrijf. En dat zijn toch dingen waar iedereen meespeelt."
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	2	50 / 50 formal and informal	"Het is eigenlijk beide. Je hebt bijvoorbeeld ook te maken met de ondernemingsraad, die moet daar ook iets van vinden. Dat is een heel formeel traject, met adviesaanvraag en alles wat daarbij hoort. Dus dat is heel formeel. Je hebt ook te maken, helaas, gelukkig met heel weinig, met mensen die boventallig raken hierdoor. Daar ga je ook een heel formeel traject mee in. Maar bijv. afstemmen met de managers over de werkplekken, dat is heel informeel. Dat moet je ook niet spannender maken dan dat het is. Dat past ook in de cultuur hier. De persoonlijke relaties die ik heb die helpen wel in hoe ik hier zaken intern kan coördineren. De band die je op hebt gebouwd met mensen die gebruik je hierin."	Intrinsic	Met name het hele extrinsieke deel, natuurlijk helpt dat wel, en moet je zorgen dat dat soort dingen goed geregeld zijn, daar gaat het eigenlijk meer om, dat je doet wat je moet doen als werkgever, en dat je dat netjes en zorgvuldig doet, dan dat je mensen over de streep moet trekken met geld. Dat gaat uiteindelijk niet werken op de lange termijn.
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	3	Predominantly informal	Afhankelijk denk ik van het onderwerp. Want er zijn heel veel onderwerpen die regel je informeel, je loopt gewoon even ergens naartoe en zegt ik heb een probleem en als jij nu dit doet en ik doe dat dan kijken we daarna wel even verder. Dat gebeurd heel veel met kleine issuetjes waarvan we niet zeker weten is het iets structureel. De hele formele weg is echt als we echt projecten doen. het meest bij mij zou passen omdat via de informele weg te doen. Gevoelsmatig ga ik eerst een overal even langs om te kijken, hoe zou dat bij werken.	Intrinsic	Wat we nu doen, we hebben een aantal dingen teug laten komen uit de Engagement survey. Men had het gevoel dat er onvoldoende gedaan werd met hun idee We hebben voor alle drie een plannetje gekregen. Alles wat ik binnenkrijg waar van ik denk dat is belangrijk voor, tender gewonnen, accountmanager weg, winberichten. Ik merk heel erg dat mijn medewerkers die worden heel ongemotiveerd op het moment dat ze voor hun belangrijke informatie missen, en dat zijn heel de dagdagelijkse dingen missen. We hebben zo'n groot tv-scherm daar hangen en daar doen wij wekelijks een compliment voor iemand van de afdeling, Informatie, cijfertjes laten we ook zien op het bord, we de resultaten van de dag ervoor zien, hoeveel mails zijn er verwerkt etc. 4x per jaar doen we iets extra's voor de afdeling. Dat soort dingen, maakt het ze gemotiveerd weet ik niet. Het houd de dingen wel een beetje levend en dat we ergens voor gaan.
Staples Advantage / CE (case 3)	4	Predominantly informal	"Ik heb niet eens formele controlepunten. Maar ik volg het wel heel erg op afstand. En het kan soms wel een zijn dat ik zeg "paf, hoe zit dat". Dashboards en planning, schei toch uit, daar word ik helemaal gek van. Dat is nu bij Staples, bij alles moet een KPI en een dashboard. Daar geloof ik helemaal niet in. Toen ik CE alleen had, en SAP een grote puinhoop was, had ik maar drie dingen die ik elke dag gerapporteerd kreeg. En ik zal je vertellen, da's meer dan genoeg dat moet je niet eens willen weten."	50 / 50 extrinsic and intrinsic	Incentives dat is iets wat je even een keer doet, de eenmalige bonus. Het is iets, je moet een systeem hebben waarbij je je mensen op een langdurige wijze kunt belonen. En dat vereist een goed systeem. Bonus, met promotie, salarisverhoging, allemaal heel consistent. En als je dat heel consistent doet is het ook veel makkelijker voor mensen te begrijpen. Als je met incentives gaat strooien, en het krijgt het subjectief karakter, die krijgt wel en die krijgt niet.
RESULT		**Predominantly Informal**		**Predominantly Intrinsic**	