Competence Development

What can project-based organizations learn from the management of a hockey team?

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Abstract

Project-based organizations (PBOs) have drawn attention in business management and represent an increasingly important part of organizations. If managing by projects represents an adapted way to cope with the current environment, it also comes with new challenges. This research brings light on the organizational tensions between immediate performance and sustained performance in PBOs by focusing on competence development as the crucial means to achieve sustained performance. Because PBOs are temporary by nature, competence development represents one of their challenges. Therefore, this research was conducted to gain a better understanding of how this tradeoff can be managed by PBOs.

With that purpose, we both researched how this organizational tradeoff and competence development processes were managed in a hockey organization. In sport organizations, player succession is crucial to the organization’s overall performance and survival, therefore making competence development a key activity. The research led us to grasp a better understanding of the nature of the tradeoff between immediate performance and sustained performance as well as brought additional findings on competence development processes. More specifically, it was found that this tradeoff requires adaptation to project stages. We summarized and visualized the findings by providing a framework that can act as a tool for practitioners in PBOs to understand and therefore manage the tradeoff between immediate performance and sustained performance by implementing competence development.

Keywords: competence development, performance, project-based organizations, organizational dilemma, exploitation and exploration.
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1. Introduction

Project based organizing is a growing trend among organizations. About 40% of marketer agencies from Canada and the United States which responded to a survey have claimed that their amount of project work increased and 43% of them explained that it now represents more than half of their work (RSW/US Agency-Marketer Business Report, 2014). Researchers have also identified this trend, claiming that more and more organizations operate in projects (Bredin, 2006).

Project-based organizations (PBOs) are specific kinds of organizations which are characterized by the formation of temporary systems aimed at performing tasks for a specific project (Sydow, Lindkvist & DeFillippi, 2004). These organizations are managing by projects and are therefore temporary, dynamic and demand employee versatility (Huemann Keegan & Turner, 2007). Because of their nature, PBOs have different needs than traditional organizations, and in particular, in terms of Human Resources (HR) practices (Huemann et al., 2007). More specifically, PBOs require employees with specific competences and skills (Huemann et al., 2007). Competence development is a crucial HR practice for these types of organizations (Suikki, Tromstedt & Haapasalo, 2006) as their employees need to renew and adapt their competence to projects.

Because PBOs are sometimes working on new projects with different purposes, they are facing a very interesting managerial challenge: on the one hand, they need to secure immediate performance in carrying out their projects, which implies high efficiency and goal orientation, and on the other hand, they need to develop their project members’ competence to reach sustained performance, which may negatively affect the performance of the ongoing project. Additionally, project teams constantly change members and in modern business, organizations prioritize selection and turnover over training (March, 1995). As a consequence of this, a reluctance to develop competences might emerge, because in many cases the investor will not be the benefiter. In other words, the competence development is paid for in the present, but the returns will only materialize in the future, where someone else may profit from it. At the same time, it can also work in the opposite direction, and an organization can benefit from another organization’s competence development through recruitment. Some researchers have already identified a similar dilemma in the field; “the recurring tension within project-based organizations appears to be between the immediate task and performance demands of the project at hand versus the opportunities for learning and disseminating project practices that can be employed in subsequent projects” (Sydow et al., 2004 p.1476). However, if few studies identified and discussed this challenge, we found none that focused on competence development as the learning process, nor studied it empirically. The purpose of this research is hence to bring light on the challenge that competence development represents for PBOs to reach sustained performance.
Competence development is a HR practice that has the potential to enhance the future of PBOs. A parallel can be drawn between balancing performance and competence development and balancing exploitation of current capabilities and exploration of new opportunities as conceptualized by March (1991). Since March’s contribution, this dilemma has been approached by many researchers who also came to develop the concept of organizational ambidexterity, which referred to the balancing between exploitative and explorative activities (Raisch, Birkinshaw, Probst & Tushman, 2009) and in a more general way to the balance between two competing objectives (Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013). Ambidextrous organizations have been described as “aligned and efficient in their management of today’s business demands while simultaneously adaptive to changes in the environment” (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008, p.37). Ambidexterity has been positively linked to superior performance by many studies (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004; He & Wong, 2004) and hence understanding how PBOs can balance the two competing objectives as explained before is of high importance for their success.

Another important aspect of balancing these objectives is that if PBOs do not carry out competence development, they are limited in the scope of projects they can take on unless they recruit the relevant competence. In other words, the organization becomes stuck on a less than desirable path when better alternatives exist (Liebowitz & Margolis, 1995). And as the existing alternatives become unattainable, the organization loses its flexibility and becomes locked in (Sydow, Schreyögg & Koch, 2009). Concretely for PBOs, it refers to a situation where their lack of available competence becomes restricting. This process, where options are diminishing, is referred to as path dependence and occurs due to the choice of a specific path (Sydow et al., 2009). By focusing on recruiting competence rather than developing, PBOs follow the path of recruitment in which they can be stuck. Therefore, understanding how PBOs can develop competence has high interest as it would enable them to avoid ending up locked-in and prepare for sustained performance.

In order to understand what competence development refers to, it is important to define what is meant by competence because, as some scholars have underlined, competence is a fuzzy concept which can have broad meanings (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Klink & Boon, 2002; Westera, 2001). In this study, competence is defined according to Polanyi’s vision which describes three kinds of practical knowledge; skill, know-how and competence, where competence is the third dimension that builds upon the previous two by including a reconnecting reflection to know-how (Polanyi in Rolf, 1991). Skill is to follow rules where feedback judges performance (for example, a skill can be ice-skating), know-how is to perform skills according to rules set by the social context (example; performing well in figure skating), and competence is not only the ability to follow rules but also the power to influence them via reflection (Rolf, 1991).
We investigated competence development by observing and understanding how a sport organization, specifically a hockey team, balances between these two competing objectives: immediate and sustained performance. More specifically, the perspective on sustained performance is one that regards competence development as a vital activity. Therefore, this study aims at understanding competence development processes of the hockey team over a season and draw conclusions for PBOs based on the patterns found in them.

Sport organizations, and in particular hockey teams, represent an interesting context to observe competence development and its tradeoff with performance. There are two main reasons justifying the choice of sport organizations to study the phenomenon in question. First, talents have a short lifetime of approximately ten to fifteen years regarding their careers as professional athletes which means that these organizations have less time to develop them and prepare their succession. Second, the talents’ performance in sport organizations is directly linked to the organization overall performance and developing their competence is consequently even more critical to the organization’s success. Indeed, if sport organizations do not make sure to prepare for the future by developing their new talents, they are likely to fall behind and will have to spend high amounts of money in recruiting, which can be seen as less efficient than developing. Consequently, the tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance is observable and linked to competence development in these organizations. The most recent and popular example of sport organizations who did not prepare its sustained performance thanks to competence development is the fall of both Milan professional football clubs, namely Milan A.C. and Inter. Both clubs had successful seasons relying on experienced players about to retire and lacked of succession planning (Telegraph). As the article blames the lack of succession planning for their failures, it is common sense that had they developed other players’ competences, they would have ended up in a better situation. It is important to draw the parallel with PBOs which are in the same situation where they may end up recruiting competence that they need and do not have available. The sporting context is also one where competence development is observable. Professional sport organizations, like any other organization, have a lot at stake and must perform to survive. A large part of their revenue stems from the prizes from competitions and their popularity is crucial as it is positively linked to ticket and fan shop sales. The links between sport organizations and management have already been drawn by researchers “Sports like Australian Football can be applied to better understand abstract and highly theoretical concepts in modern management” (Kriz, Kriz & Voola, 2014p.2). These authors even concluded that “the Australian Football League is a good analogy for replicating real systems and analyzing key aspects of the business environment” (Kriz et al., 2014 p.6). In addition, the parallel between hockey teams and PBOs can be drawn. As explained by Bredin and Söderlund (2011), PBOs are goal oriented; team oriented and knowledge intensive; temporary; interdisciplinary and cross-functional; and tensional which represent their five main features. If hockey teams cannot be described as PBOs, they share most of the features of PBOs. Indeed, hockey teams are goal oriented as they set objectives for games and more importantly for a season. In the same way as PBOs, hockey teams are team oriented as they require high collaboration between team members and knowledge intensive since they gather a broad scope of expertise and competence based on the different players’ positions for example. For the same reason, hockey teams are
interdisciplinary and cross-functional. If hockey teams do not represent temporary organizations of the extent of PBOs, they still have about one fourth of their members being changed every season and their competitors change. They maintain however permanent structures illustrated both by the management of the organization and longstanding players and are consequently facing the same tensions as PBOs. Since hockey teams share many of the key features of PBOs, there will also be similarities regarding competence development. That is why competence development in PBOs is investigated in this research by observing how a hockey team is managing this activity.

**Research question**

Immediate performance suggests for an organization that it puts all efforts towards performing current tasks or projects. On the contrary, sustained performance implies preparing for the future needs and challenges of the organization. These future needs include a need for competence that can be covered through competence development processes. However, developing competence requires learning and training and, obviously, a learning employee is not as well performing as an already trained one. If developing competence is critical for the future of organizations, it is time consuming and is a process which holds back performance while ongoing. There is an inner paradox to that managerial issue and it requires balancing between these two objectives. Surely, sport organizations must prepare for their future and this includes developing their players’ competence but at the same time, they must ensure that they reach a sufficient performance to keep operating.

Building on this complex issue, this research aims to provide answers to the following question: How does a sport organization manage the tradeoff between immediate performance and sustained performance through competence development?

**Target audience**

This study aims itself towards scholars and professionals with an interest in competence development and project management. In this paper we investigate the strategic use of resources in order to achieve immediate and sustained performance in relation to competence development and therefore contribute to both the strategy and the HR fields. By researching this management of resources in a hockey team, our contribution is that we bring about a connection between the sport field and the business field, as well as to offer a case study that provides a context where highly theoretical concepts are applied and easier to understand.
Disposition
1. Introduction
2. Theoretical framework
3. Method
4. Empirical data
5. Analysis
6. Conclusion
7. References

1. Introduction
This chapter introduces the reader to the topic and provides the purpose and interest of the research before revealing the research question.

2. Theoretical framework
This chapter presents a relevant theoretical background that is meant to enrich the reader with knowledge about our topic, as well as to support our empirical research.

3. Method
Herein is the methodology described in detail to inform the reader how this research has been carried out and also to provide the motivation behind the research design.

4. Empirical data
This chapter presents the data collected via our interviews.

5. Analysis
In this chapter we analyze the data collected and present the findings of our research, thanks to the support of our theoretical chapter,

6. Conclusion
This chapter presents the conclusions and the answer to our research question, presented earlier. This chapter is also aimed at translating findings into concrete consequences for the business field.

7. References
Here we list the sources that have helped develop our knowledge and assist us in our research.
2. Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a frame of reference to the research mainly by reviewing the relevant literature on the main concepts, namely competence development, project based organizations and exploitation and exploration.

Competence development

The aim of this section is to develop our definition of competence and competence development as it is the main phenomenon at study. First, we review some literature on competence and then describe based on the work of scholars who carried out research in HR on PBOs what competence development refers to.

Competence

What is competence? Answering this question is not an easy task as the concept of competence can vary widely according to many scholars (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Klink & Boon, 2002; Westera, 2001). [For example, core competences of organizations (Prahalad & Hamel, 2006) are very different from Hartle’s definition who sees competence as a characteristic to increase performance to higher levels by utilizing individuals’ skills, traits, knowledge or motives (Hartle, 1995).] This diversity of definitions leads to the necessity of making choices regarding how competence is defined. In this research, we look at individual and collective competence rather than organizational, even though they both interact (Suikki, Tromstedt & Haapasalo, 2004), and we define competence according to the work of Polanyi, who states that there are three kinds of practical knowledge: the most basic is skill, the next dimension is know-how and the third dimension is competence (Polanyi in Rolf, 1991). The type of competence referred to here is work specific and evolves from specific task skills, individual factors and organizational culture (Suikki et al, 2004). The essence of competence is to effectively apply accessible knowledge and skills to a specific context, which means that an understanding of the context is necessary in order to adapt to it (Scheeres & Hager, 1994).

To go further into detail about the three types of practical knowledge conceptualized by Polanyi, we learn from Rolf (1991) that skill is in the practice of following rules that you can control as an individual, whereas know-how means to follow rules that are made up by the social collective. Building upon that, Rolf (1991) explains that competence is a type of know-how that includes a reconnecting reflection that can change the rules of the collective. Professional competence involves the ability to reflect on the socially gained knowledge by changing its rules and that the professional collective can learn from its members (Rolf, 1991). According to Polanyi there also exists two levels for each of these three categories, making up a total of six different types; the two levels are situation dependent and situation independent, the skill of the actor may need bigger or smaller adaptation to the situation and the actor’s skill is dependent on rules that are more or less situation-dependent (Polanyi in Rolf, 1991).
**Competence development**

From our definition of competence, one can infer that competence development refers to the development of skills and know-how of both individuals and groups of individuals. Nyhan (1998) even draws the parallel between competence development and human resource development. In a similar way, Huemann et al. (1997) explain that the purpose of personnel development in PBOs is to offer opportunities to gain knowledge and experience that will increase the competence of the project management personnel. If this helps understanding the aim of competence development, it remains to be seen what this HR practice concretely refers to.

Competence development includes a large selection of activities such as supporting employees to develop their competence, shouldering the responsibility over individuals by making individual competence development plans, actively participating in development programs and assigning them to tasks where they will develop (Jackson et al., 2009 in Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). As a consequence, courses and training programs are important processes of competence development, however, a vital part is the skills that the personnel develops while being on the job (Beer et al., 1984 in Bredin & Söderlund, 2011).

**Project-based organizations**

*In this section we further our knowledge on project-based organization by reviewing their main features and the challenges they face in order to gain a deeper understanding of them.*

**A specific way of organizing**

PBOs are special kinds of organizations that have been increasingly studied and became a popular way of operating over the last decades. To understand why they are of interest in the field of competence development, it is necessary to review their specific nature and features. The main characteristic of PBOs is that they are managed in projects (Huemann et al, 2007) and these projects are the main focus of their activity. Despite the fact that researchers had different focuses and perspectives when studying PBOs, they share similar visions regarding this aspect. In such organizations, projects are seen as core repeated activities (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). According to Hobday (2000), PBOs are organizations in which the project is the main unit for production and competition. Lindkvist (2004) goes further with that definition and explains that PBOs even operate a majority of their activities in the form of projects. Popaitoon and Siengthai (2014) explain that PBOs are temporary organizations that integrate resources and expertise to manage the complexity of the environment in which they evolve through the use of projects. In a similar way, Sydow, Lindkvist and DeFilippi (2004) defined PBOs as specific kinds of organizations which are characterized by the formation of temporary systems aimed at performing tasks for a specific project. They can be entire firms or networks of firms (Sydow et al., 2004).
Bredin and Söderlund (2011) identified five features of PBOs that will be further clarified: they are goal oriented, team oriented and knowledge intensive, temporary, interdisciplinary and cross-functional and finally, tensional. When it comes to goal orientation, projects are processes built to achieve a specific objective (Berggren, 2001). As being project centered, PBOs consequently are goal oriented (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). Because the completion of this specific objective requires both the integration of some situational knowledge and collaboration among the project members, PBOs are team oriented and knowledge intensive (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). The literature on PBOs emphasized the temporary nature of projects as one of their main features (Huemann et al, 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). If some researchers highlighted the temporality of employment contracts (Söderlund, 2000) and systems (DeFilippi, 2002; Sydow et al., 2004) in PBOs, Bredin and Söderlund (2011) claimed however that some important permanent systems and structures, which include employees, are critical to the success of PBOs. Hence, PBOs both have temporal and permanent structures and employees, which makes them different from more traditional forms of organizations. This particular aspect of PBOs is the reason why they are tensional (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). Finally, because different skills and knowledge as well as project members with different roles are required to complete projects, PBOs also are interdisciplinary and cross-functional (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011).

**Competence development: A key HR practice for PBOs**

Because of their different nature, PBOs have different needs than traditional organizations, and in particular, in terms of Human Resources (HR) practices (Huemann et al, 2007). Söderlund and Bredin (2006) identified four HR challenges for PBOs including competence and studied how HR practices can help addressing them. The process of becoming a PBO from a traditional organization requires modifications in HR and in particular in recruiting and competence development (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). This is due to the fact that PBOs require employees with specific competences and skills (Huemann et al, 2007). Sydow and his colleagues (2004) justify this need for specific competences when claiming that “projects as temporary systems refer to groups comprising a mix of different specialist competences” (Sydow et al, 2004 p.1480). The organization is responsible for competence development (Huemann et al, 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011) and should develop tools to achieve it. However, some dimensions of competence development are under the decision of individuals themselves such as their willingness to participate and motivation to learn (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011).

Competence development processes involve specific members of the organizations in different ways. Bredin and Söderlund (2011) identified four key roles regarding HR practices in PBOs namely, HR specialists, project managers, line managers and project members (ibid). They explain that dysfunctional HR practices result from the weak interplay between these four agents that they conceptualize as the HR quadriad and emphasize the role of line managers who they believe should adopt the role of competence managers to ensure the coordination of competence development (ibid).
It stems from the above discussion that competence development becomes a more critical aspect of HR practices in PBOs. It is also because PBOs are temporary by nature (Huemann et al., 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011) that they need to develop their members’ competences so that they fit the needs of the current project.

**Two competing objectives: Immediate and sustained performance**

As explained in the previous sections, PBOs are to manage between immediate and sustained performance. Many scholars have already studied similar dilemmas in the field of organizational management. The most discussed and broad conceptual contribution was brought by March (1991) when he highlighted the exploitation exploration dilemma and provides a relevant framework to understand the challenge encountered by PBOs. These two activities are very different as exploration of new opportunities involves search, risk taking, variation, experimentation, flexibility and innovation, while exploitation of current resources comprehends refinement, efficiency, selection, implementation and execution (March, 1991). Organizations share their attention and resources between these two activities, which can also be seen as exploration to find new knowledge and exploitation to use and develop existing knowledge (Levinthal & March, 1993). The parallel with the dilemma that PBOs are facing can be drawn as performance relies on refining and obtaining the best result from the existing resources while competence development involves training and exploring new directions.

Engaging in exploration and exploitation is a necessity for organizations, but these activities are in competition for scarce resources and consequently, organizations often choose between them by making calculated decisions based on their competitive strategies (March, 1991). Managing this organizational dilemma is a complex issue which in turn leads to complications when trying to specify a suitable trade off and achieving it (March, 1991). Another difficulty is that exploration has a vulnerability: because its returns are less certain and more distant in time compared to exploitation (March, 1991). Exploration is also further from the center of organizational action and adaptation, because what is beneficial in the long term is not always favorable in the short term (March, 1991). In a similar way, immediate and sustained performance are competing objectives. When PBOs carry out a project, they must manage the tradeoff between maximizing their performance on this specific project or using it to develop competence. Competence development shares the same vulnerability as exploration in PBOs as developing on the job can harm the short term success since it may negatively impact project performance. Competence development is even more uncertain in the context of PBOs as the turnover in these organizations is high and hence, organizations have a lower probability to reap the benefit of this crucial activity.

The fact that knowledge plays such a large role in today's world means that it is crucial for organizations to invest in it, which is no easy matter, it is complicated by the fact that competence takes time to acquire (or develop) and the organization therefore has to decide what knowledge to invest in, long before they will actually need and use it (March, 1995). By doing so, organizations invest in so called knowledge inventories (Feldman, 1989; Levinthal and March, 1993), where they accumulate knowledge that they hope will be of use in the
future (March, 1995). This is rather difficult as the organization might acquire knowledge that will not be used, as well as the fact that it might fail to acquire knowledge that would have been useful, this therefore makes it difficult to specify and implement knowledge acquisition policies (March, 1995).

**Managing the tradeoff between competing activities**

If it is clear that PBOs are facing a dilemma between two competing activities, why and how they should handle the tradeoff between these activities remains to be seen and the example of exploitation and exploration provides once again a relevant literature background. A strategy focusing on exploration but excluding exploitation will experience the costs of experimentation without receiving the benefits from it (March, 1991). In other words, an organization which engages only in exploration will not obtain the benefits from it (Levinthal & March, 1993). This is true for PBOs as well, where setting the priority on competence development while neglecting performance in projects, would be likely to lead to failure since it would decrease the chances of a project’s success.

In the opposite scenario where exploitation is favored and exploration is excluded, the firm will be trapped in a less than desirable stability of balance (March, 1991), and engaging in only exploitation will eventually lead to extinction (Levinthal & March, 1993). PBOs could decide to focus exclusively on maximizing their project performance while ignoring competence development. It has a justification as it provides results in the close or immediate future, just like exploitation (March, 1991), which is not always the case with competence development. Levinthal and March (1993) explain that high turnover of decision makers implies that the distant benefits of exploration lower its attractiveness, while previous exploitation in an area makes future exploitation in this particular area more efficient. Organizations learn the short-term advantage of refinement and the absurdity of exploration (Levinthal & March, 1993). It would however lead to a lack of relevant competence in the organization and would raise the need to acquire this missing competence.

Based on the previous discussion, it appears important for organisational prosperity and survival to maintain a suitable balance between the competing activities (March, 1991). Therefore the organizational dilemma is to engage in sufficient amounts of both activities in order to secure present and future viability (Levinthal & March, 1993). Interestingly, as Chen and Katila (2008) stated “Exploration and exploitation need not always be competing activities, but can and should be complementary” (p.208). Strong arguments exist that favor the need for both exploitation and exploration, it has been well established and accepted (Ancona, Goodman, Lawrence, & Tushman, 2001; Benner & Tushman, 2003; Dougherty, 1992; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Feinberg & Gupta, 2004; Levinthal & March, 1993; 1991, 1996, 2006; Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006). Despite the need for a balance has been agreed upon, it is still unclear how to achieve it (Gupta, Smith, & Shalley, 2006) or how to find the optimal one (Levinthal & March, 1993). In PBOs too, finding the right balance between immediate and sustained performance is crucial but rather complicated.
A focus on performance and the risk of path dependence
Not carrying out competence development for PBOs would lead to the lack of relevant competence however. Instead of developing this competence internally, PBOs would consequently have to acquire it which can appear to be inefficient compared to developing it, especially if it happens in the form of additional recruitment which is costly. Additionally, if PBOs neglect competence development, they are likely to be in a situation where they have reduced options as their scope of competence does not adapt or broaden. In this section, we draw the parallel between this situation and the phenomenon of path dependence.

Path dependence refers to the impact history has on where the organization is heading, as it depends not only on where it currently is, but where it has been in the past (Liebowitz & Margolis, 1995). Path dependence can lead to choices that make organizations stuck on less than desirable paths (Liebowitz & Margolis, 1995).

The figure above illustrates the process of path dependence. The number of options available to the firm decreases over time as the company becomes increasingly dependent on the path that it is taking. This process is made of three phases, where phase three is constricting and represents lock in (Sydow et al., 2009).
Sydow et al. (2009) describes the concept of path dependence as a process made of three distinct stages and understood it as the reduction of available options. Phase one has a broad scope of action, effects of potential decisions are not possible to predict (Mahoney, 2000) and once it is made it can cause a small event that unintendedly starts a self-reinforcing process (Sydow et al., 2009). Self-reinforcement describes the mechanisms which explain why the path taken will be further pursued such as network externalities or increasing returns (Vergne & Durand, 2010). This time is a critical juncture (Collier & Collier, 1991), and it signals the end of preformation phase (Sydow et al., 2009). Phase two is the formation phase where it is likely for a dominant action pattern to emerge and it is when the complete process becomes increasingly irreversible (Sydow et al., 2009). The amount of options is decreasing and the difficulty to reverse the choice or action pattern is escalating, because a path is developing (ibid). Phase three is constricting and leads to lock in, eventually all actions are bound to a path and when this has occurred, flexibility is lost (Sydow et al., 2009). Lock-in situation relates to a situation with low potential for endogenous change and hence, hard to move away from (Vergne & Durand, 2010). In other words, Path dependence is about how organizations lose their flexibility and enter a stage of inertia, or even become locked in, it highlights organizational inflexibility, rigidity, or stickiness (Sydow et al., 2009).

If PBOs do not carry out competence development, they are likely to end up in a situation where their number of options is reduced. This situation comes with a lack of flexibility and adaptability and, given the dynamic and temporary nature of PBOs and their systems (Huemann et al., 2007), it is not a desirable situation. Consequently, understanding how PBOs can manage the tradeoff between performance and competence development is a way for them to avoid a path dependent situation that could lead to lock-in.

**Competence development or recruitment**

As explained previously, when PBOs focus on performing rather than developing competence, they are likely to end up in a situation where they must recruit. Individual knowledge increases with the time spent in an organization (March, 1991). On the contrary, when turnover increases, it reduces the average time individuals serve the organization and thus also decreases the average individual knowledge, with a strong effect (March, 1991). Therefore, turnover has a complicated effect on the organization and scholars have identified a tradeoff between learning rate and turnover rate (March, 1991) which PBOs are obviously facing. Indeed, despite the dilemma faced by PBOs is expressed in this research as immediate performance against sustained performance, a strong focus on immediate performance implies recruitment. This dilemma leads to a tradeoff between competence development and recruitment.

However, it is unclear when it is more beneficial for PBOs to recruit or develop. March (1991) explained that slow learning and rapid turnover lead to insufficient exploitation because of the new knowledge they bring and that, consequently, a reasonable turnover rate is desirable as it improves the total combined knowledge. However, this positive effect of turnover does not stem from superior knowledge of newcomers, as they are usually less knowledgeable than the ones they replaced, but rather stem from the diversity they bring.
(March, 1991). This is due to the fact that the knowledge of those who have been in the organization for some time, is already reflected in the organizational code, so it is less likely that they will contribute to it, while the newcomers’ knowledge is more different from the code and sometimes better, it therefore makes them more probable to make contributions that improves the organizational code (March, 1991). The reason why they can improve the code is because they have the competence, which according to Polanyi's definition, is a step beyond skill and know-how, and therefore enables them to change the rules (Polanyi in Rolf, 1991). This is relevant to PBOs as it has been stated by researchers who investigated these organizations that projects are consisting of a group of different expert competences (Sydow et al., 2004). Because of the temporary nature of projects (Huemann et al., 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011), diversity is also vital for PBOs as their need for competence requires adaptation and is diversified. However, it does not necessarily imply that this diversity should come from an external source as competence can be developed and be a viable solution, because learning can affect the distribution of performance and if it increases its mean and variance, it will lead to an improved competitive advantage (March, 1991).
3. Methodology

Setting and participants

The parallel between hockey teams and PBOs can be drawn because they have common features. PBOs are goal oriented, team oriented & knowledge intensive, temporary, interdisciplinary & cross-functional, and tensional (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). If hockey teams cannot be described directly as PBOs, they do however share many of the features (see introduction chapter for details) and since hockey teams share so many of the key features of PBOs, there will also be similarities regarding competence development. Therefore, to improve our understanding of the dilemma between immediate and sustained performance, we researched competence development in a professional hockey team where. Competence development here is similar to what it is in the business world, however the careers of players are significantly shorter so there is less time to play with. To study this phenomenon, we have conducted several interviews with members of the Linköping Hockey Club (LHC) women’s hockey team. Our interview subjects consist of the general manager (of the LHC women’s hockey team) Kim Martin, who we have interviewed twice, and two players from the team: Florence Schelling, the first goalkeeper, and Madelèn Haug Hansen who plays as a forward. Interviewing members of the organization was particularly adapted to include respondents with very different roles and responsibilities as it gave a broader view on the phenomenon of competence development. Being in charge of the recruitment of the staff (including the coaching staff) and players, the general manager has the widest vision of the organization and is consequently involved in HR practices of the organization. Interviewing two players gave a more insider approach to how competence development was handled as they were directly experiencing these processes. Moreover, the three interviewees are very experienced in the field of women’s hockey and were therefore able to provide us with rich information. In addition, we chose to interview members of the organization with different nationalities as it provides a broader understanding. The interviews were carried out in neutral and calm environments as one occurred in Kim Martin’s office at Saab Arena and the two other on the campus of Linköping University.

As part of our preparation for the study, we took some of the findings from the first interview and corroborated them by a secondary data collection. From the first interview we conducted with the LHC women’s team general manager, we learned that exploration is carried out in times of lesser importance, which means trying new things and giving match time to younger players, while performance is prioritized when the situation is more demanding and hence utilizing the best players available. We were able to corroborate this by carrying out a statistical study. We collected secondary data where we looked at a number of teams and how they rotated their players in regard to the matches they played. This kind of data is sometimes also referred to as available or existing data and even though this form of data was initially collected by someone else than the actual researcher and was recorded at an earlier point in time and for a completely different purpose (Johnson & Turner in Abbas & Charles, 2003), it was still helpful. This kind of data is however not given out on a silver platter, it required active searching to find the desired data in order to be able to use it for our own study, and
this secondary data can be used alongside other data for corroborative purposes (Johnson & Turner in Abbas & Charles, 2003). Our plan was to use this secondary data in combination with another data collection method, this is regularly done by researchers who engage in inter-method mixing (Johnson & Turner in Abbas & Charles, 2003). However, as our study evolved, this secondary data study serves more of a purpose for deepening our knowledge about competence development in sports and gave us more information, which we were able to use in the following three interviews. Therefore we do not present the secondary data in the empirical chapter, but we do describe this process here as it aided our research process, and including both qualitative and quantitative methods achieves a more complete understanding to a research question by each method filling the gaps of the other research method and reaching completeness (Bryman, 2012). Also, there are many strengths of secondary data, for example; it can provide insights into what people do and think, it can be collected for events occurring in the past such as historical data, it is useful for corroboration, and it can be used to study trends (Johnson & Turner in Abbas & Charles, 2003). With this in mind, the secondary data study was conducted to further our understanding of competence development in the sport context and to prepare for the interviews by gaining a better understanding of the field. We wanted to ensure a good result from the interviews by knowing what to investigate and ask the important questions without having to ask about unnecessary things, and this preparatory study allowed us to do this. As Bryman (2012) states, secondary data allowed us to conduct an analysis that would be beyond reach if we would have to rely on the data collected by ourselves, as secondary data gave us access to data of high quality which would be difficult to collect on our own, due to limitations in time and resources.

**Kim Martin** used to be the goalkeeper of LHC and had a very successful career as a player. She started playing in the Swedish national team when she was fifteen and earned prestigious awards such as the best goalkeeper of the 2006 Winter Olympics after bringing the team to a silver medal. She is now thirty-one and retired from hockey but still enjoys her passion for it through her managerial position where she can make use of her extensive knowledge of the competitive hockey scene.

**Florence Schelling** is regarded as one of the best goalkeepers on the current international competitive scene of women’s hockey. She joined the Swiss national team when she was only thirteen and earned a bronze medal in the 2012 World Championships and in the 2014 Winter Olympics. During this last Winter Olympics, she was awarded best goalkeeper and most valuable player of the tournament. She joined LHC two seasons ago and appeared to have a crucial position for the team as being Kim’s successor. She was injured from October to January and had a different perspective on the development of the players and the team.

**Madelèn Haug Hansen** joined the team five seasons ago. After playing with the Norwegian men national youth team since she was thirteen, Madelèn decided to make a move to Sweden in order to pursue her professional hockey career when she was eighteen, as the Swedish women’s league is more competitive. She is now twenty-three and an established forward in the team. All these interviews have provided us with a lot of insight into their organization and how competence development is handled throughout the season.
Data collection

As competence development is an ongoing process which takes place over time, we therefore conducted a process study and investigated the development of players over an entire season. Process studies place focus on how things develop over time, certain patterns may emerge, grow, or cease, and it can show how interactions contribute to change (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven, 2013). We interviewed members of the organization at the end of the 2016-2017 season with the aim to track and map their entire year. All interviewees have been part of the organization during the whole season and were consequently able to provide us with great insights on it. The way we investigated the season was by identifying important moments of the team’s season and then trying to understand how things happened, hence giving participants a lot of freedom to answer. From looking at critical events, researchers can make an analysis by paying attention to individuals and learn how their experiences grow over time from previous interactions (Langley et al., 2013).

Based on the team schedule and results, we identified the following important periods:
- June and July: Summer training
- August: Preseason
- September: A six game winning streak
- October: Three losses including two against weaker teams
- December: The winter break
- January: Start of the second part of the season with a win against the favorite team.
- End of February: Break before the playoffs
- March: Playoffs
- End of March: Start of the recruitment phase

These events are based on the team schedule accessed on the organization’s website. They have been chosen based on results and what appeared to be important checkpoints of the season. By asking about these periods, we both managed to collect information on what happened but also on how the team prepared for the various events of the year, which enabled us to map their player development processes where they work on individual skills and team-play, hence improving their skills, know-how and ultimately competence as well. Once the season was reviewed with the interviewees, we asked them questions which were more closely linked to competence development. However, as it will be further explained in the analysis section, these checkpoints had to be modified to match the real crucial events which shaped the season of the team. In particular, it was adapted to the way competence development processes evolved throughout the season. One purpose was to try to describe their weekly schedule and especially if it had patterns in how the organization manages competence development. We then investigated it depending on their answers about some competence development processes that they may have implemented and if they did, how it was done.
Finally, we tried to understand what the interviewees considered as important factors to make a successful season. As competence development in this research is put in relation to performance, it was of interest for us to understand how these two activities interact in the hockey team. It was also a way to get insights on how the organization was managing the tradeoff between performance and competence development.

In order to acquire the most pertinent data for our research we decided to employ a practice called purposeful sampling, because it is a suitable method to use when the researchers must choose a sample where they can acquire the most relevant information, in order to reach the aim of gaining insight and understanding into the area (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Purposeful sampling entails that you collect the most relevant information from people who are experts in that area (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As described by Chein (1981): “The situation is analogous to one in which a number of expert consultants are called in on a difficult medical case. These consultants-also a purposive sample-are not called in to get an average opinion that would correspond to the average opinion of the entire medical profession. They are called in precisely because of their special experience and competence” (Chein, 1981 p.440). This is what we aimed to do, especially as differences might have existed between different interview subjects, therefore, we let them be our experts.

We conducted interviews as a method to collect data and these were qualitative interviews where we had a number of questions that we asked and wanted answered but we also allowed the interviewee to talk somewhat freely so that we could ask follow up questions on top of that. We gave room for the interviewee to talk without intensive lead from the interviewers, while at the same time following the format of our questionnaire that we brought with us. In particular, we asked about the various events of the season and asked interviewees to give as many details as they could remember and tell us the story behind these events. This type of method is recommended for qualitative research because it provides an understanding of the situation from the interviewees’ perspective and it gives rich answers that are not possible to gather through quantitative interviews (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative interviews can be either unstructured or semi-structured (ibid). We wanted to retain some structure so that we could get answers to the same questions in order for comparisons to be made between interviews and also to ease the analyzing process. Therefore, we decided to resort to semi-structured interviews, because this type of interview demands answers to an amount of questions, however, it still grants the interviewees a lot of freedom to talk, hence, this process includes a lot of flexibility and gives focus to what the interview subject sees as important and their view on what happened (Bryman, 2012).
Analysis
To start the analysis process, we turned to the interviews, which is the data that we have collected. The interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed into text. The spoken language during the interviews was English, therefore there were no translation issues in the transcription. The transcription process helped to visualize the communication during the interviews and made it easier to understand the data we collected, which was the ambition for ensuring a valuable result (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

As a method for analyzing data we used a thematic analysis, which means that we looked for essential themes that fit our research (Bryman, 2012) namely, developing skill, know-how and competence. We also identified repetitions of topics and similar answers from different interview subjects and related theory in order to find themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Once the interviewees’ perspectives were understood, they were connected to theory without losing the connection to the interviewees’ world (Bryman, 2012).

Ethical considerations
Due to the fact that certain issues that were discussed during the interviews went into great detail about problems that occurred, coupled with a desire for secrecy regarding certain events, some of the information collected in the interviews are not discussed in this paper. Furthermore, it will also be removed from the transcribed interviews if they are to be made available. In particular, secrecy is important because this organization operates in a competitive environment where some of its features and processes may be the basis for outperforming competitors. To assure that their wishes were abided by, the interview subjects were given the chance to read and approve the empirical data before this paper was submitted. As researchers, we feel it is important to respect the wishes of the interview subjects and are glad that they shared this information with us, although we did not use it directly in this paper, it has helped us gain a greater understanding about our studied phenomenon.

Validity
In order to work towards achieving validity we used a qualitative research method in order to focus on depth rather than breadth which is key to quantitative studies, we also selected interview subjects with different roles in the team so that we would be able to look at it from different perspectives. As this was an unfamiliar area because it was new to the field, we decided that the qualitative method would be relevant as it is explorative and frequently used in this kind of context, where researchers are uncertain of the results the research is going to produce (Harboe, 2013). Qualitative methods were therefore a perfect match since we were unsure what to expect and needed to include some flexibility (Harboe, 2013). Furthermore, our qualitative research only included a few respondents in order to keep the focus on depth inside the selected field (Harboe, 2013).
As another means to aid validity we performed the study according to the abductive approach and the thought behind this is that we wanted to be able to back up our findings with existing theory, and the abductive approach allowed us to alternate between theories and results during the data collection process (Bryman, 2012). We used this to find patterns and similarities between the data collected and existing theory. After the first interview we needed to know more and we went back to theory and thereafter refined the topic. This was an iterative process and not only did it help us in the data collection process, but it also helped in the analysis stage as well, and overall it allowed us to create a better study. The abductive approach has the advantage of being more flexible, which was important in our study because the context was new.

This being a qualitative study has many positives, but one common critique of qualitative research is that it is hard to generalize the results as it is not representative of the population, due to the number of respondents being few. However, we do not intend to generalize to populations, but to theory. According to Mitchell (1983), it is the theoretical reasoning's effectiveness that decides the generalizability, instead of the statistical criteria. Therefore the critical factor in determining generalizability is the quality of the conclusions derived from the qualitative data (Bryman, 2012).

All research methods have imperfections and can endanger the research by exposing it to weaknesses. However, accordingly to what has been presented in the previous paragraphs, we have strived to aid validity through our methods described above, by trying to minimize their drawbacks while utilizing and benefitting from their advantages and therefore worked towards increasing the validity of our research.

Limitations

According to our understanding and what was also clear from what we heard in the interviews, was that the coach had a key position regarding competence development. However, since there were changes in the coaching staff, only the assistant coach remained in the organization. Unfortunately, we did not manage to get an interview with him even though countless efforts were made. We felt that an interview with him would have brought a lot of additional valuable information for our research, but unfortunately he was unavailable during our given time frame.

Furthermore, this research is based on qualitative methods, which focus on depth and therefore we have based this study and its findings on three respondents from one club. We are aware of the limitations that this includes as it can affect generalizability, nevertheless, we have generalized to theory by reviewing the work of many scholars, whose ideas fit well with the thoughts we have developed in regard to our research.
4. Empirical data

The empirical chapter displays the insights gathered during the three interviews. It presents this data in a chronological order which enables the reader to follow the development of the team throughout the season and to understand what happened in the organization from the perspectives of the different interviewees. The different periods of interest which shaped the season have been modified compared to the ones originally described in the methodology chapter. The reason for that is that original periods were the ones we used to investigate in the organization, based on the team schedule, whereas the one presented here is based on the story told by the respondents.

Interviews:

Kim Martin - General Manager: (GM)
Florence Schelling - Goalkeeper: (FS)
Madelèn Haug Hansen - Forward: (MHH)

Player abbreviations are by name, while Kim Martin is by her role, this is to separate her from the players and make it easier for the reader to understand. For more detailed information about the interview subjects, please refer back to the methodology chapter.

The team

Linköping Hockey Club (LHC) is a sport organization with both male and female teams and these teams play in the highest ranked hockey leagues in Sweden, namely the Swedish Hockey League (SHL) and Svenska damhockeyligan (SDHL) [Swedish Women's Hockey League, SWHL]. Both teams are considered to be top contenders within their respective league, especially the women's team which we follow here, they have won the playoffs twice in the last four years and won the league once.

A season at LHC

June and July: Summer training and preparation for the coming season

In June, summer training started after a month of vacation following the end of last season, they train until midsummer and the training is dependent on the coach, but at this time there is only off-ice training with the off-ice coach (GM). During this time there is practice every day and the off-ice training consists of intervals, strengthening, agility, and speed exercises and lasts for three months (FS). The off-ice training was praised by the team as it got them into a superior physical shape, compared to previous years and one strong factor was their development in the gym where the focus on lifting was more emphasized than before (FS; MHH). “It was the season where I developed the most in the gym because I had never lifted that much before.” (MHH). The training was very structured and suited to individual player needs and “...it was fun too, which was important.” (MHH). “Every program was developed differently for everyone.” and the (off-ice) coach was “open and dedicated.” and was therefore well liked and the team wishes to collaborate with her again (MHH). These training programs were built after a series of physical evaluations including one in early May and one
in the end of June (MHH). The tests consisted of strength and mobility assessments aimed at pointing out player weaknesses and advantages in relation to their positions (MHH). These tests do not take place once the season starts, but most of the players participate in other tests with their national teams (MHH).

August: Preseason

Preseason starts in August and here the ice practice begins, alongside the off-ice practice that continues in order to maintain the physical shape achieved throughout the summer, this period includes an exhibition game as well (FS; MHH). The team trains more at that time of the year than during the season as Madelèn Haug Hansen explained: “We train three days a week with heavy lifting, two other days we had intervals and then we had ice sessions four to five times a week.” (MHH).

LHC is a very international team, therefore a lot of the players go home after the season and only come back at this time. New players arrive in early August just when on-ice training starts again, along with off-ice sessions (GM). Apart from the fact that full training starts again, this stage’s main focus is to include the new players as quickly as possible in order to build a team that can come together as one and be ready for the season, “When you come into a new team it is like when you come into a new class, getting to know your classmates and in that case, teammates.” (FS). The inclusion of new players is carried out through the normal trainings, as well as team activities where they spend the day together at some destination where they get to talk to everybody, have fun together and bond as a team (FS). Kim Martin had the following to say about these activities:

“It is important that players get along and know each other so we try to make them have fun with team activities. For example, we went canoeing and played some beach volleyball. We always have one of these sessions before the season starts and usually one in the middle of the season when we feel that the team is exhausted or less motivated.” (GM).

Last season, the team also had one of these activities in the form of a trip to Jönköping where they went to a spa (FS). This season however, the integration of new players was made more complicated by the fact that the new coach arrived at the same time as they did, because the new players got to follow a program designed by the new coach while the other players continued to train according to the off-ice coach’s workout program, “…so the team got divided in two between new and old players” (MHH). Consequently, the team could have benefited from additional team building sessions (MHH).

The team practice every week and a typical training week is described below by Kim Martin: “At the beginning of the week, we try to do individual practice like forwards practice on scoring and the defense practices defending or skating and then the closer we get to a game, the more we work on systems, powerplay, boxplay, three on two, two on two or one on one. But the coach makes modifications also depending on the team we face if needed.” (GM).
Additionally, the team has one day off during the week that is chosen through a common decision between the coach and the team captains depending on the level of exhaustion due to their game schedule (MHH).

September: A great start
The team won its first six games and started the season in a perfect way. “We knew we had a good team last year but it gets more competitive, more and more teams focus on the women teams now so it’s harder as the general level is increasing.” (GM). These great results were the consequences of the superior physical shape they achieved through the summer where everyone worked really hard (FS). The physical strength allowed them to outperform their opponents, be better in duels and make the difference (FS). “I think we were physically in great shape, everybody was working really hard throughout the summer and throughout August and then bringing that, the physical part into the season helped us a lot in our games at the beginning of the season.” (FS). The importance of trusting and seeing that the coaching staff does its maximum to put players in the best conditions for the games is a crucial factor (MHH). The team also benefited from its high cohesion “we got the group together really fast and had a good team spirit from the start.” (MHH).

Kim Martin explains this successful period with the following statement: “when the team wins, everything goes well, it’s just when you start losing that things can go wrong, of course, not only one loss but several.” (GM). This statement is reiterated by the players: “winning boosts the team’s confidence and leads to series of victories.” (MHH).

October to November: The storming phase
Based on the results LHC had in October, it makes this a key period as the team experienced three losses in one month. One of these was not problematic as the team was facing the previous champion and highest ranked team in the league Luleå, but against AIK and Leksand, LHC was the favorite team. “Luleå was the favorite team this year too. They have a really good team we have three great lines but they managed to have four really competitive lines.” (GM). Luleå played better as a team and consequently won the game (FS). LHC remembered their loss against them the year before, in the final of the playoffs, which influenced their perspective on the game as they knew it would not be an easy confrontation (FS). The team was not negatively impacted by this loss given that Luleå was a serious opponent (MHH). The reason why Luleå was a serious opponent, and have built such a well performing team is that “They also have great financial resources which explains that they have great players.” (GM). Facing Luleå was a challenge for the team, but nothing in the preparation was changed accordingly: “I don’t think we did anything differently but the players focus more when playing against a good team.” (GM).

The losses against AIK and Leksand were explained by the GM: “We had some trouble with the coach, there has been some miscommunication which led to a change in that position later that season.” (GM).
The GM and the coach met the team captains on a monthly basis and they expressed their dissatisfaction towards the head coach in one of these meetings (GM). The GM linked this issue to the team performance mentioning that trust was very important in a hockey team and that the events had affected the whole team (GM). Despite the negative impact of the situation on the team’s performance, the organization decided to find solutions to improve the satisfaction towards the coach. “We did not want to change the coach unless there would be no other solution. So, we tried to improve the situation but at some point, both the coach and the rest of the organization agreed that it was better to stop working together.” (GM).

Trust was an important reason for what happened. However, the coaching itself, i.e. training and tactics were also accountable for the drop in performance (GM; FS; MHH). “He tried new things in trainings that the girls were not used to and he had a different kind of leadership. For example, he modified the off-ice training a lot.” (GM). This interfered with the training programs of the off-ice coach, whose contribution was well appreciated (FS; MHH). In the aftermath of these events, the off-ice coach was not part of the team anymore (FS; MHH).

In November, after losing to Leksand, the team lost to SDE, a team that usually does not make it to playoffs. “We shouldn’t lose against them, so of course, that was another point where the girls were not satisfied with the situation. In the end, the team played more individually than before.” (GM). The team was also missing one very important player, namely the first goalkeeper (Florence Schelling), who had sustained a serious injury and would be missing until mid-January (GM; FS). At first, the gravity of the injury was not known, but once the team realized that she would be away for three to four months, it meant that the second goalkeeper had to play for a large part of the remaining games of the season (GM). Unfortunately, the second goalkeeper had times when she was out as well due to sickness and LHC had to rely on their third goalkeeper, who is very young (FS; GM). Nevertheless, this decision was made by the whole team and everyone thought it was an accurate decision to give this player some official game time against SDE, as it was supposed to be an already acquired victory (MHH). However that is not to say that the loss was the fault of the third goalkeeper, games are won by scoring goals and this did not work well during this game, so it was the performance of the whole team that was to blame (MHH). Kim Martin explained about the two losses by saying that the team “should have scored more, so our losses were not due to our second goalie’s mistakes but I believe that the team feels safer with the first goalkeeper and can focus more on their offensive plays.” (GM). In this team, there was a large age-gap between the different goalkeepers and as the substitute goalkeepers are quite young, they did not have the same level of experience yet which had its impacts on the performance of the other players, as they needed to help out more, even though these goalkeepers belonged to the highest league (FS). The team however borrowed a goalkeeper from the second division for a while before Florence Schelling’s return and this is common practice in the field of hockey (MHH). LHC sometimes puts young players out on loan to other teams so that they can have experience from official games, when they do not get enough of that at home (MHH).
These two losses however influenced the team, which started questioning itself in order to understand the reasons for why this was happening, which led to doubts in the team and harmed its general atmosphere (MHH). It was underlined that despite LHC being a large favorite against these teams, the level in the league was high and the competition in the league was rising (MHH).

**December: The winter break**
In December the winter break started. It lasts about three weeks, from 15th December to around 7th of January and includes national breaks and free time where players usually go home. “We give players workout programs to follow. Once they come back, we have only a week to prepare before the games start.” (GM). There was also a belief that the winter break would help the situation regarding the coach: “We believed as well that the break could have been helpful to solve the situation.” (GM). Indeed, the players noticed that the atmosphere really improved after the break as the team was in need of some rest (MHH).

**January: A new start**
After the break, the first game for the team was playing away, against Luleå, the leading team in the league. Despite their previous losses and the situation with the coach, the team still secured an important victory. “I think the decisive thing was that everyone really wanted this victory.” (GM). The team then continued with a six-win streak, which was surprising given the difficulties the team had experienced in the previous periods. Kim commented “Hockey wise, the team was doing great but something was still going on.” (GM). The whole team was evolving in a less favorable atmosphere which harmed its motivation “It felt like the team had less fun than usually but the fun came back once the new coach was appointed.” (GM).

When being asked about the role of the captain, Kim Martin explained that “the captain is voted by the team but this time, she was close to the coach and hence did not represent the team very well.” (GM) and that “Overall, even though the players were doing their best and were there the whole year, I think these events affected their motivation.” (GM).

The month of January was the start of another six win streak for the team even though the change of the coach occurred in the middle of this streak. There was a team meeting regarding the state of the team where every player could voice their opinion (FS; MHH). It appeared to be really important as not only leaders spoke, literally everyone had a word and agreed on a solution so that they were able to speak up as a team on this issue and put their foot down until the problem was resolved, which illustrated great team cohesion (FS). This team cohesion reveals how united the team is and it is believed to be important success factor by the players (MHH). The assistant coach became the head coach and the team picked a new captain (GM).
With a new coach, the team had a fresh start and the atmosphere within the team improved. The end of the month also saw the first goalkeeper playing again as she returned from her injury (FS). Trainings were redesigned and saw a large increase in variety from before. Florence’s perspective was one of a goalkeeper who did not witness coaching on the bench during games and did not participate in drills but rather focuses on saving pucks (FS). She also had a special goalkeeper coach that she met once a week separately from the team, for about forty-five minutes (FS). Both these factors explained that she could see the change of dynamics in the team, but had a particular point of view when making a direct detailed appraisal of the switch in the coaching staff (FS).

Despite her special position in the team, Florence Schelling explained that in general, she thought that having a too repetitive style of training dropped motivation, similar thoughts were shared by Madelèn Haug Hansen as well (FS; MHH). Until the change in the coaching staff, the team had a very similar way to train throughout the season. “I was here in August and September and when I came back in January, the team was still having the same trainings and you could tell that barely anyone had high motivation to come to the rink anymore to train because they knew that the trainings would be the same all over.” (FS). When the assistant coach took the lead, things began to change, there was more variation in the drills and the team was “working on what we needed, on the things we had to improve for the games, weaknesses that were noticed during games.” (FS).

Madelèn Haug Hansen took part in the trainings during the whole season and had great insights to share about it. The new trainings were different as it included “new drills and it felt very nice.” and were carried out by more than just the coach as “Kim held some sessions and I know that I can trust her and her tips.” (MHH). As a consequence of all that, players were more motivated to come to practice and they had more fun playing which also increased the team spirit: “I felt that there was a lot more joy around, the players actually had fun out on the ice and more motivation and desire to come to practice, to be on the ice, to improve and perform.” (FS).

Having a great atmosphere again and enjoyable training sessions, the team made a leap forward. The impression was that “the team developed more in a couple of weeks than they had from August to January.” (FS). In particular, this improvement was skill related and mainly due to the fact that the new way of coaching was more focused on each player individually where they were able to improve their individual skills within the team drills, which were the focus (FS). “The new head coach was going into every single player and told them, you need to work on this. The drills were team drills, but within the drills every player can still be better.” (FS). However, when the season comes to an end and playoffs are approaching, the team usually prioritizes trainings aimed at polishing details in order to perform as much as possible. “When the season comes to an end, it is not time to work on individual skills but rather work on our lines and our teamplay.” (MHH). Nevertheless, the new coach connected both, which made the players improve a lot in their skills as well (FS).
From her management perspective, Kim Martin observed various changes “We didn’t have a lot of theoretical sessions last year. It went from once a month to practically once a week at the end of the season. It also became more specific, sometimes the coach only does them with a line or even individually. As we have young players, we also do some sessions on basics on how to improve skating for example.” (GM).

The winning streak ended with a loss against Djurgården, a team that LHC struggled against, having a record of two wins out of seven during the whole year. Despite having obvious difficulties against this specific team, LHC did not find a solution to cope with this situation. “We did not prepare differently but they were hard to beat. On paper, we had a good team and could win against them but it was a lot of individuals. We lacked a coach who could make us work as a team and follow tactical systems.” (GM).

**March: The playoffs**

On 19th February, the last game of the league was played and the final ranks decided which team could reach the playoffs. Despite its unexpected difficulties, LHC ranked third, a comfortable position which enabled the team to pick their opponent for the quarterfinals once the two first teams had done so. The first playoff game started on 1st of March and the team had little time to prepare for the most important period of the season.

“Most players have national team break at that time and then we have about a week to prepare before the quarterfinals. Once we find out who we play against, we also watch replays to understand how the opponents play. The most experienced players discuss situations a bit more and try to help others. When this happens in a team, it is usually successful” (GM).

This replay session starts 30 minutes before the practice, which acts as a tactical session (FS, MHH). At the same time, these tactical sessions eat up precious resting time for the players, which reduce its value (MHH).

Because the playoffs is a crucial and at the same time hectic period, the weekly schedule during playoffs is different and includes more resting time. Therefore it was something we discussed in detail with all of the interview subjects: “We play games on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. So, between the two rounds, we only have Monday and Tuesday to get prepared for the next opponent. On Thursday, we usually take a day off and on Friday we analyze replays and train team skills such as power play or boxplay” (GM). The specific nature of playoff trainings is that they are easier as the planning includes a lot of important games in a short period (MHH). For example, players should not have heavy physical training that week, in order for them to be fresh for the games and not be exhausted due to overtraining (MHH).
In the quarterfinals, the team chose to play against AIK, a team that they were confident facing and had the advantage of being close to in regard to travel time. It was an important factor as time spent in transport adds to the exhaustion from the games and can have an impact on the players’ performance (MHH). LHC won this confrontation two games to zero and advanced to the semifinals.

In the semifinals, the team faced Djurgården, against which they lost two games to one. Djurgården then became the playoff winners by beating Luleå in the final, which makes Linköping’s performance honorable, especially since they were the only team to win a game against them during the playoffs. Kim Martin commented; “it was close games really and in all three games, the team that scored first won the game. We won a game away but unfortunately lost a game home” (GM).

April: Overall appraisal and recruiting for the next season
At the end of a season, it is common practice in sport organizations to carry out assessments and review the season. If LHC does not resort to such practices, the organization still pays attention to players’ development. “We do not carry out specific skill evaluations but I can see that players developed. In particular, young players who had more playing time this year really improved.” (GM). Injuries during the season hurt the team as they represent a loss of performance but they also enable young players to increase their in-game experience. We wondered specifically if there were indicators to identify such improvements: “You can tell when seeing them play. You see the patience with the puck, that the player is not scared and makes good plays, i.e. make the right passes or score. But we do not keep count of these as statistics” (GM). Madelèn Haug Hansen had a reserved view on her development that season and had the impression that she maintained her level, especially when she compared this season to the one before, during which she improved a lot (MHH). She expressed her wish for “more stability throughout the season, especially regarding the different lines as we need time to improve together.” and highlighted the importance of trust with the coaching staff (MHH).

When the season, ends it is time for the organization to recruit its staff and players. Given the difficulties that the team met with coaching during the season, the decision made to hire the new coach was way more elaborated, focusing on a well-established and experienced person. “We hired a woman who has been coaching for a long time for next season. We wanted someone with experience in women’s hockey. I think it’s very different to coach women than men. I believe that women ask more questions and look for more explanations” (GM). The forward player we interviewed justifies Kim Martin’s statement as she explained “I often ask questions like why are we doing this, is this going to help me during the game because I know how my body reacts to different kinds of training. Young players tend to ask less questions but experienced players do.” (MHH).
Apart from the great experience that the new coach has, it is also a person that is well known by LHC and in particular its GM “I have worked with her in the U18 national team and played against her and she has been coaching Brynäs for five years now. I know her as a person and she is dedicated and very open.” (GM). Recruiting is however restricted by financial aspects as the team must stay within the budget but the organization learnt from last year. As a consequence, the organization agreed to increase the budget allocated to the recruitment of a coach so that the team does not experience the same difficulties (GM).

When it comes to recruiting players, the team has a cohesive group of about eighteen players and recruits around five players every season. “It is the same in every team, there is a cohesive group of players and then around five players who come here for a year or two and then leave.” (GM). Therefore, the recruitment is based on who stays in the team and the team looks for players who would make the team complete. “It depends on what our needs are. But the women’s hockey scene is limited so it’s important to be flexible in recruiting and recruit players who fit in the team. We look for natural leaders, having leading players help younger girls to succeed. We look for good characters, people who would do everything for the team. We want a team and not a team of individuals.” (GM). LHC does not have a specific recruitment section in its organization but some of the members of the team staff are real experts of the hockey scene and use their knowledge to enhance their recruitment processes. However, it is not an easy task as more and more talented new players are entering the competitive scene. “I have been in women’s hockey for a long time so I know a lot of players. But as I am getting older, I need to watch videos and talk to coaches to gather more information. I also know more about players in the Swedish league than abroad.” (GM).

Apart from the knowledge of the team’s staff, players also play an important role in recruiting. More specifically, the older players are asked about their opinions in order to recruit players that they may know from their national teams or previous seasons. For example, the recruitment of a player for the upcoming season went through this process where the GM asked one of the most experienced players, namely Florence Schelling to help her in the recruitment process: “I’m still playing so I can tell her “we have this player in Switzerland who would fit the team and is playing great”” (FS).

Although Kim is no longer playing, she still continues her passion by being general manager and it is something that shows in the team; Kim does a lot as a manager, despite a busy schedule on and off work, she always answers quickly no matter what time it is and tries to fix potential problems that players come to her with (FS). Players expressed how important it was to feel that they can trust her and have that kind of support, especially when they are in a foreign country with their families being far away (FS; MHH). This is very helpful in the recruitment process as you feel more secure to come to a new country, and besides aiding recruitment, it also helps to retain players as well (FS; MHH).
5. Analysis

Project members’ motivation: a prerequisite to competence development
To understand how PBOs can manage the balance between immediate and sustained performance, it is first important to review how they can implement competence development processes as competence development was presented as a crucial activity to achieve sustained performance. Therefore, this first headline discusses the importance of motivation as a requirement to efficient competence development. Based on the findings made thanks to the interviews, we review in the following section how PBOs can ensure motivation to develop and can pave the way for competence development.

Competence development as we defined it is the development of skills and know-how of both individuals and groups of individuals. Basically, competence comprehends skills and know-how but also includes a reconnecting reflection of know-how that enables the modification of collective rules (Rolf, 1991). Building upon that definition, development of individual skills, collective skills and know-how are included in competence development along with competence itself. If PBOs and in particular, their HR department, are responsible for their competence development processes (Huemann et al., 2007), Bredin and Söderlund (2011) remind us that individuals themselves play an important role too. Indeed, their degree of participation and motivation to learn and develop affects the results of competence development (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). If many scholars discussed and studied the ways to increase the motivation of employees (Lawler, 1973; Walker, Churchill & Ford, 1977; Wiley, 1997; Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004), the focus here is to identify the antecedents of the specific motivation to develop and learn as it is of importance for competence development. This discussion is not based on the assumption that players or project members are demotivated to develop when motivation is not enhanced but rather on the belief that motivation can be increased even though it may be already present and hence positively influence the results of competence development processes. In both a hockey team and PBOs, the motivation towards competence development processes stems from both individual and collective factors as these two organizations consist of groups of individuals who interact and have collective dynamics. By investigating the season of LHC and how it developed its players, we also gained insights on motivational factors and were able to identify three main conditions which have an influence on the players’ motivation to develop.

First, the interviewees expressed that the atmosphere in the team was a very important aspect that could boost or drop motivation depending on its nature. They explained that having fun in trainings and during games as well as having a cohesive team are two characteristics of a favorable team atmosphere. On the contrary, when the team had dissatisfactions with the coaching staff, it affected its atmosphere and consequently, players’ motivation to come to training sessions dropped. In PBOs, the link can be made with the organizational culture which can be designed to enhance teamwork and hence produce more collaborating project teams. Organizational culture influences the work environment and can make working time
more enjoyable for the personnel, which we link here to what the team referred to as having fun. Team cohesion at LHC is achieved through team-building activities organized at the beginning of the season. As projects have a temporary nature (Huemann et al., 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2011; Popaitoon & Siengthai, 2014), project teams are not built on a permanent basis (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011), and project members do not represent a cohesive group at the moment of the project team formation. Therefore, team-building activities would help PBOs achieve cohesion in project teams, which is, according to our interviews, a factor of favorable team atmosphere.

Second, it appeared to be important that players and the coaching staff share mutual trust to enhance their motivation. On the one hand, trust from the coaching staff has an impact on the players’ autonomy and willingness to do their best. When trusting players, the coaching staff also notifies them that they believe in their capacities to improve. On the other hand, trust from players towards the coaching staff enables players to participate actively and feel engaged in the competence development processes without doubting them. In a similar way, PBOs can show trust to their project teams. They can do so by giving responsibilities and autonomy to their project members to give them a signal of trust. When it comes to gaining trust from players, we identified that players need to understand the value of competence development processes. Experienced players at LHC tend to question these processes and what it could bring them. When this happens, it is an indication of competence since players in that case try to change collective rules by influencing processes based on their knowledge. If answers are not provided, they are likely to doubt the development processes. Not only can this make them have the impression of wasting resources and time but it can also corrode their trust towards the organization since they are likely to see it as incompetent. Therefore, the organization can gain from providing answers by explaining the purpose of the various components within these processes. PBOs can gain trust from their project members by achieving clarity both in roles and in objectives. PBOs can do so by clarifying why specific steps of competence development are implemented, directly with the ones experiencing them so that it would increase their motivation towards these processes.

Finally, we came to the conclusion that the context in which the team evolved was affecting their motivation. In particular, the hockey team has a higher motivation in times of positive results, which not only lead to more development but also higher performance. Indeed, the team had two long winning streaks which show the snowballing effect of positive results. LHC also had times where the negative context had similar consequences, where one loss led to many losses in the same month. We draw the parallel between the motivation stemming from victories for the hockey team and the motivation that achievements can bring to project members. Therefore, communicating on the progress made to project teams appears to be an efficient way to enhance their motivation. It can be done on a regular basis so that project members feel that progress is continuously happening, hence maintaining a positive context, which favors competence development.

The previously mentioned antecedents of motivation give a concrete picture of how to implement a favorable context to competence development in PBOs.
Efficient competence development processes: key features and roles

We exposed that competence development processes achieve better results when they are implemented in a favorable context which positively influences project members’ motivation to develop and learn. However, it is important to review which features of these processes can positively influence their success. Competence development includes training programs (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011) and on-the-job learning which represent crucial processes. At LHC too, competence development occurred through two main processes: training sessions and games. If games gave players experience while achieving performance, trainings were designed in a way to prepare for the games as well as to develop players. Thanks to the qualitative data gathered during the interviews, we identified key features which enhance these processes at LHC and might be transferable to PBOs.

If working on collective skills and hence on know-how, was crucial to perform, individualized training of skills appeared to be important to competence development. More specifically, trainings gain from being tailored to individuals as they need to acquire different skills. Individuals have different weaknesses and strengths which must be considered when it comes to development. This implies assessment sessions aimed to evaluate the state of individuals, which then becomes the basis for designing training programs. LHC uses the summer and preseason to evaluate physical skills and design individualized training programs. Ideally, training programs should be tailored but as it requires additional organizational resources in the form of time and financial investment, their need for efficiency must be considered as well when deciding on the degree of individualization. PBOs can as well resort to individualized training in the form of individual competence-based training. This kind of training would focus on identifying and filling the competency gap of a project member, hence leading to the design of a suited development. However, it is hard for PBOs to know in advance what their future needs will be and as decisions to acquire it cannot be postponed, it means that they will have to invest in the competence they believe will be useful in the future and hope they made the right decision (March, 1995). What we learnt from the hockey team is that, despite the impossibility to know exactly what will be needed in the future, the possibility can be narrowed down. At LHC, forwards and defenders do not train the same way and focus on skills that are relevant to their roles. Obviously, the hockey team evolves in an environment where rules and objectives are stable and even ensured by an authority, whether it is the referee or the league’s organization. On the contrary, PBOs evolve in an environment that is more uncertain. If changes are required depending on the specific project in which project members participate, their area of expertise remains the same and therefore, their competence in this particular area can be reinforced and updated. We believe that designing trainings depending on the position and area of expertise that a project member occupies is a way to cope with the uncertainty of future competence needs.

In addition, competence development at LHC is adapted to the period of the season and the current schedule. Before the season starts, hockey players focus on developing their physical shape and team cohesion. Indeed, LHC spends June and July prioritizing off-ice training where the aim is to develop the players’ physical shape as much as possible. In August, this training continues along with on-ice training and team-building activities to work on team
cohesion. This means that the team utilizes this available time to develop individual skills and work on collective know-how. During the season, they have a mix of individual development and team training to be ready for games. We learnt that the usual weekly schedule is made of trainings aimed at developing on-ice individual skills in the beginning of the week whereas the end of the week is used to work on teamplay and tactical systems. During the playoffs, however, the team focuses strongly on maximizing performance for the incoming games. They have three intense games a week and hence benefit from an additional day of rest. We also observed that the trainings were shorter and less physically intense but rather focusing on know-how and on situational tactical knowledge. PBOs can learn from this specific flexibility of competence development processes. As it is acknowledged that projects have different stages, it is important that competence development processes match these various stages. The similarities with the way LHC manages that adaptability of competence development processes are numerous. As mentioned earlier, PBOs need to enhance team cohesion at early stages, as project teams are constantly being reformed since projects are by nature temporary (Huemann et al., 2007). This temporary nature of projects also infer that new projects may require new skills that project members need to acquire. Therefore, PBOs would gain from implementing competence development processes aimed at developing individual skills and collective know-how in early stages of projects. While the project is ongoing, PBOs can afford to acquire the missing competence through competence development while ensuring that progress is made, though it may slow down the progression. Finally, in the late stages of projects, PBOs must focus on achieving the final goal and at this point competence development receives less focus. Adapting competence development processes to project stages makes sense in PBOs and that is why we consider it an important feature.

Stability seems to have an influence on the quality of competence development. This stability does not refer to the kind of processes used to develop competence, it is linked to stability in the context in which they are implemented. For example, competence development is carried out best at LHC when players train within the same hockey line as they do not need to focus on knowing each other since they developed mechanisms over time. On the contrary, they can then take their training to another level and develop other important aspects of competence. Basically, players acquire common know-how from training with the same teammates and can hence focus either on skills or on competence. The interviewees insisted on the importance of training in the same line and voiced how the instability in lines that occurred during the first half of the season was detrimental. This is a real challenge for PBOs as the context in which project members evolve is constantly modified, whether it is the aim of the project or the project teams. However, PBOs can try to enhance a similar kind of stability for example by having project subgroups who are assigned to project teams together and hence do not need to work on this kind of know-how and can focus on skills and competence.

Competence development processes gain from being diversified in the form they are carried out. If competence development is always implemented in the same way, its efficiency tends to be eroded over time as project members get used to it. Developing competence is an explorational activity, both for the organization, as it was explained earlier, and for the individuals as it is about acquiring new skills, know-how or competence. However, it is also
an exploitational activity when it comes to the refinement of existing skills, know-how and competence. LHC experienced repetitive processes especially during trainings last season and that dropped its development efficiency. However, as soon as these processes were changed and gained in variety, the team members improved significantly. If PBOs should design competence development processes tailored to their needs, these processes need variety so that project members do not get too used to it. Of course, discussing this issue goes beyond that as it is about finding out when and to what extent these processes should be diversified. As it was mentioned earlier, stability also has advantages as routines can make these processes gain in another kind of efficiency by saving time and gaining in clarity. Therefore, we believe that further research would be necessary to grasp an understanding on the extent to which the form of competence development processes should be diversified.

From observations made at LHC, some roles appeared to be crucial regarding competence development in the organization. The coaching staff is in charge of the schedule and of the design of the training sessions. As such, this staff is designing the competence development processes, with the head coach having more decision-making power. In PBOs, the HR department occupies a similar role as the coaching staff and is therefore responsible for designing the HR processes including the ones aimed at competence development. We then highlight that, based on the recommended attitudes for coaches, that HR specialists as well, would benefit from maintaining great relationships with the developing project members and conveying trust.

In addition, team captains were also influencing competence development processes at LHC. Representing the link between the team members and the head coach, team captains share their insiders’ perspective to provide feedback to the coaching staff and give an indication on the team’s needs. In addition, captains also assume the responsibility to make sure that the team understands instructions and what is expected from them. A parallel can be drawn with the roles of project managers and line managers. Project managers provide direct feedback to employees through contact with line managers to review processes (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011). Team captains have a similar linkage with the head coach in the hockey team and act as line managers, while the head coach behaves similarly as project managers. As Bredin and Söderlund (2011) underlined, the role of line managers is increasingly the one of a competence development manager. Our research reinforces the idea that line managers, HR specialists and project managers are involved in HR practices and especially in competence development as it was presented by Bredin and Söderlund (2011). Through their HR quadriad, Bredin and Söderlund (2011) highlighted the importance of communication and great interplay between HR specialists, line managers, project managers and project workers. The example of LHC empirically illustrates the importance of these interplays through the analysis of the linkages between players, captains, head coach and coaching staff. However, the case of LHC gave insights on important roles and linkages: If the parallel is drawn between the coach and the project manager in PBOs, the coach is here involved in the elaboration of player development processes. We also noticed that the relation between line managers and the project manager appeared to be crucial. Therefore, we built the following framework based on the interplay observed between team members, team captains, the coach and the coaching
Recruitment and interactions

Data collected on the recruitment processes brought a new perspective to the organizational dilemma between immediate and sustained performance. If recruitment first represented a way to compensate for the lacking of competence development, or one that is insufficient, it is also a means to enhance it. Recruitment of players at LHC is aimed at acquiring missing competence by finding players accordingly. But high importance is also placed on how well newly recruited players would fit the team. This specific focus along with the fact that the team members share their knowledge and tend to help each other, explains that competence development is also achieved through interactions. This phenomenon can apply to PBOs too since projects consist of groups with different expert competence (Sydow et al., 2004) and newcomers are more likely to make contributions that improve the organizational code (March, 1991). Therefore, in PBOs, recruitment need not only be a way to counterbalance a lack of competence development but can also be a means to enhance it through interactions which lead to sharing of skills and know-how.
Building on this idea of competence development being achieved through interactions of players, we also underline the practical solution that loans represent for LHC. Player loans give teams flexibility. On the one hand, a player can be recruited for a short period to replace an injured player and enable the team to perform while bringing new knowledge through interactions with the rest of the team. On the other hand, young players who cannot develop as much because they lack playing time can be loaned to other teams and develop there by interacting with other players and acquiring experience. For project teams, the situation is different but can be compared to cross-project teams and cross-organizational teams. By building teams with other organizations or with other projects, PBOs can develop their project members’ competence through interactions with organizations with different skills, know-how or competence. In addition, collaboration with another organization is another way to cope with a lack of competence that PBOs must acquire and hence perform.

The balance between performance and competence development
One of the main purposes of this research was to understand how PBOs could manage the tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance. By observing how this was achieved by LHC, we reached a better understanding of this organizational dilemma. We drew the parallel between the tradeoff that immediate and sustained performance implies and the one identified between exploitation and exploration by March (1991). Just like exploitation and exploration, performance and competence development are respectively linked to current and future organizational survival (Levinthal & March, 1993). If managing such a tradeoff through reaching a balance between two crucial activities to secure both present and future viability is widely accepted (Levinthal & March, 1993), knowing which balance is suitable remains unclear (Gupta et al., 2006; Levinthal & March, 1993). We learnt from the interviews at LHC that not only is this balance unclear but it is also situational and approached with flexibility, which means the ratio of what is being favored, changes according to the current tasks.

Operating in a competitive environment where winning games and hence, performing, is crucial to its success, LHC has a strong rationale to prioritize performance. At the same time, professional women hockey players have a career that last for about ten years and player succession is a key activity to prepare for. To prepare for the succession of new players and making sure that the team maintains a high level, player development is a very important HR practice for a hockey team. If both activities are constantly being carried out throughout the season, the balance between these two activities changes depending on the context.

During the preseason, the team prioritizes individualized physical training with the aim to make players progress as much as possible. While this indeed appears to be of high importance in performing at the beginning of the season, this is a competence development process. Simultaneously, LHC organizes team building activities and starts on-ice trainings which are aimed mainly at preparing to perform as the team must become a cohesive group of individuals by gaining know-how before the season starts to ensure a satisfying teamplay. When the season starts, LHC focuses mainly on performing but still carries out competence
development. On the one hand, the team affords to practice on individual skills at the beginning of the week while on the other hand, trainings are prioritizing teamplay and tactical systems to perform for incoming games at the end of the week. We found out that the balance tips on one or the other side depending on the level of difficulty of the tasks they must perform at. For example, when facing Luleå (the highest ranked team), the team prioritizes performance as this game represents a challenge while when confronting low ranked teams like SDE, the team affords to give playing time to younger players and hence make them develop by gaining game experience.

The balance is also modified accordingly to what is at stake. This shows in particular during the playoffs where the team mostly trains tactical systems and team performance, and benefits from less physically intensive sessions in order to ensure the best conditions to perform during games. This is due to the fact that the playoffs represent the most important period of the year and winning them is the biggest achievement for LHC. Therefore, LHC prioritizes performance in this last part of the season.

There are two learning points from this previous discussion for PBOs which help to understand how to manage the balance between competence development and performance. First, this balance requires flexibility and should be adapted to project stages. In early stages of the project, project members must acquire the competences they need to ensure the project’s success. It is also a competence development process that can be started before the project starts during the preparation phase. In the same time, project teams must carry out activities aimed at reaching performance quickly such as team building activities which enable team cohesion, a prerequisite to perform in such groups as explained earlier. As projects make progress, the focus on performing increases and becomes the absolute priority in late stages. At the moment of the project team’s dissolution though, PBOs must prepare for the incoming projects and hence redirect their priority towards competence development.

Second, the balance between immediate and sustained performance depends on the difficulty of performed tasks and on what is at stake. Concretely, a project with a lot at stake cannot be assigned to project members in need of competence development, but should be assigned to reliable and performing project members. On the contrary, projects of lesser importance can be used to enhance competence development. This is to be done however, in accordance to the previously discussed important features of competence development processes.
Performance and competence development: Intertwined objectives

In this research, performance and competence development were presented as competing activities as their linkages were compared to the ones that exploitation and exploration as defined by March (1991) share. In PBOs as in sport organizations, it appeared that organizations had to manage the tradeoff between these two activities. Indeed, similarly to how both exploitation and exploration are required to secure present and future viability (Levinthal & March, 1993), both performance and competence development are crucial activities to a hockey team and PBOs. What complicates the tradeoff is that competence development is a timely process that may hinder current performance, while maximizing current performance does not rely on developing but rather on exploiting current competence. However, through the analysis of the case of LHC, it appears that performance and competence development have a more complex relationship than one of competing activities which require a tradeoff. Alike how exploitation and exploration are not always competing but can be complementary activities (Chen & Katila, 2008), we found that performance and competence development are not only competing but also intertwined activities.

Despite competing for scarce resources, immediate performance and competence development have a common antecedent: motivation. As it was explained in the first part of this chapter, motivation is a key requirement to achieve competence development. However, motivation is also strongly linked to performance (Walker et al. 1977). Therefore, we believe that it is possible to enhance both activities by increasing motivation. It is however likely that motivation to develop and motivation to perform have different antecedents while they might also have some in common. This research cannot conclude on which antecedents influence both types of motivations. It is hence one of our recommendations for further research.

What stems from the study of competence development at LHC is that, while the team designs its training programs mainly to perform during games, it still manages to achieve player development. When players prepare for a game, they work on specific needs for this game but these needs belong to the common stand of competence in the hockey field. Consequently, while working towards performance, LHC manages to carry out competence development also because players develop during games.

One of the purposes of this research was to understand how competence development enables to avoid a lock-in situation. Path dependence describes the process through which an organization loses its flexibility because its number of available options is decreasing (Sydow et al., 2009). For PBOs, one way to prevent the number of available options from decreasing and instead increase it is through competence development. Indeed, by developing the competence of project members, PBOs increase the scope of projects they can take on because their project members have broader and deeper expertise, as well as increase the number of combinations of competence they can assign to projects. In such a situation, PBOs have more choices available when it comes to undertaking projects and assigning project members. Knowing that performance and competence development are not necessarily competing objectives but intertwined, PBOs can avoid getting stuck in path dependence and avoid lock-in as they can broaden their available options while performing. However, there are conditions
under which this works and these were described in the previous sections. By managing both performance and efficient competence development, PBOs can be less reliant on recruitment and will have many choices of competences from within the organization and this has several benefits, among which is that these people will already be schooled in the ways of the organization and its company culture (March, 1991), and therefore be a home-grown product that does not need to be brought up to speed in how to act accordingly to the ways of the organization. We take the discussion one step further by underlining that having too many available options can also be detrimental. On the one hand, having many available options enables the organization to avoid lock-in and to stay in control but on the other hand, it leads to more difficult choices and thus complicates the decision-making processes. The difficulties in decision-making arise because there are so many available options, which adds more parameters to the equation, another consideration is the increased competition between potential project members.
6. Conclusion

Summarizing the study and lifting key issues
By drawing the parallel between PBOs and hockey teams, this research provides a better understanding of how competence development processes can be handled in PBOs. Competence development was approached as a competing objective with immediate performance. As explained in the previous chapters, both activities are crucial to PBOs but managing the tradeoff between them was unclear and represented a managerial challenge for these organizations. By interviewing members of the women’s team of the Linköping Hockey Club, this research highlights various points linked to how PBOs can manage this tradeoff.

This research brings light on a key favorable condition to competence development processes: motivation to develop. By investigating this specific motivation, this study identified some of its main antecedents. More specifically, it was found that the team atmosphere, trust and context were influencing this motivation. In terms of concrete actions for PBOs, these antecedents of motivation can be positively affected by respectively implementing a favorable organizational culture and team-building activities to enhance cohesion; giving responsibilities and clarifying roles and objectives; communicating on the progress made in project teams.

By carrying out a process study in the hockey team, this study investigated the competence development processes themselves and how they were implemented. It enabled us to identify various features that appeared to make these processes more successful in the hockey team. Competence development processes seemed to be more likely to fulfill their objectives when they are customized to fit individuals’ skill needs; adapted to the schedule; retaining a stable context; carried out in diversified forms. Moreover, by observing how these processes were executed at LHC, this research underlines some key roles in enabling competence development, as shown in figure two. The coaching staff, head coach and team captains appeared to be involved in competence development. This showed especially when investigating their linkages and relationships which are of high importance for competence development processes, in particular in the way they communicate with each other. When drawing the parallel with PBOs, it resonates with the previous findings of human resources research in PBOs which stressed the crucial HR roles of HR specialists, project managers, line managers, project members and their interplay (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011).

If recruitment first appeared to be the alternative to competence development, it stemmed from the observations made at LHC that recruitment is also a way to enhance competence development. By linking the arrival of newcomers and their different set of competence with the interactions between individuals, this study shows how recruitment can favor competence development. In addition, since interactions seemed to be of importance in competence development processes, we highlight the value of cross-organizational and cross-project teams for these processes.
As mentioned earlier, competence development was approached as an activity which competed with performance in a similar way as exploitation and exploration were presented by March (1991) do. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to understand how PBOs could manage the tradeoff between these two vital activities. As this tradeoff was also present in the hockey team, this research enabled to analyze how LHC manages this tradeoff and hence grasp a better understanding of this organizational dilemma. By observing how the tradeoff evolves during an entire season, we bring light on how the balance between competence development and performance is modified by the organization. The main finding was that the balance between these activities requires flexibility and should consequently be adapted to project stages. In addition, it was found that the tradeoff also evolves depending on the level of difficulty of performed tasks and on what is at stake. PBOs therefore can use these findings to try to adapt this tradeoff depending on their project stages and current tasks.

Finally, the data collected at LHC enabled to reach another level of understanding of the tradeoff between immediate performance and competence development. This stemmed from observing when and how both activities were carried out. The main conclusion is that competence development and performance are not only competing objectives but are also intertwined. Because they share a similar antecedent, motivation, competence development and performance can be enhanced simultaneously and are therefore not necessarily competing. In addition, performing implies the achievement of tasks and consequently on-the-job learning and acquisition of experience which we link to competence development. Competence development is then to some extent an inherent activity to performance. Interestingly, this enhancing relationship between competence development and performance also exists in the other direction as competence development impacts on the future performance. This research further refers to this relationship between these activities as a viable solution to avoid the lock-in situation of path dependence since it can enable PBOs to perform while maintaining various available competence options.

**Answering the research question**

Before we start answering we want to remind the readers of our research question that we presented in the first chapter: How do sport organizations manage the tradeoff between immediate performance and sustained performance through competence development?

Through this study we learned that there is no simple answer to this question in terms of a specific ratio that can be applied and success will be plentiful, rather that it needs to constantly be adapted to current circumstances as they might involve differing levels of difficulty, as well as the different project stages. Therefore, flexibility is hence a necessity for balancing these two endeavors. Furthermore, these two activities should not only be seen as competing, but intertwined as well, because they have a common antecedent, motivation. Finally, as competence development can be seen as a hindrance to performance in the present, it will provide an increase in performance for the future and this helps to avoid a path dependent situation where options are diminishing, that might result in lock-in, and this is because competence development increases the available options in the long-term.
Managerial implications and a framework for practitioners

The tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance is complicated and as we explained it requires flexibility as it benefits from being adapted to the project stages and level of difficulty of performed tasks. In order for practitioners to understand how they can refer to our findings on this managerial dilemma, we built a framework that we named: Project stages and the tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance.

![Figure 3A: Project stages and the tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance](image)

Please refer to the following two pages for a detailed explanation of the framework and all its stages, as well as a larger version of the framework for easier viewing.
The preparatory stage is a period where the project members already have been assigned to a project but the latter has not started yet. Therefore, the nature of the project is known and it is time to design and implement competence development processes to prepare for the incoming project and develop for future projects. If project members need to learn on the job and will do so when the project starts, trainings however enable PBOs to develop their project members consciously during this preparatory stage as they design these trainings. This stage is also a time for team building activities in order to create a cohesive team that will work well together. The cohesiveness of the team is a factor that is of high importance as explained in the analysis.

At the early stage of the project, the focus is on performance and experienced project members are given more responsibility to ensure that the project has a successful start. This is based on the fact that it can create a snowballing effect which builds up a positive momentum, since it was one of the observations made at LHC.

During the main stage, the focus can be on both developing competence and immediate project performance. The difficulty of the current tasks serves as a basis for deciding between performance and development. Concretely, this means that the level of responsibility given to developing members (with the purpose to increase their on-the-job learning) can vary in this flexible and situational model.

At the late stage, the conclusion of the project is approaching and deadlines are to be met. Therefore, the focus on immediate performance increases and more responsibility is given to experienced project members.

After project completion and before the project team’s dissolution, project managers and line managers have the important responsibility to review the development and assess the competence of project members. For that matter, project members also play an important role as they can share knowledge within the team as well as with the rest of the organization and provide feedback to line and project managers. More specifically, they can do so by discussing learnings retained from the project and summarizing the knowledge gained. We represent it in a feedback loop that connects to the preparatory stage of the subsequent projects. Visualized at the bottom of the framework are the important factors to implement competence development processes, which are the antecedents of the motivation to develop as outlined in the analysis chapter and are ongoing throughout the project's existence.

While this framework helps in understanding when certain processes can be favored throughout the project stages, we advise practitioners to refer to our framework presented in the analysis as it illustrates the importance of the roles when it comes to designing and implementing these processes.
**Figure 3B: Project stages and the tradeoff between immediate and sustained performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Stage</td>
<td>Competence development</td>
<td>-Assign project members&lt;br&gt;-Training&lt;br&gt;-Team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Stage</td>
<td>Performance, competence development</td>
<td>-Experienced members are given more responsibilities&lt;br&gt;-Balance to be decided according to difficulty of current tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Stage</td>
<td>Immediate performance &amp; competence development</td>
<td>-Experienced members are given more responsibilities&lt;br&gt;-Feedback &amp; evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Stage</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>-Feedback &amp; evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissolution Stage</td>
<td>Project completion</td>
<td>-Retained learning and knowledge gained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Feedback loop
- Evaluation
Further research
From everything that we have learned throughout this research process, we have not only found many answers, but also issues that could benefit from further attention as well. As we discussed earlier in this paper, we saw that variety in competence development processes helped to stimulate the team members motivation to develop, in contrast to that, we also know that routines has its advantages by gaining in efficiency. This therefore becomes a dilemma of choosing between stability and efficiency or variation and stimulation, and currently, it is no easy task to solve, other than through trial and error. Therefore, to better understand how much variation should be included in competence development processes, we recommend an advancement of this study by conducting further research in order to gain more insight into this very interesting dilemma.

Even though performance and competence development compete for scarce resources, they share the antecedent of motivation. Motivation is a key requirement for competence development, but it is also linked to performance (Lawler, 1973; Walker, et al., 1977; Wiley, 1997; Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004). Based on this we believe that by increasing motivation, you can improve both performance and competence development activities. However, while motivation to develop and motivation to perform share some antecedents, it is also probable that differences exist between them as well, and which antecedents influence both types of motivations is something we cannot conclude in this research and it is therefore one of our suggestions for further research.

The very interesting dilemma of exploitation versus exploration is something scholars have discussed for many decades now. We applied this dilemma in the context of competence development in connection with performance and researched it in a setting where we focused on depth, and this has many advantages. However, to understand more about competence development in contrast with performance, we recommend an increase in the number of respondents by comparing processes across different teams. We believe the research would benefit from this as it would create a large pool of data and could work towards achieving a generalization towards populations. With this in mind we recommend researchers to build upon our paper by conducting further research that is more inclusive in regards to data gathering and analysis.
7. References


Electronic sources
