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A Study of the Adjustment Process of International PhD Candidates

Master Thesis in Organization and Management

Study Program: Relational Leadership

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Abstract

During the adjustment process of a doctor of philosophy (PhD) education, it is understood that international PhD candidates are facing more obstacles than host nationalities, due to arriving to a new culture and without having a relational base in the appurtenant country. The research question to be addressed in this study is: How do international PhD candidates experience the adjustment process in their new research environment during the first semester? Also I will bring in the perspectives of what they expected before arrival.

I have proposed a new model; "The Adjustment Process Relation Model", that includes important factors to consider during the adjustment process. The model is based on my own experiences when working at NTNU, Q2S[1] and supported by the literature. Analysis on four international PhD candidates is used to show the applicability of the model. The model can be used to raise the awareness of interaction when working among international employees.

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[1] *Q2S was a Centre of Excellence initiated by The Research Council of Norway, in the period 2003-2012.*

Preface

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Master in Organization and Management at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). The study was conducted in the period September 2012 to January 2014. Academically, the master study was under the responsibility of the Department of Adult Learning and Counseling, Faculty of Social Science and Technology Management, NTNU, and has been supervised by Professor Ragnvald Kvalsund.

Acknowledgements

First of all I will thank my supervisor Professor Ragnvald Kvalsund, who has been a great support during my master study. Without his feedback and support this work would not be possible.

I want to thank my four informants. I am very grateful that you have shared your stories with me and given me a possibility to draw on your experiences.

I will also like to thank my colleagues at NTNU, Centre for Quantifiable Quality of Service in Communication Systems (Q2S)[2], Centre of Excellence (CoE), for being very supportive and encouraging during my master study. Especially, I will thank my colleagues; international PhD candidates, that I pilot-interviewed. In this way I felt more relaxed and confident when doing the main research interviews. It has been a great time working at Q2S and building so many new, interesting relations from all over the world. It has been a very good learning process in many ways for me. I hope our souls will meet again.

I also like to thank my good son Roy who listened to me and gave me courage to go on with my challenging study.

I hereby, dedicate my thesis to all my colleagues at Q2S during the period 2003 – 2012.

Note: All pictures on front page and page three have been granted the use by the people involved.

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[2] *Q2S was a Centre of Excellence initiated by The Research Council of Norway, in the period 2003-2012.*

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Introduction

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is employing and educating researchers from all over the world. When starting a doctor of philosophy (PhD) –study, it is understood that international PhD candidates are facing more obstacles than Norwegians, due to arriving to a new culture and without having a relational base in this country. The purpose of this study is to learn about how international PhD candidates experience the first semester of the PhD study and how they adjust to others during their adjustment process of their study.

Today, little research is conducted on how international PhD candidates experience their adjustment process at Norwegian Universities. They face additional challenges because they must adapt to a new culture alongside starting a demanding PhD-study. Not only is it stressful to move to a new please and a new country, but moving to a totally different country holding different norms and culture without a relational network established seems to be challenging. Understanding this closer we must study the combined phenomenon. I understand that good working environment for international PhD candidates can work as a buffer against stress and loneliness.

Question to be addressed in this study is:

- How do international PhD candidates experience the adjustment process in their new research environment during the first semester? Also I will bring in the perspectives of what they expected before arrival.

I have proposed a new model; "The Adjustment Process Relation Model", that includes important factors to consider in the adjustment process. The model is based on my own experiences when working at NTNU, Q2S[3] and supported by the literature. In this master thesis I will validate the model by doing real interviews and analysing the data. The analysis will show whether the model is good. Related research, which refers to different and interesting factors have been examined. Some suggested solutions to maintain a satisfactory adjustment process is suggested, and thus I show how the model can be used in practice.

The study is written in English for two reasons. Firstly, in translating the recorded interviews from English to Norwegian it is always a potential for wrong interpretations.

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[3] *Q2S was a Centre of Excellence initiated by The Research Council of Norway, in the period 2003-2012.*

Secondly, the information in this thesis may be of interest to non-Norwegian speaking international students and employees.

Before starting chapter one, I present my experiences from working at NTNU, Q2S. In chapter one I present the method I have used for performing this research. In chapter two I present the theory around my proposed model and in chapter three related research is presented. In chapter four the analysis of the performed interviews is given. The discussion is presented in chapter five. In chapter six I present the conclusion. At the end of the thesis relevant work performed before conducting the interviews are attached.

Experiences from Q2S

At Q2S we tried to do our best to give a positive and including welcome to all new employees. For me, during ten years, I welcomed approximately 80 international newcomers. The awareness was to bring together international and national candidates to work together in a common working environment to improve good relations with each other. We believed that when a person feels included and accepted in their working environment, he or she can better put a creative focus into the work. Q2S learned that international candidates wanted and needed both administrative and social support to cover up for belongingness, well-being and learning.

At Q2S the working environment had regularly jointly coffee- and lunch breaks. This was time set aside to chatting and learning about each other`s cultures. The Q2S center also tried to emphasize the importance of learning Norwegian to be readily integrated in the society as a whole. Therefore, it was focus on practicing Norwegian with the international candidates during the breaks.

The Professors in the working environment regularly arranged so-called "Friday colloquiums" which included various presentations of work performed by the local employers. Sometimes, external lecturers were also invited. These gatherings were a popular meeting point, and the employers were happy to be served coffee and cake.

Q2S also arranged trips and gatherings outside of working hours. Examples are trips in the forest for berry- or mushroom picking. Other events were practical, informal courses in skiing and in the summer, orienteering with local map and compass. Other successful events were fishing both in the fjord and in the local river. Among the employees, there were always some experts that could teach the others, and this formed very positive relations. These trips generated many good common stories that the working environment benefited from in a

positive way. In this way, many common topics were assembled for chatting and laughter, and thus it felt easy with spontaneous chatting.

What I understood, was that the employees really appreciated to join gatherings arranged by Q2S, both during the working hours, and in the leisure time. From my opinion, these gatherings affected the working environment positively and presumably also the employers' well-being. They were seeking for a place to belong and thus to learn to know their new colleagues and their new social working environment.

For me, the positive working environment gave very good motivation in my job, and has been the major inspiration to take on an MSc-study in Organization and Management, of which this thesis is the finalizing contribution. Before the regular interviews were conducted, pilot interviews with international PhD colleagues from Q2S were accomplished. These pilot interviews confirmed the experience and feelings that the working environment at Q2S had been a success.

A question which should be asked is whether Q2S was somehow different from other departments at NTNU? Financially Q2S had control over their own resources. It is clear that the management of Q2S used this to give priority to support a variety of low budget activities. I believe, Q2S was successful due to the nice atmosphere we all created feeling inclusion in an exciting project. The centre attracted a lot of international persons, with numbers reached as high as 70%, thus we were a multicultural work environment where most persons saw the need to learn and interact among a variety of cultural differences.

Q2S gathering for fishing at Hopsjøbrygga, Hitra, 2012.

1. Method

Introduction

As mentioned, the purpose of this study is to learn more about how international PhD candidates experience their adjustment process at NTNU. The reason why NTNU was selected as a case for this study is because I work at NTNU as an administrative officer and has a sincere wish to improve the quality of the working environment for both international PhD candidates and their colleagues. Positive impact on the reputation of NTNU as an international university is also good.

The literature references are based on the American Psychological Association style (APA style). The APA style is based on the Harvard style, where in the text the name of the author and year is given, and in the literature list the whole reference is given in alphabetic order. These styles are meant for references in psychology and related fields (http://www.apastyle.org).

In this chapter I will present and justify the research approach in the study. I will discuss the analysis techniques and also put forward the limitations and implications of the research.

Adopting a qualitative approach

This study is conducted according to a qualitative inquiry method within the phenomenological approach. To do qualitative research implies to understand the informants' experienced perspective and everyday life in its' natural content. The purpose is to catch the mutual experience the people hold regarding the phenomenon studied. Phenomenology describes the meaning people put in an experience linked to a certain experience of a phenomenon (Johannessen et al., 2011; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Postholm, 2010).

Qualitative researchers approach their research attitude holding a set of anticipations that guide their research. The chosen method gives a direction for the study and this implies that the researchers' own knowledge and experiences influences the research focus. Qualitative research has developed from the interest in peoples' lives and cultures. Qualitative research implies a close co-operation between the researcher and the informant. Researchers` say that this type of research forms knowledge and understanding in a social interaction, therefore qualitative research is an academic study that is conducted within a constructivist paradigm (Johannessen et al., 2011; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Postholm, 2010). The

constructivist paradigm assumes a relativistic ontology, which means there are seen multiple realities (Lincoln, 2013 p. 27).

Constructivism is a theory, or paradigm, and not the "real" life. A Paradigm is an explanation on how we understand the world and the real life. Paradigms express thoughts on how we can discover and reveal new knowledge. "Within constructivism we understand knowledge as construction of understanding and meaning created in the meeting between people in a social interaction. In constructivism the knowledge is constant in modification and renewal. Therefore the social, cultural and historical setting will be of signification for peoples' apprehension and understanding" (my own translation to English), (Postholm, 2010).

As this study has it's locality in a university the situation chosen will contribute to form the study. This setting gives an inductive approach to the research locality. I will with my own experiences and theories try to understand and create meaning from the data material collected. Thus, research says that the study will not be value-neutral (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Postholm, 2010).

As we look into a social interaction, the interaction will be described. Also the research will illustrate interactions implied for the parties involved. Thus the qualitative research moves towards a descriptive part, as I tried to describe what is happening and what meaning these happenings impose (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). I will, assisted by my experiences, observations and theories, interpret the empirical data in its contextual connection.

Choice of informants

An email request to access email contact lists of PhD candidates was sent to two faculties at NTNU. The choice of faculties was randomly selected. Received email address lists were used to contact informants. First an email with research information was sent to all received address lists, see attachment A. The email gave an introduction to the study, and asked if anyone might be interested to participate and thus respond to the received email. In a few days I had two PhD candidates who were willing to be interviewed, and we set up dates for the initial interviews. The interviews were conducted the following week. For the other two candidates, I had to ask for additional email address lists, and after another week, I had enough candidates. For the third and the fourth candidates, the interviews were conducted the week after.

The requirements for choosing PhD candidates were: international candidates, two male and two female, started the engagement as a PhD candidate from fall 2012, single

persons; not bringing their family with them, not lived in Norway for a long period before starting the PhD-study.

Data collection

The empirical data was collected through in-depth interviews with four participants. The timing of primary data collection was chosen to be in January and early February 2013, assuming that the informants would have particularly emotional experiences at the point in time that their initial experiences would be fresh in mind from the previous fall when they were attempting to adapt to the new academic environment. The informants decided time and location. They were invited to be interviewed in the meeting room in our location, which also was the preferred location for all four participants.

A participant consent form was made beforehand which the candidates read and signed when we met to do the initial interview (Appendix B.) The interviews were recorded on my mobile phone. The same day as the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed into a word processor accordingly. From the transcripts, the important sayings were categorized into a table according to the relevant questions. I did not know any of the participants from beforehand. All interviews took approximately forty five minutes. The informants were not contacted to add extra information retrospectively.

The pilot interviews at Q2S

I conducted the pilot interviews in January 2013 in order to get more interview experience and for the sake of refining the interview guide. From the first interview, some of the questions were changed a little, to make the communication flow more naturally. The questions were formed in open form, like: "*Can you describe*" and "*Can you remember*". This method, seemed to help the informants to remember directly back to the relevant situations in their mind. I also added, when appropriate, extra questions like "*How did you feel?*" and "*How did this feeling affect you?*"

After a few pilot interviews I found that it was better not to stick with a strict ordering of the questions. This method opened for more like a story telling from the candidates. I memorized the questions and did not have to look at the manuscript with questions during the interview. In this way, the setting became more relaxed and we appreciated the atmosphere during the interview. Even though the pilot informants were at the end of their PhD educational period, they remembered quite well from the startup period. These interviews gave positive feedback to me, as they said they really appreciated to be interviewed, and be

invited to talk and reflect upon their startup period, be interviewed and talk and reflect upon their upstarting period.

Participant observation

I introduced myself, said welcome and had a small warming up sentence, like "*How are you doing?*" I could very soon observe whether the informant were happy or in a melancholy state by their body language and the first sentences. All informants were open and talkative, thus I was aware of putting focus on listening and observing. The interviews were rounded off by some concluding remarks, like "*Thank you very much for participating,* and *"How did you experience the interview?"*.

Three of the researchers were really eager to talk a lot about their situation after the interview, in this phase they really felt free to talk more. These talks are not included in the thesis. However, this emphasizes that they really appreciated to receive attention regarding their situation, and that the research on this phenomenon is of importance.

Ethical considerations

When studying people, there are some ethical aspects to consider. One important aspect is to secure confidentiality (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Postholm, 2010). Therefore the names of the informants are not given. Also the names of the belonging Departments are not given. The study intended to take care of people's privacy. The meaning is to have focus on the phenomenon described, and not the persons and Departments. The informants were asked by email to read and eventually comment on the thesis before publishing. Received feedback were agreed upon and corrected. I saw positive consequences for especially two of the informants who experienced that having someone who really listened was a good relief.

Limitations of the study

A major challenge in this study can be that external factors, not related to the working environment, is highly likely to influence the well-being of a PhD candidate. Such factors could be problems and controversies stemming from the candidates social life, possibly also enhanced by personality differences or cultural background. To approach this challenge, I selected by random PhD candidates from different cultural backgrounds and included both genders. This will help me to avoid that the result is too dependent on some of the external factors.

Methodically, I need to emphasize that I cannot generalize the data presented in this study. Only four people from four different Departments were interviewed, and more

interviews from several Departments could give a more objective result. Interviews of several PhD candidates from the same Department, could also give more objective results. Also if interviews of PhD candidates from several universities in Norway were conducted, it could be easier to generalize the results. Anyway, the intention of qualitative studies is to find good examples, new theory or hypothesis from the subjective experiential fields and the phenomenology of the participants (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Postholm, 2010).

Also a limitation of the study is that I did not have place to ask in details how the PhD candidates were offered support. Also I did not ask if they found valuable information on the Internet. However, the PhD candidates probably found information from local websites. By reading websites candidates will find specific information, but I value personal contact with others as the best way to practice and learn to interact in a new cultural environment. This is also confirmed from the interview of candidate B. She told she had read a lot on the web about the new culture, but nevertheless she felt a strong need to receive social and academic support in her local environment. From my view, this confirms the necessity of research regarding the phenomenon in my thesis.

The analyzing process

To structure the data material I used my model "Adjustment Process Relation Model". It was challenging to categorize the data because some of the statements could fit within several of the factors. For me it was important to categorize the four interviews very similarly even it was difficult because the wordings were all different. At the same time, I was also looking from the theme of my questions when categorizing, to ensure a similar categorization of all interviews.

I went through an open coding process, where I identified and labelled phenomena in the various factors from my model. I primarily labelled whole sentences, which I think made the material easier to handle. This was a rather time consuming process, and I had to start over again to ensure I had a correct interpretation and that all interviews were considered similarly.

From the first draft of my model I formulated the interview guide (Appendix C). I grouped the questions into the following sections: the welcome, contact with others, stressors, humor, expectations and future for each of the informants. I intended to categorize the data from the interviews into their related factors in the model. A table including the factors was made to extract and group the relevant wordings to have a better view when interpreting the data. The answers from the interviewees seem to relate close to each other and might be of relevance in several of the factors in the model.

2. Theory

A PhD candidate

A doctorate is an academic degree that qualifies the holder to teach at university level in the specific field of their degree. Doctor of philosophy (PhD) is the highest degree available from an institution of learning. PhD's are awarded in many fields, ranging from political science to physics. The modern PhD was developed in the nineteenth century in Germany where it required the completion of coursework, the performance of original research and the successful defence of a dissertation presenting the results of the research. Today, a PhD is the summit of formal education achieved all around the world (Maslen, 2013).

"Starting out in a new graduate program is a rather daunting and nerve-wracking process for many graduate students", (Gardner, 2007 p. 726). Researchers have identified that international students face particular challenges and have needs that require additional learning awareness and support (Dickinson, 2012). Many students who begin a doctoral program fail to complete it, and understanding doctoral attrition is important to making doctoral education work effectively (Golde, 2005). Life stressors, like personal and cultural adjustment increase academic stress, however, perceived social support seems to have buffering effects on stress symptoms for international students (Misra et al., 2003). Research on postgraduate students in England found that inhibiting forces in adjusting were cultural dissonance and segregated friendship groups, which implied minimum exposure for learning and adjusting to the new cultural environment (Brown & Holloway, 2008). The researchers argued that the University cannot afford to overlook the discomfort felt by the students and suggest the University to realise the benefits of the cross-cultural contact (Brown & Holloway, 2008).

The study of International PhD Candidates' Cross-Cultural Adjustment at the University of Oslo, finds that many international PhD candidates describe their adjustment process as lonely and hardworking (Bergström, 2010). PhD candidates say that struggling with issues related to adjust to a new culture while doing the PhD is difficult and demanding. It seems that the candidates do not get the support they need in order to cope with the stress factors they experience and thus their emotional well-being is impaired. The study found that PhD candidates ask for a better suited support and learning opportunities in their cultural adjustment. The study argues that when important cultural skills are lacking, PhD students have difficulties trying to function effectively at the University. Relevant factors mentioned are communication skills, social encounter and contact with host nationals. The research

suggested that more informal gatherings could have helped against loneliness. The study suggests that adjustment is primarily a learning process. The more the candidates are adjusted the better they perceive the fit in the new environment. Further, factors that reduce uncertainty regarding appropriate behavior will facilitate adjustment (Bergström, 2010).

Cultural adjustment

In this study, and on a general level, cultural adjustment refers to how well a person fits in and thrives in a new cultural environment (Bergström, 2010). As adjustment is defined as a dynamic and interactive process (Anderson, 1994), I see that it means that the adjustment is in constantly movement and a varying interaction holding mutually influential communication. Adjustment from an adjuster's standpoint means responding to the demands the environment is constantly making on them, and these demands can be experienced as obstacles (Anderson, 1994). Adjustment is a dynamic and interactive process that takes place between the person and the environment, and is directed towards achievement of fit between the two (Anderson, 1994). In this study it refers to the fit international PhD candidates experience to achieve in a university environment. The differences in language and culture which are constructed locally in various universities in different countries, communities and academic disciplines can significantly impact students' socialization. Morita found that to become socialized into the various academic disciplines is a complex and dynamic process in ways of understanding the local disciplinary and institutional culture (Morita, 2009).

The organization NTNU - contextualizing the setting

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) hosts about 1800 international students yearly and holds dozens of international student exchange programs and more than 300 cooperative or exchange agreements with 60 universities worldwide (NTNU/edu/facts, 2012).

The vision of NTNU is «Knowledge for a better world», and the goal is to be internationally outstanding. NTNU aims to have an academic environment that ranks among the best in the world. NTNU aims to offer an attractive range of education programs that enriches students' growth as human beings and contribute to the development of democratic and responsible citizens. NTNU aims to have a modern research infrastructure as well as learning and working environment that attract the most talented students and staff (NTNU/edu/strategy, 2013). Research at NTNU is linked to the doctoral education where the doctoral candidate is the most important resource (NTNU/ime/forskning/phd, 2013).

Multicultural organizations - understanding cultures

Our education and research networks are getting more and more global, and NTNU is employing an increasing number of people from all over the world. To be aware of the value of forming new relations and learn to understand each other and to co-operate quickly, is really a competence which should be focused on to further developing the research efficiency of the organization (Spitzberg, 1989; Spurkeland, 2012; Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2005; Williams, 2002).

As our world and organizations like NTNU is getting more multicultural, it is of importance to try to understand how culture works and explain the actual organizational phenomena (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007). Culture is a background structure and also a dynamic phenomenon which constantly change by the behaviour and values of the employees (Schein, 2010). Schein also says that culture creation and management are the essence of leadership, as leaders are influential in shaping the behaviour and values of others. The structure and stability of the culture implies how we are supposed to act and feel in certain situations with others in a given organization, and certain situations (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007; Schein, 2010).

Since culture is a complex phenomenon, a definition of culture is required. I like to present Schein's (Schein, 2010), definition of culture in my study: "shared learning experiences that lead to shared, taken-for-granted basic assumptions held by the members of the group or organization" (Schein, 2010, pp. 21-22). The assumptions that are taken for granted is a reflection of culture and determines much of the group's behavior, rules and norms that are taught to newcomers in a socialization process that is a reflection of culture.

Cultural forces are powerful because they are abstract and operate outside our awareness. Understanding these forces may help to explain many of our frustrating experiences in the organizational life. Over time, when adapting, we will understand ourselves better and be less anxious when encountering the unfamiliar, and we will better understand the groups in where we want to belong. Therefore, Schein says we need to have a much better understanding of the dynamics of the organizational culture (Schein, 2010). Culture is a complex phenomenon on all levels of the organization, even for regular employers, it can be challenging to understand how it works. Therefore, we should put a focus on helping each other in understanding how the multicultural context of our organization forms (Schein, 2010).

In our global world today, it is understood, that the socialization process, to communicate and understand each other, can be challenging (Schein, 2010; Spitzberg, 1989).

In a multicultural organization, it can also be challenging for host nationalities to understand and work together with newcomers in multicultural teams. Over time, when interacting in our multicultural organization, we will learn more from each other and affect new cultural formations (Schein, 2010).

The Adjustment Process Relation Model

The phenomenon of my thesis is the combination of these aspects:

- International PhD candidates' challenges adapting to a new culture alongside starting a demanding PhD-study.
- Also moving to a new place in a new country is known as very stressful, and in addition without having a relational network established.

To try to understand the phenomenon of my thesis, I have created a model which is meant to give an overview of concrete elements of communication within the organization which can be of importance to put a focus on in the adjustment process for international newcomers. The name of my model is "The Adjustment Process Relation Model".

I created the model before I started the analysis of the interviews. When I designed this model, I was heavily inspired from my own empirical setting, as is my own experiences when working for ten years at Q2S. I experienced there are factors that are important to address in the multicultural organization in order to form a good relationship between a newcomer and his colleagues in the socialization process of the working environment.

The Adjustment Process Relation Model gives an overview of important factors which the organization should consider when employing newcomers like international PhD candidates. These factors are Welcoming experience, Belief in forming good relationships, Informal conversation, Social gatherings, Feedback and Humor. It is of significance that the model shows that all factors are connected and related to each other. I will look further into these coherences in my discussion. In the following paragraphs I will explain the model by looking into the chosen factors.

In addition to related theory, the model is meant to be the basic fundament for looking into the questions addressed. It is chosen to try to simplify the complexity of the communication process for both the new PhD and their colleagues during the adjustment process.

Questions to be addressed in this study are:

- How do international PhD candidates experience the adjustment process in their new research environment during the first semester? I will also bring in the perspectives of what they expected before arrival.
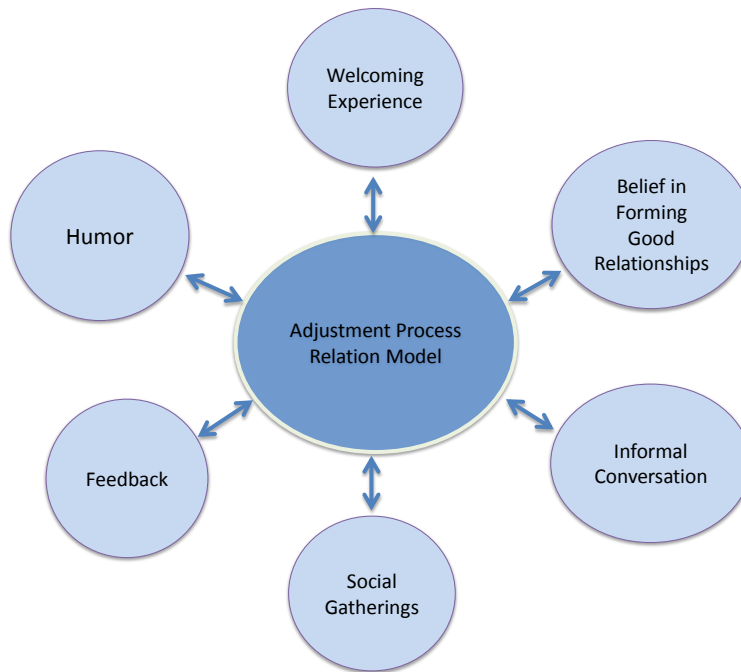

Figure1. The Adjustment Process Relation Model.

When creating this model, I was inspired by the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010), about relational competence. Relational competence is my own translation of the Norwegian word "Relasjonskompetanse". Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2004) says that relational competence is proficiency and ability in forming and maintaining our contact with others in order to interact. In my thesis, this definition will also apply when I am talking about relational competence. My model has inherited some of his in appearance. I chose a similar structure to explicitly capture the question of my thesis as relational competence is a fundament in communication. However, I do not include trust as a specific factor as Spurkeland does because I believe to build trust will apply in all factors in my model. My model resembles a wheel where the order is not important.

Also a reason for this choice, Spurkeland has experience from research and the working life in Norway and part of his work appear to be close to the problems addressed in my study. Kallestad, (2011), refers to the model from Spurkeland in her master thesis. She

found that leaders benefit from his theory and practice is needed to improve on factors within his model of relational competence (Kallestad, 2011).

1. Welcoming experience

The welcoming experience may be most dominant factor in my model. According to Arthur (Arthur, 2006), employees want, first and foremost, to feel welcomed. When showing the newcomers positive interest and active engagement, the basis for forming good relations can already start from the beginning of the arrival - in the adjustment process (Spurkeland, 2010). Showing a positive interest in the newcomers background including their private lives, will help each new employee to feel welcomed and included in the new working environment (Arthur, 2006). We know that when a newcomer enters a group, one of the major activities is to learn and adapt to the culture. This is part of the socialization process to feel included (Schein, 2010, p. 19). I got ideas to create my factor "Welcoming Experience" from the factor "human interest" (my own translation from Norwegian) in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

With reference to my pilot interviews of my international colleagues, I have seen how important it is to show positive interest and help the newcomer to feel relaxed the very first days. This clearly helps them focus on their academic startup. Also research confirms this understanding (Arthur, 2006). Within a good feeling from the very first days, it was easier for the newcomer to ask for help. This observation regarding newcomers is also shared by Schein (Schein, 2011).

There are most probably many questions to ask the first days to becom familiar with the surroundings and feel comfortable. The PhD candidate may also feel a certain amount of awkwardness with respect to their social behavior with others in the very first days. When social and cultural codes are observed, understood, and internalized people will feel comfortable and behave according to the situation. Receiving a positive welcome will help individuals to feel comfortable interacting with others, and it will help to learn about and adapt to the new culture quicker (Schein, 2010).

During my ten years of work at Q2S I tried my best to give a positive welcome to more than one hundred international newcomers at NTNU. When a newcomer arrived, it was of importance to provide a guided walking tour for informal introduction of the local environment. This is a good chance to introduce the newcomer and his colleagues to each other. After introductions like this, my experience is that it is easier to approach each other and talk the next days. Also, after these guided tours, it feels easier and more natural to say

"hello" and "how are you doing" to each other. A guided walking tour shows an attitude of consideration and that the organization cares for others' welfare and progress (Arthur, 2006).

When we meet the newcomer with acceptance and empathy, he or she will feel more comfortable in the situation and react according to their own resources even if it is an unknown and uncomfortable situation (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). To show empathy is to act in a way that you show interest and understanding in the other person's situation and life. To be met with empathy is of importance for the other person to feel understood and accepted (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005, p. 59). To feel safe enough and thus free to be relaxed is of importance to establish comfort in the relation (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Arthur, 2006; Tuckman, 1965).

The first impression of new persons and a place is of very high importance when forming positive and strong relationships (Kvalsund & Meyer, McClure 2005, Johnson & Johnson, 2013). When working at Q2S, I saw that how I met people were of importance when building relations. When we met, a smile and eye contact was a very good start for making connections, and to present our names was for me of great importance. From research, these experiences of mutual positive feedbacks are signs of recognition and shows values that we are friendly and caring in a polite way (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; McClure, 2005: Schein, 2010). These positive expressed values, forms relations with trust (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010). Fruitful interactions in relations do not work without trust (Kvalsund, 2005). Trust is a good feeling generated from a specific relation we all have experienced. It is a basic feeling of peace of mind or attitude which helps us to react and behave in a proper and positive way in a relation (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Building trust in the adjustment process of a relation will give mutual acceptance, respect and positive engagement. Expressing acceptance, support and cooperativeness is of importance to form a relationship with trust (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). The adjustment process should be an orientation phase which gives basic information about the client's situation, actual problem and needs, and to finding good ideas for how to help (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2011). To ensure building trust, people should be aware of the communication techniques, which are among others to listen carefully, show empathy and to care and be present (Kvalsund, 2006).

From my years at Q2S, I have seen that if a person does not feel welcomed in a positive way, he or she will probably feel frustrated, lonely and insecure, and not have an easy way to partake in the socialization process. Schein (2010) says that the socialization process for newcomers can only be successful through learning from behavior from old members of

the group. Further, he says that it is always a learning process going on, even if it is unsystematic because one of the main activities for new members is to try to understand the operating norms and assumptions when entering a new group. This is explained by people always striving towards patterning and integration which is a product of human need for stability, consistency and meaning (Schein, 2010). To ensure group development when cultural values differ, people must already from the first meeting be aware of potential unknown codes which needs to be seen and reflected on to ensure integration and understanding (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

If the adjustment process is experienced as problematic, negative feelings can steal a lot of energy. Negative energy can lead focus away from the main purpose of the stay, which is to consistently follow the aim of a defined study, and thereby fulfilling the dream of becoming a Doctor of Philosophy. From the organization`s point of view, it will also affect the purpose of the engagement in a negative way. The worst output might be that the PhD candidate close his engagement or do not fulfill the demanding study, i.e. take a flight instead of a fight, a not too unfamiliar feature of unwelcoming group environment (Bion,1961). If the PhD candidate is dissatisfied, negative energy may most likely spread, also in the local working environment (Williams, 2002, p. 6). Dissatisfaction with the adjustment process might also affect the reputation of the university in a negative way, and can be difficult to readjust. If the PhD candidate is comfortable and happy in the new environment, all related parties will gain advantage in many ways.

2. Belief in Forming Good Relationships

This factor is important because in complex university cultures, I believe the responsibility of building strong relations sometimes is taken for granted without awareness on important communication techniques. To have the belief in forming good relationships is that the leaders believe it is of importance to develop competence in building strong relations as people learn and develop new knowledge through interaction. From my working experience I understand that this is even of more importance when an international newcomer starts adjusting to a new culture without a relational base from before. Research confirms that a new employee need help to be successfully integrated into the new fellowship (Arthur, 2006; Andersen, 1994). I got ideas to create my factor "Belief in Forming Good Relationships" from the factor "relational competence" in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

"We are all in the business of relating to each other!" (Williams, 2002, p. 111). We should focus positively on forming good relations among our colleagues, because people learn

and develop new resources in relations and through interaction with each other (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Spurkeland, 2010).

For organizations to learn more about the dynamics of human interaction, personal competence should be improved to build knowledge about relational competence (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Kvalsund & Meyer (2005) aims to build more knowledge around the importance of relations as a process for developing resources and their impact on productivity. The researchers point out that factors which is of importance to form good relations often is taken for granted, and therefore the importance of the factors will often not be emphasized in our awareness. This awareness is even of more importance when dealing with complex relational processes (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Skills of importance to develop are to see, discover, acknowledge and to challenge within the processes of interaction (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Leaders should therefore take the responsibility and develop skills around awareness and knowledge on how to build relations and influence group processes (Spurkeland, 2010; Schein, 2010).

We all need social networks and relations to support us in various situations in our life, someone we can contact when we need assistance (Brammer & MacDonalds, 2004). It is said that today individuals and organizations more than ever need to learn the ability of building relational networks and relational support to function optimally (Fyrand, 2005). By social network is meant relations between people and their informal interplay (Fyrand, 2005). What organizations should analyse and learn more about is how those social networks function and what their importance are (Fyrand, 2005).

Regarding social networks in our organizations, we should emphasise the possibilities for each individual to take responsibility and choose and form one´s own social network in order to meet own wants and needs. There is a connection between social network and health, and we can see that many people create friends through the social network at work. Thus, there are obstacles which can limit our choices like cultural circumstances (Fyrand, 2005). Because the social network is of significance regarding preventing life changes and obstacles, the organization should give focus and awareness on forming advantageous and functional networks.

Another reason for building social network at work is that today organizations are structured differently from before, less hierarchic and more multidisciplinary. In this way, the plainness of our relations might be more unexpected in different situations. Also, the fact that we use more email and Internet in communication, support this. Therefore, organizations

should actively focus on adjusting supporting relations so that individuals can better master the working day (Spurkeland, 2012).

Relational theory says that some people have ability and awareness to build relations, other people put less effort in building relations. People that care less in building relations, tend to be less interacting with others in their jobs. People need to learn the game to form quick and good relations where and when it is requested. This active focus is a combination of attitude, proficiency and knowledge. It is about mental awareness of the importance of forming relations when we need it (Spurkeland, 2012).

Organizations should be aware of the need to establish a positive welcoming culture and give responsibility to a few persons to pay extra attention and care for newcomers. What I have understood from my experience at Q2S is that PhD candidates rely heavily on their supervisor, therefore one of the responsible persons should be the supervisor, possibly assisted by the co-supervisor. As a PhD candidate is at the start of three or four challenging years, it is important that good relations are formed quickly. Also, the newcomer will ask for administrative and technical help, therefore one or two administrative personnel should be given a supporting role and responsibility for supporting newcomers.

The newcomer should be supported in getting to know their new co-workers, and the employees should immediately know who this new co-worker is, by name, face and a little bit about previous background. If we like to talk about human capital, we should know that professionalism in the adjustment process has an enormous potential for building strong and constructive group relations. An important potential for building good relations is that the newcomer feels significant and supported from the first day and is informed about others competence. Being able to quickly communicate creatively with the others and will have positive feelings for the organization for a longer time (Spurkeland, 2012).

3. Informal Conversation

By definition informal conversation is awareness of creating a location for free floating and open conversation in order to improve contact and understanding among employees. Informal conversation is also defined as chatting or small talk. From my work experience at Q2S I have seen how important chatting was in establishing mutual cultural understanding and good relations. I got ideas to create my factor "Informal Conversation" from the factors regarding "dialog skills" (my own translation from Norwegian) in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

At Q2S we encouraged to meet in our regular location for chatting in the morning, and also by having lunch breaks together in the same location. From my view, these chats created interesting talks about our daily lives and created mutual understand from our different original cultures, thus our relations became stronger. I will say it was a positive factor for feelings of belongingness and well-being. At Q2S these chatting meetings became part of our local culture for building relations. Research also confirms that the culture of regularly having coffee breaks in the working environment will help people to get to know each other (Hutchins, 2000). From my understanding to create an informal conversation culture should give the PhD candidates a great start and motivation for building further strong relations in their organization.

It seems important to create a location in the working environment where it feels natural to meet and talk, possibly over a cup of tea or coffee, with the aim to improve contact and learn about each other to form good relations and so creating a mutual understanding of the working culture (Schein, 2010). The participants can learn by experiencing the multicultural differences immediately in the room, and such meeting rooms will help to improve communication across cultural boundaries (Schein, 2010).

Obviously, people need to chat when forming relations to be integrated into a workplace culture and feel more whole (Williams, 2002). From Williams, the purpose of chatting, therefore, in the working environment is to improve contact and understanding between colleagues. Especially the chatting is important for newcomers to learn about the new working environment, and how to adapt and be congruent with others (Williams, 2002). Relations that involve dialogues can build strong relational networks, which facilitate creativity and fulfill fantastic dreams and build new culture as well (Schein, 2010, p. 19). Ekman (2004) says that through small talk feelings of uncertainty in relations will decrease and cohesion in the organization will increase. He also says that people will share more knowledge and learn more from each other when having a location for small talk.

What should we small talk around when meeting a newcomer in the coffee-break? From my experience at Q2S I liked to be open and tell a little about my own life and the people and culture in Trondheim. From research I now understand that this is a way of building trust in a relation (Kvalsund, 2006). I am very interested in cultural variations, therefore it was natural to ask general questions about the other persons' life and original culture, and thus real personal interest were shown. Research shows that with the awareness of listening and inquisitiveness, colleagues show an including attitude in the working environment (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2006). In our culture, during talking both parties

should feel that the other persons listen, try to understand and respect each other, independent of culture, age, gender and profession. These positive feelings of equivalence and acceptance are important to form good relations, if not the energy will be used to deal with inner negative feelings and frustration (Kvalsund, 2005; Kvalsund, 2006; Spurkeland, 2004; Spurkeland, 2010).

4. Social Gatherings

Social gatherings are defined as social events which are arranged by the organization with the aim to build mutual understanding and good relations among the co-workers. This factor is of importance because when gathering during informal arrangements with colleagues it seems like the atmosphere is more relaxed and it is easier to chat and have some fun. Social gathering is a place for chatting but also a way of team-building and networking. I learned from Q2S that such gatherings may well build common histories and basis for future friendships, even beyond the PhD-study period. I got some ideas to create my own factor "Social Gatherings" from the factor "visibility" in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

How can people enable to communicate with good understanding when they do not know each other from before? Kvalsund & Meyer (2005) confirm that for people to get to know each other, they are dependent on staying in a relation over time and learn to know who the others are and to learn about themselves. At Q2S we arranged regularly social gatherings in order to improve mutual understanding and having fun together. These gatherings were various trips in the woods, like practicing orientering, picking berries and mushrooms. Also, we arranged social gatherings holding academic content in addition to skiing or even fishing. I saw that Q2S people experienced these gathers to be very popular, and obviously as we shared interesting stories and had fruitful discussions it brought us closer and thus strengthened our relations. Schein (2011) also confirms social gatherings to be an important factor for building strong relations. Research confirms that for newcomers, attending such gatherings can be very good opportunities to get to know the others and to feel included. By this, the organization shows responsibility of social consciousness and helps building good relations among the co-workers (Schein, 2011).

From my view, if the newcomers shall learn about the new culture in the new environment, it is of importance that the supervisors and administrative personnel also attend these gatherings, as they have various supporting roles. Physical presence in these gatherings shows that people are interested in getting to know each other (Hutchins, 2000). People that

take responsibility in forming good relation on behalf of the organization is aligned to Bandura`s (2001) social cognitive learning theory, and shows how human agency and modelling will function. I think, when a PhD candidate shall learn to communicate with their supervisor, the supervisor certainly must be present. The gatherings will build a basis for future research discussions which is the core of the employment for the PhD candidate. Research confirms that such social gatherings, given it is friendly and receptive, makes it slightly easier to build a basis for self-confidence, fellowship and team building (Schein, 2010; 2011).

5. Feedback

Feedback in my model is essential for international PhD candidates because newcomers are dependent on receiving feedback on themselves and their behaviour to know if they are accepted and included in the new culture. Schein (2011, p. 117), defines feedback as "information that helps one reach goals by showing that the current progress is either on or off target". Further, he says to give constructive feedback, means to give specific and concrete feedback according to the target the person is aiming for, and it should be descriptive rather than evaluative. Also, he says that the helper must know from the person what the target is before acting and responding, therefore I mean it is essential to establish trust in the relation from the beginning to communicate clearly. If feedback is to be helpful, the helper should engage in humble inquiry to learn how to help (Schein, 2011). The factor "Feedback" in my model is partly similar with the factor "feedback" in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

From my experiences at Q2S, both in random communication and from individual talks, I saw how important it was to listen carefully and give positive and creative feedback. Sometimes I witnessed feelings that were influenced by frustration and sadness. I learned that the best way of helping was to listen and try to ask questions which helped the employee to consider his own problems more clearly. To be present and by use of coaching techniques, I saw how this gave value to the other person and trust was established. Research confirms that to use listening techniques reflects an attitude that the other person is seen as valuable (Kvalsund, 2005).

Hargie (Hargie, 2011), says that feedback newcomers receive on their person from others in the working environment can be seen as a defining social act of building relationships. Feedback can create both positive and negative effects such as emotions on how good, bad or indifferent he thinks others see him as a person (Hargie, 2011).

The core technique when giving attention is listening (Kvalsund, 2006, p. 7). Kvalsund describes in detail different types of listening, like types of active and passive listening. When listening by showing empathy, providing feedback we confirm that we have understood what the other person says. This gives a better chance to catch correct information and build a good relation of mutual understanding. Listening techniques are strong basis for building trust (Kvalsund, 2006, p. 14).

To create psychological safety for learners is of importance when starting to learn something fundamentally new. To give valid feedback on how the learners are doing when practicing, will help the learner to feel secure and adjust his or her behavior to sooner adapt to the new culture (Schein, 2010).

If newcomers do not have a location and subsequent chance to meet their new colleagues, there will be less opportunities of receiving feedback. Without feedback it is difficult to verify the adjustment to the new working environment. The result can be feelings like loneliness and depressions, which is an obvious obstacle for creative studying and learning.

6. Humor

Humor is important because it is a communicative technique that brings people together and it enables to interact more smoothly and thus to keep relationships working (Norric, 2009). This is an important factor in my model because people might be restricted to use humor as it can hurt feelings in multicultural groups. A challenge can be to find mutual and good humor in specific situations because humor vary in different cultures and even in different organizations and groups. The factor "Humor" in my model is partly similar with the factor "Humor" in the model of Spurkeland (Spurkeland, 2010).

We should be aware that a smile is understandable in all cultures and is a sign of acceptance and thus people might feel free to interact with humor. At Q2S I tried to use humor as a conscious technique to change the focus and direction of the negative thought patterns. Some of them even thanked me later for helping them to change their direction of thinking in a positive way. These confidential talks followed by spreading of humor, I believe formed good relations.

Humor is as a communicative technique that brings about merriment and positive emotions (Hargie, 2011 pp. 374-375; Norrick, 2009). Humor is the world's "social lubricant", and we tend to like people who make us laugh. Humor is an effective approach to establishing

trust and frankness in relations. Therefore, humor as communication technique should be used with sensitivity and care so that it is likely to be appreciated (Williams, 2002, p. 111).

Research identifies a variety of motives for the use of humor and laughter in social relations and communication. When striking up a conversation within a new relationship humor can be used to discover attitudes and values the other person possesses, instead of directly asking their views (Spurkeland, 2012). Humor is genuinely attached to human well-being, optimism and social capacity. This ability and capacity is important for personal self-confidence, courage to live, positive attitude, creativity, mastering communication and for building relations (Spurkeland, 2012).

Humor in communication tends to have positive impact on inner motivation and well-being, and also inner motivation has positive effect on people's performance and sense of belongingness to an organization (Wivested, 2012). Humor is a social phenomenon that brings people together, and is seen as a positive linkage for establishing and keeping relations, and humor will often strengthen the social environment (Robinson, 1991). Humorous communication is positive in interpersonal context and also for greater self-perceived coping efficacy. High humor-oriented people proactive communication humor in a way that help ease interactions (Wanzer et al., 2005).

To include humor as a social skill is relatively novel to many people (Hargie, 2006). Hargie says that humor is an appropriate response in most social situations. When humor is reciprocated during the adjustment process of a relation, it might be a sign of social acceptance and the feeling of being included. It also can be a sign that communication becomes more personal and that the relationship moves forward. Humor can loosen up communication when people do not know each other very well. If a conversation is boring or unpleasant, we can use humor to bring relief into the situation. Humor with colleagues may be a buffer, and a potent way of dissipating unwanted anxiety and stress (Hargie, 2011).

What kind of humor should we use in our working environment? Sense of humor may vary among people, and humor appreciation is also different in various nations, cultures and groups of people. It can be challenging to use humor in international groups, although people in the same society develop their own type of humor over time. The smile is understandable in all cultures. When using humor consciously, working environments can find which kind of humor is catching on. The organization should look upon humor as a communicative and social skill that needs nurturance and cultivation (Hargie, 2011). Humor can also be used to change the direction of a conversation from being boring or too serious, and thus to reduce

levels of anxiety and stress. Sharing humor in stressful situations can be used to lighten up the atmosphere from personal problems (Hargie, 2006).

Summary chapter 2

I have a created a model, "The Adjustment Process Relation Model", which gives an overview of important factors which the organization should consider when employing newcomers like international PhD candidates. These factors are: Welcoming experience, Belief in forming good relationships, Informal conversation, Social gatherings, Feedback and Humor. It is of significance that the model shows that all factors are connected and related to each other. In addition to related theory, the model is meant to be the basic fundament for looking into the question addressed. It is chosen to try to simplify the complexity of the communication process for both the international PhD candidate and their colleagues during the adjustment process. This chapter has shown research related to my model which I will use to analyse the interviews.

3. Related research

When planning my thesis I found that the theory related to the factors in my model, was not enough foundation for looking into the phenomenon addressed. Consequently, it was necessary to look into additional related influences, which will be presented in this chapter.

Helping in organizational relationships

To build an effective helping relationship the first thing to focus on is how personal initiative leads to a relationship (Schein, 2011, pp. 9-10). Someone must articulate the need and bring it to public consciousness. Therefore, we need to understand how this initial contact between the potential helper and the potential client evolves into a relationship that produces help. Also the cultural principle according to play our roles appropriately to a given situation, must be complementary, as to pay attention, listen and respond according to the situation and what is required (Schein, 2011; Kvalsund; 2006).

These cultural dynamics are crucial in the helping situation, and how the helping relationship evolves then depends on the degree to which the helper and the client grants value to each other. These social currencies that are exchanged are attention, acknowledgement, acceptance and help. Help is one of the main ways of expressing caring emotions. This is around the core of building trust in a relationship (Schein, 2011, p. 14).

Kvalsund (2006) says to give attention to the person who needs help, is of importance to understand what information the person is searching, and also to show that we like to help. Kvalsund (2006) says that in all helping relations, it is of importance to learn techniques and skills to give signals that the newcomer is both seen and heard. These signals are of most importance during the initial phase of a relation. When giving attention, both the helper and the other person can clarify what is the core of the situation. To give attention should form a better mutual understanding and communication both on personal-, relational- and cultural level (Kvalsund, 2006).

Social support

A generic label of social relationships is used as an umbrella term for the constructs social support, social networks and social integration. Research identified the need to better understand the processes through which social relationships affect human health and well-being, and social support is one of their identified social processes which may have effect (House et al., 1988). Social support pertains to the emotionally or instrumentally sustaining quality of social relationships. Their research says that literature has not produced a clear definition of social support. Social support and related terms such as social networks and social integration are often used as general terms for a broad range of phenomena, generally dealing with consequences of social relationships for individual health and well-being (House et al., 1988).

Social support refers to the positive, potentially health promoting or stress-buffering aspects of relationships such as instrumental aid, emotional concern, and information (House et al., 1988). Much of the literature on "social networks" and "supports" documents the impact of social integration on stress and health. It is often assumed that people with more relationships or more frequent interactions are healthier because of the network structure and social support of these relationships (House et al., 1988).

Emotions affect our behavior

We are all emotional human beings, with both positive and negative feelings during a day. Our emotions are sources for understanding ourselves, thus we should be aware of our feelings. Our feelings help us to make choices in our daily life. Thus, during conversation and the dialogue, people are also affected by their feelings, both consciously and unconsciously. These feelings affect our thoughts, words and engagement (Kvalsund, 2005). As we all have experienced, positive feelings give us more energy, and these feelings affect us more than we can imagine (Spurkeland, 2012).

Belongingness

Belongingness is an emotional registering of accept, respect and the feeling that the other person is genuinely interested during the dialogue (Bang & Midelfart, 2012; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Human beings are fundamentally motivated by a need to belong, that is, a strong desire to form and maintain interpersonal attachments. Belongingness brings about positive emotions and affects human well-being. Research found that human beings have a pervasive drive to establish a minimum of positive, strong and stable interpersonal relationships. Research says that the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental and extremely pervasive motivation for individuals (Baumeister & Leary, 1995 p. 497). The fundamental interpersonal motive for belongingness appears to have strong effects on our thoughts and emotions. Lack of attachment might affect peoples' health and well-being in a negative way (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Fear of being rejected

The fear of being rejected by others is a central theme during interaction and communication (Kvalsund, 2005, p. 56). From his research, Kvalsund experienced that many people told they are afraid of being rejected when forming new relations. Because of this fear, people can behave in different ways with the intention to protect oneself from being rejected, like increase in the physical distance to specific people like withdraw from communication or simply rejecting others. The fear of being rejected is often related to being different from the others and the feeling of not being included in the social environment (Kvalsund, 2005).

Research shows that feeling of social exclusion causes undesirable behavior reactions, like poor intellectual or academic performance. These people do have interest in forming new relations, but might be, due to previous experiences, distrustful of others. Rather than taking the first step, they tend to wait until they see signs of promise like welcoming and friendly appearances from others (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Happiness

In this study about happiness, happiness is conceived as "the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life favorably" (Veenhoven, 1990). Such happiness can also be called life-satisfaction, which portrays how well a person likes the life he leads. Sources to evaluate ones' life can be how well one feels generally, and how favorable one compare own success with others'. Happiness is about how one self-classify affective experience and about to which degree a person perceives his aspirations to be met, or comparison with earlier experienced situations and living conditions.

Happiness in the sense of life-satisfaction depends on standards of comparison, and also on the gratification of innate bio-psychological needs. These needs do not adjust to circumstances, but mark the limits of human adaptability. The better these needs are gratified the better we feel (Veenhoven, 1990).

Happiness is also used to denote subjective well-being in general (Shmotkin, 2005). Subjective well-being is in this content defined as one's image of actual or potential threats to one's life or integrity. Subjective well-being refers to evaluations that people make about their lives. This conceptualization emphasizes the process, rather than the outcome of pursuing happiness (Shmotkin, 2005).

Loneliness

The theoretical perspective on loneliness in this study is based on the social needs' approach. The psychological perspective from this approach emphasizes the unmet social needs that are theorized to underlie the experience of loneliness. The social needs' approach is seen as a direct relationship between subjective feelings of loneliness and objective measures of social deficits such as social network variables expressed as numbers and frequency of social contacts (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989).

In (Weiss, 1973) it is claimed that loneliness appears always to be a response to absence of some particular type of relationships. It may be a response to the absence of meaningful friendships, collegial relationships or other linkages to a coherent community. Weiss characterizes "the loneliness of emotional isolation" as a form of loneliness that appears in the absence of a close emotional attachment, and "loneliness of social isolation" as absence of an engaging social network (Weiss, 1973 pp. 17-19).

Social support perspectives distinguish between 'emotional loneliness' and 'social loneliness'. Emotional loneliness is characterized by feelings of anxiety resulting from absence of a network of social relationships wherein an individual ideally should have felt part of an interrelated group sharing similar interests and activities (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989 p. 95). Social loneliness is assumed to characterize individuals who have recently entered a new social environment looking for establishing a new social network. Generally speaking, times in life when individuals need to establish new social networks are considered a potential factor for loneliness. The subjective perceived quality of interpersonal relationships depends on the specific interpersonal behaviors and skills exhibited by the relationship partners, and individual perceptions and evaluations (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989).

Self-efficacy and motivation

To understand more around communication, I will include Social Cognitive Theory which explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns. Human behavior is explained in a model in which personal factors and environmental influences all interact. Self-Efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory is the most important pre-requisite for behavior change (Bandura, 1989). Perceived Self-efficacy is defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994 p. 71). Self-efficacy is about the confidence a person feels about performing a particular activity and how important the person think self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989).

Bandura's theory focusses on self-processes and self-generated activities that function as important determinants of motivation and action in the self-referent phenomena. It says that a human characteristic is to exercise control over one's own thought processes, motivation and action. Judgments and actions are partly self-determined, and people can effect changes in themselves and their situations through their own efforts (Bandura 1993).

Summary related research

Both in my analysis, discussion and conclusion, I will, in addition to theory from chapter 2, draw from the theory in this chapter. During social interaction, we are affected by our feelings, both negative and positive, which helps us to make choices in our daily life. Elements like the want to help others, what is social support and aspects regarding our emotions like belongingness, fear of being rejected, happiness, loneliness and motivation are touched upon. Hopefully theory from this chapter will help to explain why people feel and behave in certain ways in various situations.

4. Analysis

In this section, I provide the results of the interviews. Four people from two genders, with ages between 27 and 34, coming from Italy, Iran and Spain were interviewed. Of significance is that they work in four different Departments and locations in the organization. The information is categorized by the aforementioned factors in Figure 1. Then, I provide a summary of findings and tendencies from the interviews.

I will point to the fact that the reader will notice that there are quite a number of recurrences and/or repetitions in the answers from each single interviewee. This is 'natural' because the informants emphasize particular details from his/her situation. As a result, this will probably colour the answers of several of categories of the questions, as the interviewees tend to give the same answer to different questions.

INFORMANT-A

Welcoming experience

From the first welcoming experiences Informant-A (Candidate-A) told that he greeted the others with a handshake, and at the same time presented himself the first day. Candidate-A said disappointed that he had a "*mandatory*" welcome. I understood he had expected and appreciated a more including welcome, and thus he could have felt accepted and more comfortable when starting up the socialization process. As I understand, a somehow scarce welcome, might also give an understanding on why Candidate-A expressed frustration around the adjustment process. Research confirms that a good welcome is important when forming new relations (Arthur, 2006; Schein, 2010; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Kvalsund, 2006).

Candidate-A said: *"It is not easy to arrive here, I do not have the information about where to do everything, here, I feel like a child because I need help from everybody".* The first weeks were quite stressful for him because of the challenges in adapting to the new culture and especially lack of wanted administrative and social support. Relevant theory says that international candidates face particular challenges and need support which seems to have buffering effects on stress (Gardner, 2007; Dickinson, 2012; Misra et al., 2003). Also, he said he was greatly thankful for the support and opportunity given. From my interpretation this is a positive feedback addressed to his colleagues, as a sign of recognition with the intention to build trust in relations within his local working environment. Feedback like recognition is a way of building trust in relations (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). This might also be a sign that he

wanted to feel included and belonged, as the need to belong is a strong desire to form attachments (Baumeister & Leary, 1995 p. 497). The frustration can be explained by the need for support in the initial stage when adjusting and as international students require academic support as a buffer against stress (Brown & Holloway, 2008).

Indeed he shared several ideas about how the support from NTNU could reduce these challenges. Especially it was difficult to know how to search and find the relevant courses on the Internet, as he could only search from title of courses. His supervisor had helped him looking for courses, but at that moment he was still not sure if he had chosen the courses which were best for him. Probably, the core of the need in this helping situation was not articulated and understood clearly. Reasons might be cultural uncertainty and thus misunderstandings in communication (Schein, 2011). Also feelings of frustration and lack of trust might have affected the dialog in a negative way. Emotions affect our behaviour in communication with others (Kvalsund, 2006).

Belief in forming good relationships

When interviewed, Candidate-A was still waiting to hold a personal presentation talk in his Department. Such a presentation would give the candidate the opportunity to present himself and comfortably start building his social networks. We all need social networks to support us in various situations (Arthur, 2006; Fyrand, 2005; Brammer & McDonalds, 2004).

When I asked Candidate-A how he contacted his supervisor, he said: *"I contact my supervisor by email, I don't knock on his door, well I can but…"*. From my interpretation the candidate feels uncertain in the new culture on how to behave because enough trust is not establish in the relationship with his supervisor. Relations do not work without trust (Kvalsund, 2006).

Candidate-A also said: *"No one contacted me, everybody is busy. Therefore it is difficult to approach, I have tried but everybody is busy"*. Also from this utterance, I will say that the candidate is uncertain on how to behave, he don't hold enough trust in the relation and thus lack of self-confidence on how to behave. Lack of confidence might affect motivation and thus action to solve events that affect their lives (Bandura 1993; 1994). I believe he wanted to build stronger relations to socialize and feel included with the aim to learn from others. To socialize means to learn a new culture from others (Schein, 2010). To build stronger relations is of importance in the initial phase of relations to establish trust for improving communication and understanding (Kvalsund, 2006).

During the interview, when we were talking about how he met new people at NTNU, he said that he never felt stressed by his supervisor and he really appreciate that Norwegians are polite and that they did not try to disturb you. However he express Norwegian behaviour were so correct that he felt cold. Before he came, he thought the biggest challenge would be the weather, but for him the worst thing was the distance between people. He emphasized that here it is very difficult to approach and to be close and make friends. The candidate obviously encounters unfamiliar situations from his origin culture as he expresses feelings of disappointment and frustration. Over time, when socializing, we will feel less insecure on how interaction and communication between people works (Schein, 2011). As culture is a complex phenomenon, it can be challenging to understand how interaction works (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010, Schein, 2011).

Candidate-A sighed and continued in frustration: "*I will try to go on, if I have to quit, I will do it. Every week I ask myself: am I going to support this? Every day is a challenge*". He was concerned that even if he had troubles, he did not know who to contact. The candidate expresses feelings of frustration and loneliness and this is probably a sign of stress in the initial stage of the academic adjustment. Reserach confirms that to adjust to a new culture besides doing the PhD can be difficult and demanding (Bergström, 2010; Brown & Holloway, 2008). It's obvious that the PhD candidate has challenges and has needs that require additional learning awareness and support. Research confirms that international students need additional support (Dickinson, 2012; Misra et al., 2003).

Informal chatting

Regarding someone to chat with, Candidate-A expressed sadly that it was difficult to approach and form relations with his colleagues. He said: "*I have tried every day, but colleagues are so busy, I meet loneliness everyday*". As the candidate expresses feelings of loneliness, it might be a sign of unmet social needs, such as absence of collegial relationship and other social networks. Research confirms that lack of social needs might be reasons for feelings of loneliness (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989; Weiss, 1973).

When I asked how the others contacted him, he said "*No one contacted me, everybody is busy*". He expressed that he wanted to feel comfortable and chat with his colleagues, and he wanted to get to know the others and to associate with his colleagues. I believe the candidate is expressing his need to belong to a group, as people are fundamentally motivated by the need to belong as it appears to have strong effects on our thoughts and emotions. As the candidate is feeling lonely, he is now searching to feeling accepted in order to build

interpersonal attachments, which has positive effects on human well-being (Bang & Midelfart, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Candidate-A does not have regular lunch breaks and coffee breaks with the colleagues in his Department. Clearly, the candidate is missing such a location. Due to lack of locations for lunch and coffee breaks, the candidate does not have an easy way to partake and learn from old members in the socialization process. To have a location to meet and learn the culture from old members is of importance in the socialization process (Schein, 2010). There are unknown cultural codes which need to be seen and reflected on in the group to ensure integration and understanding, and people need to chat when forming relations to be integrated (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Social gathering

Candidate-A said with frustration, that he from the beginning did not know about the mandatory course for new PhD candidates, and that nobody included him in a list for attending. He wanted to attend this course. The frustration from the feeling is expressed by his saying: "*I feel I arrived to a limbo; I waited two months…*". I suggest the candidate is frustrated because he did not feel included and accepted in the group because he was not invited for this possibility to form new relational networks. Social gatherings are events arranged in organizations with the aim to build good relations (Schein, 2010). I suggest he wanted to attend also with the purpose to show people that he was interested in getting to know the others. We all need social networks to support us in life (Brammer & McDonalds; Fyrand, 2005; Hutchins, 2000).

Candidate-A described his most important challenge as "loneliness". Candidate-A said: "*Loneliness, the feeling is very strong", before I came, I thought the biggest challenge would be the weather, but it was not. The worst thing is the distance between people, there is a huge difference in the culture; difficult to approach and to be close, to make friends, I have tried every day, my colleagues are so busy. I meet loneliness every day."* This frustrating utterance I will say is a sign of unmet social needs. The social needs' approach is seen as a direct relationship between subjective feelings of loneliness and deficits of social contacts (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989).

Feedback

Candidate-A was missing locations to meet and chat with his colleagues, also he did not experience to hold a personal presentation talk where he probably could have received

feedback. When not experiencing to have satisfactory locations to meet ones colleagues, there will be less opportunity of receiving constructive feedback and the result can be feelings like loneliness which is an obvious obstacle for learning (Folkman & Dalton, 1996; Folkman, 2006). When I asked him how others contacted him during the day, he said: *"No one contacted me, it is difficult to approach, I have tried but everybody is busy"*. Understood is that one reason he did not feel well adjusted to the working environment was lack of good relations and associated feedback. Feedback is a defining act and communicative response on oneself in order to build relations (Hargie, 2011). I presume Candiate A is experiencing challenges in adjusting to the new culture because of little feedback. To give feedback will help learners to feel secure and adjust sooner to the new culture (Schein 2010).

Humor

Candidate-A did not experience humor in his working environment. He said: *"It is cold, like a frozen atmosphere, I assume it is the culture"*. Candidate-A said it would be nice to do something positive and fun together with his colleagues, so that he could know he belonged to a group and perform better. It is obviously that the candidate is missing to experience humor and positive interaction with others in his adjustment process. Absence of humor can partly explain his negative feelings as humor tend to have positive impact on inner motivation and well-being, and inner motivation has impact on belongingness to an organization and performance (Wivested, 2012).

INFORMANT-B

Welcoming experience

The very first day Informant-B (Candidate-B) came to the University, her supervisor was in Oslo. Therefore, another PhD candidate met her and gave her the office key and access card. One of the administrative staff gave her some information. "*Even it was not her responsibility*, *yes, it was good*", she said in not a very enthusiastic way. I understand that she had hoped for a more positive and including welcome from new colleagues, so that she could feel good in starting her socialization process. People want to feel welcomed and a few persons should have the responsibility to care for newcomers (Arthur, 2006). To feel welcome will help individuals to comfortable interacting with others (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005. It will help to learn and adapt to the new culture quicker (Schein, 2010). Also, I presume she did not feel belonged and very good because she was welcomed by a person saying it was not her

responsibility. Belongingness is a feeling of accept and people are fundamentally motivated by the need to belong (Bang & Midelfart, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Candidate-B did not experience to have a guided walking tour of her local environment. When I asked B how her Department introduced her to new colleagues, she said that her supervisor tried to introduce her on their way in the corridor to some specific persons who were important for her to know. They greeted by handshake, and the supervisor had a short introduction about her to them. The others said their name and what they were doing. "*That's it*" she said, "*it was good just to know them.*" I understand she felt a little sad as her welcome was apparently not planned because she was introduced to relevant colleagues they randomly met (Aubert & Bakke, 2008). She had expected to have a meeting day so she could get to know people face to face, at least for one or two hours with discussion to feel well to partake in the socialization process. To show a positive interest and meet the newcomer with acceptance will help the newcomer to feel good in a new situation (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005, Schein, 2011). From the very first meetings, Candidate-B probably felt frustrated and insecure on how to behave in the group, this can mean lack of trust in relations from the very first beginning. Meetings showing recognition from the beginning is essential to build trust in relations (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010).

Belief in forming good relationships

When I asked B if she was invited to hold a personal presentation talk in her Department, she said with complaint that they do not have an orientation day for meeting new people. I believe she wanted to present herself and her background, so that others could approach her more easily. A new employee needs help to be successfully integrated into the new fellowship (Arthur, 2006). Sadly, she concluded: *"I didn't have any kind of orientation day, we do not have an orientation day for meeting new people"*. Further she suggested that if they had a presentation, maybe she could find persons in the same situation as her when she arrived. She said melancholically: "*I was alone in my office for one month and I could not find any friends in my Department, it was quiet, quiet.*" The candidate apparently felt disappointed because she did not feel included and accepted, as human beings are fundamentally motivated by a need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Regarding how people met each other, Candidate-B said that colleagues in her Department did not have regular greetings during the day with each other and that colleagues were not very much into communication with each other. Understood is that Candidate-B

does not feel seen and included in her environment as techniques when forming relations holding good quality seems to be absence. Positive interest and signs of recognition shows that we care for the newcomer (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; McClure, 2005; Schein, 2010). She also told that their doors were closed, and continued: *"When I go to my office, I cannot see anybody"*, she said with nervous laughter. She did obviously not feel good, but she said that she could not change people. I seems like Candidate-B gave up taking initiative to get to know the others in her Department. Negative experiences and feelings might lead to fear of being rejected and thus withdraw from communication or waiting for others to approach (Baumeister et al., 2007; Kvalsund, 2005). Research confirms that negative feelings seem to be related to emotional and social loneliness (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989).

Candidate-B meant it was not a strong connection or something like a friendship in the Department. She expressed that she wanted to have active dialogue with her colleagues, and she wanted to get to know the others and to associate with her colleagues. I understand Candidate-B is not feeling good because she had not managed to form good relations. As seen from the social needs' approach there is a direct relationship between subjective feelings of loneliness and deficits of social contacts (Marangoni and Ickes, 1989).

Informal chatting

The situation for the PhD candidate was that she found no regular arrangements for experiencing physical presence among others in her local Department. Candidate-B told clearly that she does not have colleagues nearby to have coffee breaks and lunch breaks with. Obviously, the candidate is very disappointed and not feeling good regarding the socialization process. To get to know each other and to form good relations for common understanding, it is of importance to create a location where it feels natural to meet and talk (Kvalsund, 2005; Schein, 2010).

Candidate-B sometimes goes to another building for lunch; a cafeteria where other PhD students from the same country meet. At other times she tried to find new places for lunch or had lunch alone in her office. I understand the candidate was satisfied by having this opportunity for gathering, although she even more wanted to gather with her colleagues in her belonging group to feel included. The feeling of belongingness is a motivating factor and human beings have a fundamentally need to belong in relations (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). When mostly gathering with native students and PhD candidates, I will say the adjustment process will slow down due to fewer opportunities to learning the new social codes. Research

argues that the adjustment process will slow down when lack of opportunities for learning (Schein, 2011).

When I asked her how her new colleagues contacted her, she said with nervous laughter that it was no activation or maybe we just say "hi". When I asked if they smile at each other, she said "*depends on the people, some of them smile and some of them not*". She said that she greets people in her Department, but it is not easy when they do not know each other. She told me she had tried to initiate conversation, but she stopped because of little feedback. Instead she tries to find new people other places who like to share information with each other. As the candidate do not feel very well integrated, her feelings affect her motivation to get to know the others. Obviously, the candidate lost motivation in forming her social networks in her belonging Department. If not well integrated from the beginning, negative feelings and behaviour will affect the socialization process negatively (Kvalsund, 2005; Spurkeland, 2012; Fyrand, 2005; Bandura, 1993).

Candidate-B said: *"It is not likely that we communicate in my Department, maybe once a week only for a few minutes of talking in the corridor"*. In contrast, she told me with delight about her previous stay abroad, where she easily met new friends and never felt lonely. Obviously, she had experience in encountering different working cultures. I presume candidate B felt sad and less included because she had nobody to chat with. People need to chat when forming relations to feel more whole (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2006; Williams, 2002).

Social gathering

Candidate-B did not experience any arranged social gatherings from the Department. As said in previous paragraph, to get to know each other and to form good relations, it is of importance to have gatherings to meet to chat to feel included (Kvalsund, 2005; Schein, 2010). She was missing to have somebody to plan social activities with. Candidate-B said: "*I felt lonely, it is quite challenging. I had a lot of questions, but nobody was here to answer, I had to find out by myself, it is challenging*". Candidate-B is feeling lonely because she likes to form new relations but cannot find social events in her local environment to gather with other. Organizations should arrange locations for chatting, socializing and building strong relations (Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011).

When I asked her how she feels she can contact her colleagues, she said she has never done that. She said: "*I think it is hard to be socialized in the Department with people, it is not very easy and this is the problem.*" From my interpretation the candidate feels uncertain in the

new culture on how to behave because enough trust is not establish in the relationship with her colleagues. Fruitful relations do not work without trust (Kvalsund, 2006). She told that to fill her social needs she contact people from her home country and share spare time with them. She continued melancholy: "*Here is not a very attractive place where you meet a lot of people. I have decided to continue, so to reach my goal, I have to face the challenges.*" Obviously, Candidate-B does not feel well integrated in the new culture. Research confirms that newcomers will benefit from gatherings to get to know the others, and is seen as an important factor for socializing (Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011).

Feedback

She said: "*I can honestly tell you that when I come to my office every day, about seven hours of working, I just say hello in the corridor, we do not communicate much in my Department. I have experienced just maybe once a week like two-three minutes of talking with others.* It is obviously that the candidate is feeling melancholy because she receives little feedback as she experiences little communication among colleagues. Without a location to meet the others, there will be few opportunities for feedback (Folkman & Dalton, 1996; Folkman, 2006). Constructive feedback will help the newcomer to feel secure (Schein, 2010).

Humor

Candidate-B concluded and expressed negative emotions regarding humor in one sentence. She said: "*Little humor in my Department*". It is understood that she missed humor in her working place to feel better, as appropriate humor brings positive emotions in relations and has positive impact on motivation and well-being (Wivestad, 2012).

INFORMANT-C

Welcoming experience

When Informant-C (Candidate-C) came to NTNU the first working day, his supervisor introduced him to important supporters. He enthusiastically told that he was greeted with handshake by his new colleagues and they presented themselves to each other. "*I mostly introduced myself personally*", he said. Candidate-C said that they smiled, and it made him happy, and because of that it was easier for him to approach others. Happily, he said: "*the fact that they always smile and are always kind helps a lot*". I understand that candidate C felt happy and comfortable because he experienced a positive welcome. From his new colleagues he was given attention thus he felt included and accepted and could positively start his

socialization process. Research confirms this understanding (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2005; Schein, 2010).

From the first meetings his colleagues told him what they could help him with if he had any problems. He immediately knew where to go if he had questions concerning administrative issues. The secretary was an important supporter to him and helped him a lot with administration and gave him directions. He said: *"Personally, I think it is important to know it quite quickly, so you do not loose time"*. Administrative and social support as clearly offered here, I will say brings about positive emotions for the candidate. As understood, he felt good because support is required for international candidates in the upstarting period and might have buffering effects on stress symptoms (Brown & Holloway, 2008; Bergström, 2010; Dickinson, 2012; Gardner, 2007, Golde, 2005; Misra et al, 2003). Social support might have positive effects on social integration and well-being (House et al., 1987; Kvalsund, 2005). Also the fact that the organization initialize the need and offer help will build trust and comfort in the relation (Schein, 2011).

Belief in forming good relationships

Candidate-C said: *"my supervisor is very friendly and it is very easy to talk with him"*. He also said that it helps a lot that the administrative people always smile and are always willing to help him. Colleagues actively took contact with him, and asked "how are you" and "what do you do". The others also told about themselves and it was definitely two-ways communication, he said. This was good, he emphasized, and therefore, he said, he felt they were friends already after a few weeks. Candidate C express positive feelings and I understand this is because the organization holds awareness and skills in forming good relations (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010).

Candidate C is glad because he made new friends in his working environment, and research says there is a connection between social networks and well-being, and many people create friends through social networks at work (Fyrand, 2005). Most probably people will learn and develop new resources in relation and interaction with each other (Brammer & McDonalds, 2004; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). I will say that the organization has established focus and skills on the importance of building good relations (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010).

Candidate-C pointed out that he is very happy because the Department has the culture of organizing a presentation in the lunch room when a newcomer arrives. *"So then everybody knows who I am, this is quite important I will say, because everybody will see you and know*

you afterwards, this is an easy way to make yourself known." Also research confirms these effects on wellbeing (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2009)

Candidate-C said: *"Every time I talk to my supervisor, there is something new, he is very enthusiastic and this gives me a lot of motivation.* I will say the candidate is glad and motivated because the leader has awareness and skills on building comfort and motivation in the relation, which research confirms is required from the leader (Fyrand, 2005; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010). An argument is also because it seems like appropriate support is given from the leader, as is needed for newcomers in an organization (Kvalsund, 2005; Schein, 2011; House et al., 1988).

Candidate-C said he experienced the adjustment process easier than he expected. This, he mean was due to his supervisor who was on the same level as him when talking. He said "*he is like talking to a friend, very easy*". Candidate-C expected to find more detachment between Professors, administrative personnel and PhD candidates. "*But there is nothing like that, I find it more easy to talk, I like it"* he said with an enthusiastic voice. The supervisor has apparently paid attention, listened and responded according to various situations in the initial phase of the relations. Thus it seems like trust and comfort is established in the relation (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2011).

Informal chatting

A group of PhD candidates and postdocs at the Department has self-arranged lunch in the cafeteria. He says that he meets new people during the lunch breaks and coffee breaks. He said: "*We never see Professors and administrative people during the lunch.*" It seems like the candidate is comfortable with building international relations in the lunch, and he is apparently happy because he feels he belongs to a group where the members have similar interests like himself. An argument is also that research says, belongingness is a feeling of accept and affects human well-being positively (Bang & Midelfart, 2012; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Candidate-C likes to tell me about how he experience the chatting with Norwegians: "*When I talk to them they talk a lot, but it is not so common that they come and knock on your door to start a conversation, so it is easier to relate to international candidates rather than Norwegian candidates".* He feels comfortable by communicating more with international colleagues. I will say that due to cultural uncertainty, the candidate behave in a safe way by not exposing himself. A reason why he probably feels comfortable by communicating more with international colleagues might be that he has not learned and adapted satisfactory enough

about the local social codes, and for him it seems to be challenging to understand how the communication works. Research says that before people learn the new social codes, they might behave restricted on themselves (Schein, 2011).

Social gathering

Candidate-C had attended a meeting for new PhD candidates, arranged by NTNU. He had also attended an arranged Christmas dinner at the Faculty. So far, the Department had not arranged any gatherings. One exception is that the Department arranges cage-ball (indoor football) gatherings every Friday afternoon. "*This is great*" he said, and "T*o play with the supervisor and the Professors and having fun together*". I understand he feels good because he can join local arrangements where good relations will be built among his co-workers. Schein (2010) says arranging social events is an important factor for building good relations among co-workers.

The local group of PhD candidates arranges regularly gatherings on Fridays. When I asked him what this group means to him, he said that talking with other people is good for interacting, get help, rest and relax from research. He said: "*It was easy for me to build new friendships because it was many international candidates here*." The candidate is feeling good and happy because he has several social networks to feel included in and to be socialized. Within social networks people will build fellowship and a basis for self-confidence (Brammer & McDonalds, 2005; Fyrand, 2005).

Feedback

I will say a reason the candidate is feeling good is that he receives feedback from his local environments (Hargie, 2011). The candidate said: "*What helps a lot is every time I talk with somebody, even somebody I do not know, they smile, that is great, it makes me happy, and with smile it is much easier to talk for me*". The positive feedbacks the first days as they greeted by handshake and smiled, are signs of good values and recognition which builds trust (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Spurkeland 2004; 2012).

Candidate-C was eager to tell about his relationship with his supervisor: "*Every time I talk to my supervisor he gives me new ideas on my projects, he is very enthusiastic and this gives me a lot of motivation.* From my interpretation reasons why the candidate is feeling safe and comfortable is because of the constructive feedback from his supervisor. To give valid feedback will create psychological safety for learners and thus the chance of adapting sooner to the new culture is good (Schein, 2011).

Humor

Candidate-C told that there was a lot of laughing during the working hours. The place they laughed most, were in the lunch break. From Candidate-C, my research shows that humor is the world's "social lubricant" (Williams, 2002). Humor in this situation shows an example of social phenomenon bringing people together, and will often strengthen the social environment (Norrick, 2009; Robinson, 1991). He also told he had humor with his supervisor: *"With my supervisor we laugh a lot after the serious part"*. I guess his supervisor proactive use humor in order to feel better and to help to ease the interaction in a new relation. Humor as communicative technique will help to ease interactions (Norrick, 2009; Wanzer et al., 2005).

INFORMANT-D

Welcoming experience

When Informant-D (Candidate-D) arrived her supervisor had invited her directly for dinner in her private home, together with the co-supervisor. Candidate-D said: *"My supervisor helped me a lot and she welcomed me very warmly and very friendly. I was really lucky! She is very down to earth and very supportive, that is really something to be grateful for."* I will say that candidate D is met with empathy and extraordinary good welcome, and thus she feels very happy, accepted and safe in her new relations. To be met with empathy for newcomers will build trust in relations (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2005; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010; Spurkeland, 2010; Williams, 2002).

The first day in the office, her supervisor asked another PhD to give her a guided tour around in the Department, and took her for lunch where she met the other PhD candidates. Candidate-D told enthusiastically that they greeted each other with handshakes and presented themselves. After lunch the first day, her supervisor took her from door to door to meet the other professors. When she presented herself they talked about her research interests. Also in the working environment as a whole candidate D experienced to meet trust in helping relations. Therefore, she can start her socialization process with positive engagement. To build trust during the adjustment process of a promising relation is of importance (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2005; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010; Spurkeland, 2010; Williams, 2002).

Her supervisor informed her about many practical issues. She met the administrative personnel the first day, who she described as very friendly. She said: *"Most of them knew me*

from before from emails, so when we met in person they knew who I am and where I come from. It was amazing, it was very wonderful and my relationship was never like this before." As for candidate C, administrative and social support was clearly offered, and it brings about positive emotions for the candidate and might have positive effects on social integration and well-being (House et al., 1988; Kvalsund, 2005).

Candidate-D said that this was the best experience she had ever had in her working environment. She never had felt such a warm and helpful environment. When she asked for something, she always received good responses. She said: *"I felt like being a member of this family, it was very nice"*. Candidate D expresses positive emotions and happiness which research confirms will have positive affect on motivation and engagement in the upstarting period (Kvalsund, 2005; Spurkeland, 2012). The positive feelings of belongingness also affect her motivation for socializing and forming new relations, as researchers found to be of importance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bandura, 1989). From research I will say Candidate D felt happy as she classifies her aspirations and expectations to be met (Veenhoven, 1990).

Belief in forming good relationships

Candidate-D described in a very positive way that she presented herself in a meeting, and received very good feedback after the presentation. She felt that her colleagues were nice and friendly, and very positive and welcoming to her. As research confirms, for newcomers positive emotions are often a result of awareness and skills expressed from the leaders and colleagues (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2006; Schein, 2010).

Candidate-D said that the administrative people have been very supportive and always very kind to her. She said that there was a lot of mandatory administrative work, which was handled well and quickly due to the new supporting relations. Candidate-D said: *"I never heard the answer no, when I asked there were always someone who helped me"*. She said: "*The seniors try to keep students motivated, to get better research out of it*". As I see it, the leaders and the colleagues gave attention and built trust when help was offered, thus the candidate was happy and motivated to go on in her socialization process to build strong relations. As mentioned, fruitful relations do not work without trust (Kvalsund; 2006; Schein, 2010).

Informal chatting

The PhD candidates meet regularly for lunch in the canteen, and the professors and seniors are also there. The administrative people are having lunch in another place. At this

Department, they have coffee breaks every Friday afternoon, and colleagues from all groups attend. They talk about anything like weekend plans, conferences and maybe planning for a visit to the cinema. It seems like the candidate is satisfied with access to locations for chatting where it feels natural to meet and talk. To have a location to meet and chat will improve the contact and understanding (Schein, 2010). It seems like she enjoys the conversations, and it can be a sign that the colleagues show an including attitude by being present, listening and showing empathy in the communication. To show an including attitude will help to build strong relations (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2006).

Social gathering

The Department arranges cake and wine lottery meeting every last day in the month. The candidate was also very happy because the Department had arranged a weekend trip where all colleagues met at the same time and could talk. They also had a Christmas gathering. Next week she was planning to attend a PhD arrangement for all new candidates at NTNU. It seems like the candidate is happy with the social arrangements, and this is a sign from the organization that they aim to build good relations among co-workers. Research says that social arrangement is of importance to build good relations in working environments (Schein, 2010).

Feedback

Candidate-D said: *"I presented myself in a meeting, very detailed and official way, after I got very good feedbacks and they were very nice and friendly, very positive and welcoming."* It seems like the feedback given is helpful, as the candidate is feeling comfortable because of good feedbacks from her presentation. The received feedback can help her to feel motivated and secure to adjust, and probably she will adapt sooner to the new cultural environment. This is confirmed by researach (Folkman & Dalton, 1996; Folkman, 2006; Hargie, 2011; Kvalsund, 2005; Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011).

Humor

Candidate-D told that: "*All are very friendly and have fun, also with seniors, and that they are very intimate*". She continued: *"During gatherings we laugh a lot."* and *"We have one postdoc who is very humorous and also one PhD colleague."* My research confirms with theory that humor is a positive communicative technique that bring people together (Hargie, 2011; Norrick, 2009; Robinson, 1991; Spurkeland, 2012). Also, Williams, (2002), says that we tend to like people who make us laugh and that humor establish trust in relations.

Summary of findings and tendencies from the interviews

The main tendency is that Candidate A and B felt frustrated and lonely during their adjustment process. Candidate C and D felt satisfied and happy during their adjustment process. I will summarize Candidate A and B in the same paragraphs, and also I will summarize the tendencies from Candidate C and D together. I like to point out that references are to be found in the main analysis due to the chance of many repetitions if included in this summary.

From the interviews it is understood that both Candidate A and B had expected and appreciated a more including and positive welcome. For Candidate B, she had hoped for a more structured welcome and it seems like the responsibility of the welcome was not clarified in the organization. For both candidates the guided presentation walk in the local environment seemed to be more randomly, thus not very good planned. I will say that both Candidate A and B experienced their adjustment process as challenging because they felt lack of needed support in their local working environments. By lack of support I understand they mean administrative support and technical support, and also lack of social support.

The Candidates A and B had tried to approach colleagues but apparently everybody were busy. They also felt that few colleagues contacted them. The PhD candidates apparently felt frustrated, insecure and lonely because they had nobody to join and chat with during coffee breaks and lunch breaks. They also expressed loneliness because there were lack of social gatherings to get to know the other and having fun with colleagues. None of the candidates experienced to present themselves during a meeting in the local environment, which they had hoped for as a chance to build new relations. Also, due to few positive relations, they received little feedback which can have effects on emotions on how good, bad or indifferent we thinks others see us. None of them did experience humor in their local environments, which can help to establish relations and strengthen the social environment.

Mentioned factors seem to explain why Candidate A and B felt lonely, and not happy with their socializing processes. The emotions affected their thoughts and behavior in a negative way, and might be reasons why it was not easy for them to partake in the socialization process to learn the new cultural codes. I will say they felt uncertain on how to behave when contacting their colleagues because enough trust was not established in the new relations. I understand that when the candidates did not experience to form helping relations, they will have fewer possibilities for learning and adjusting to the new cultural environment.

Both Candidate C and D experienced a positive and including welcome, and the adjustment process felt easier than they had expected. For both candidates it seems like the supervisors were in charge of the welcome the first day. Also both candidates are confident with the support offered and given from the colleagues, and they meant it was important to know these issues quite quickly in order to not loose time. Administrative and social support as clearly offered brings about positive emotions for the candidates and might have positive effects on social integration and well-being. Candidate D said that the administrative upstarting work was handled well and quickly due to the helpful relations. I understand that trust was established from the first meetings as they were met with smile and empathy which made them feel happy. When trust was established from the first meetings, it can explain why they felt it was easy to approach and get to know their colleagues.

Both candidates experienced positively that the organizations had the culture of organizing a presentation in the lunch room when a newcomer arrive. Candidate C told that the others also told about themselves and therefore they felt they were friends already after a few weeks. Also, they were happy because the Department had the culture of arranging local gatherings for socializing.

During lunch time, both Candidate C and D experienced to gather with colleagues from the local working environments. Both candidates experienced to receive positive and constructive feedbacks, and this might helped to adjust and sooner adapt to the new cultural environment. They both experienced humor and laughing during their working days in the local environments, which are effective approaches to establishing trust and frankness in relations. I understand that the candidates are also feeling happy because they have several social networks to feel included in.

5. Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the analysis results with support from my model and additional theory. As seen from the analysis, two of the candidates (A and B) described their adjustment process as not very positive and including, and they said they felt lonely. The other two candidates (C and D) described their adjustment process as positive and supportive, and they said they felt very happy. I cannot see relevant differences between the Candidates A and B and not between the Candidates C and D, therefore I discuss them in equivalent two groups.

What I will try to answer in my discussion is why Candidates A and B felt unhappy during their adjustment process, and why Candidates C and F felt happy during their adjustment process. As support seemed to be of importance for all PhD candidates, I will also look into what kind of support is appropriate during the adjustment process. Finally, I will consider whether my model is appropriate to clarify around how the PhD candidates experienced their adjustment process and how my findings answer my research question.

My question addressed is how the PhD candidates experienced their adjustment process in their new working environment during the first semester. This is seen in light of what they expected before arrival. From the interviews I found that the Candidates A and B expected the adjustment process to be more positive than experienced, and the candidates C and D expected the adjustment to be less positive than experienced. Why did this happen?

For the PhD candidates' who expected the adjustment to be more positive, I will say they experienced natural demands like forming helping relations as obstacles. The questions will be: Would the PhD candidates A and B experience the adjustment process as more positive than expected if they experienced to form positive helping relations in their belonging department? If other relevant personal factors are omitted, as in my thesis, the answer is probably yes. The answer is yes because from the interviews of Candidate C and D, I will say they experienced their adjustment process as more positive than expected due to forming new, positive helping relations.

As seen from my research, the adjustment process has the potential of including negative experiences as positive experiences. The question is why does adjustment work in some cases and not in others (Anderson, 1994)? What is clear is that the experiences are subjective, but does this also imply a subjective working environment? From my view, a good working environment is also a subjective experience, although if most people describe their working environment as good, it can be generalize as being good. From my work I will say that the Candidates A and B would not describe their working environment as good, and the

Candidates C and D would describe their working environment as good. From my thesis, I assume that a good working environment can work as a buffer against stress and loneliness. As a good working environment in my thesis is meant to hold most factors in my model, and the Candidates C and D described their working environments to hold those factors. I found that the Candidates C and D managed to form helping relations, and this can explain why they had a good experience.

Also I wonder if a good working environment can have positive effect on adapting to the new academic culture sooner during the adjustment process. I will say that I found that for the Candidates C and D, who experienced a good working environment, it may have had a positive effect on adapting to the new culture sooner. I suggest this is due to factors from my model like chatting and social gatherings which helped the candidates to form social networks (Brammer & McDonalds, 2004; Fyrand, 2005).

Regarding the factor welcoming experience in my model, it seems like the candidates which did not describe their welcome as satisfactory and positive, but challenging, also did not manage to form positive helping relations in their belonging department during the adjustment process. Why did they not manage to form effective helping relationships? Among other factors, my understanding is that an appropriate welcome was not experienced as this is of great importance to feel included and to build trust during the adjustment process of the socializing process (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011; Tuckman, 1965).

The candidates that described their welcoming experiences as very positive managed to form positive helping relations in their belonging department during the adjustment process. Why did they manage to form effective helping relations? It is understood that a very positive welcome was experienced as this is of great importance to feel included and to build trust in the beginning of the socializing process. The candidates that felt happy expressed that people were smiling, presenting themselves and showing a positive engagement. This helped them to be motivated to approach their new colleagues. These are ways of meeting the newcomers with empathy and acceptance which is of importance to feel understood and accepted (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011; Tuckman, 1965). The techniques mentioned, will help to build trust in the new relations from the very first beginning. When comfort was established in the new working environment, the socialization process, how to get along with each other, could go on with positive engagement to learn about the new social culture. In these situations, I will say that already from the very

first impressions, the candidates felt positive to learn about their new working environment due to the trust established in the relations.

Regarding belief in forming good relationships, the people in the Departments of the Candidates C and D, I will say showed knowledge about welcoming their new colleagues. I understand that the Department has the awareness of improving human interaction with the aim to learn and develop resources from each others (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Also, due to the fact that these are complex relational processes, it is even of greater importance to build trust and feel comfortable in the communication process (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010). There are obviously several new cultural codes to learn and adapt to for the international PhD candidates (Schein, 2010). Now, when trust is established, the probability of understanding each other and learn in the communication process will increase.

Regarding the working environments belonging to the Candidates A and B, I like to say that focus on awareness of learning and developing new resources in the new complex relational processes were not satisfactory implemented during the actual situations. The organization should focus on the awareness of helping relation and social support as it may have buffering effects on stress symptoms for international students (Misra et al., 2003). One reason why awareness was not established might be that factors of importance to form good relations are taken for granted and not given highlighted focus in the working environment (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

For Candidate B, I also consider that responsibility to specific persons was not given in the working environments, which is recommended for successful integration (Arthur, 2006). From Schein (2011), the organization should have focus on who should articulate the need for helping in such situations. A discussion in the organization should consider who is responsible to bring the need of help to consciousness and how to offer convenient help in professional relationships (Schein, 2011). For Candidate B it was expressed that a person helped her without having the responsibility, and this communication is not good because it brings negative emotions and decrease trust in the organization. To give a few persons the responsibility to welcome the newcomers, I consider as important part of leadership responsibility at NTNU, among other things because of its' goal to be internationally outstanding and that the doctoral education is of great important resources (NTNU/edu/strategy, 2013). Research also says that to build awareness and knowledge about relational competence is a leader responsibility (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Spurkeland, 2012; Schein, 2010). Awareness and knowledge around understanding cultural codes and learning how culture works and changes, is also the essence of leadership (Schein,

2011). Schein (2011) says that leaders are influential in shaping the behaviour and values of others.

When trust is established in a helping relation and the socializing process has started positively, the process of building needed social networks can go on. We all need social networks and relations to support us when we need assistance of various kinds (Brammer & McDonalds, 2004; Fyrand, 2005). Seen from the interviews of Candidates A and B, and my own experience from Q2S, I will say that when the adjustment process in the new cultural environment is experienced positively, it will be easier for PhD candidates to take own responsibility and form their own social networks needed (Bandura, 1989). No other person can know which kind of social networks actually is needed to reach one's goals, due to external factors like personality and private history. Own responsibility I believe will evolve naturally because from the first days the PhDs have learned some important cultural codes around how to approach others with empathy and interest (Bandura, 1989; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2010). Namely, they will behave in the same way as they were met, because they felt very good. These are cultural principles like pay attention, listen and respond to situations required (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2011).

To chat and communicate with good understanding and thus build social networks, we need to stay in a relation over time (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). If organizations do not have the culture of creating locations for physical presence and meeting places for employers, the process of forming social networks will slow down. From my research, we can also see that PhD candidate C and D, already in the upstarting period manage to start to form their own social networks needed. When the organization is creating locations for social chatting and arranging social gatherings I will say the leaders show social consciousness and skills on relational competence. These are elementary techniques for building basis for self-confidence in fellowship and team building which is needed for building relations of good quality, which gives off desired productivity (Kvalsund, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Without physical presence and reciprocal communication, there will be fewer possibilities to give each other constructive feedbacks (Kvalsund, 2006). As heard directly from Candidate D, she was feeling very good after having received constructive feedback on herself as a person and her related work after a personal presentation for her colleagues. The feedback mentioned, gave her signs of acceptance and that she was obviously already on her desired progress, on target (Folkman, 2006; Folkman & Dalton, 1996; Hargie, 2011; Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011). Understood is also that Candidate C was feeling good because he received constructive feedback from dialogs with his supervisor. I presume, reasons why the

PhD candidates A and B felt lonely, were among other reasons, their longing for receiving constructive feedback according to their socializing process and related targets (Hargie, 2011).

From my view humor is one of the most important factors in my model for establishing relations, and it tends to have positive impact on well-being, belongingness and inner motivation (Hargie, 2011; Robinson, 1991; Spurkeland, 2012; Wivestad, 2012; Wanzer et al., 2005). Without physical presence and cohesive communication and interaction, also there will be fewer opportunities for performing and experiencing humor in the working environment. Candidates A and B did not experience much humor in their working environments, which might also be reasons why they did not express happiness but felt lonely in their new situations. For the Candidates A and B I will say that humor would be a positive communication technique to loosen up and ease interactions (Hargie, 2011; Norrick, 2009; Wanzer et al., 2005; Williams, 2002). The Candidates C and D expressed gladly that there were lots of humor and laughing in their working environment. I presume these are also reasons why they felt very happy with their new situation and related relations (Norrick, 2009).

From my work we can see that all factors in my model cohere in different ways in different situations. Although, I will say that the factor welcoming experience is of most importance to establish trust from the beginning and to form one´s own social networks needed with the aim to reach different goals (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Johnson & Johnson; 2013; McClure, 2005; Schein, 2010; Tuckman; 1965). Also, understood from the Candidates A and B, when the organization is not showing relational competence, the PhD candidates experienced not to be met with empathy, interest and an including attitude. A positive welcome in communication is basic for establishing the helping relations, which is needed in situations discussed (Kvalsund & Meyer; Schein, 2011). Also, when experiencing absence of locations and gatherings to chat and learn cultural codes, there will be fewer opportunities to interact and socialize with the aim to increase productivity according to relevant goals (Bergström, 2010; Schein, 2010). When not gathering and interacting, there will naturally be absence of both feedback and humor. We now can see that my model shows factors which are all of importance related to each other in the awareness of relational competence.

From my view, what is most interesting and challenging is to try to understand human behavior. Social Cognitive Theory says that human behavior is uniquely determined by interaction of the factors environmental influences, personal factors and behavior (Bandura,

1989). In my study I have focused on the environmental influences and unfortunately excluded personal factors. Although, what I asked the Candidates were whether they considered themselves as extrovert or introvert personalities. Only one of them, Candidate-D, characterized herself as introvert, which actually should be considered and reflected around. Unfortunately, this study did not have place for considering personal factors.

When using my model, in my work, I found that all of the candidates interviewed wanted and expected different kinds of support in the upstarting period. This understanding is also confirmed from various research (Arthur, 2006; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Bergström, 2010). As the labels social support, administrative support and technical support are not very explicit labels, I found that to use the label helping relation from Schein (2011) in my work is appropriate and will cover all types of support discussed in my work.

After reading Schein, (2011), I understand that a helping relation is defined as to offer, give and receive help in formal professional relationships. The core results of my work is that during the adjustment process for an international PhD candidate, several people are involved, and the communication process of understanding how to offer, give and receive appropriate help is a challenge for improvement in the organization. Also, the fact that when employing international PhD candidates, this awareness is even of more importance as it is dealing with complex relational processes (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). As culture is a complex phenomenon, it can be challenging to understand how interactions works, therefore the organization should put more focus on the awareness of helping and learning in communication (Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010; Schein, 2011).

There is obviously a need to learn new social codes to build trust when communicating for the international PhD candidates as entering a new culture (Arthur, 2006; Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010). These are reasons why the organization should focus on developing personal competence for improving communication in multicultural groups (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005). Skills of importance to develop are to listen, see, discover, acknowledge and to challenge within the processes of interaction (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005).

Lack of trust in relations I see as a problem for Candidate A and B. Already from the beginning they did not feel included and appreciated, because of vague communication and thus feelings of uncertainty. The core of the research of Schein (2011) is that he aims to teach people enough insight to actually help when help is asked for or needed. If trust is not established in the helping relation, the communication process on finding out what and how to offer help, and how to receive help will be more complicated and less clearly for the parties involved (Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Kvalsund, 2006; Schein, 2010).

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I hope that from my work I will give some inspiration on how to understand more about offering, giving and receiving correct help in communication with international PhD candidates. We cannot define the concrete help needed until someone has articulated a need and brought it to consciousness in the environment (Schein, 2011). I presume that candidates A and B felt too unsecure to clearly communicate their need for help due to the fact that they did not feel enough appreciated and included in the new culture (Arthur, 2006; Schein, 2010; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Kvalsund, 2006). To give and receive appropriate help within supporting relations, require to focus on and be present during the specific situation (Kvalsund, 2005; Kvalsund, 2006). When trust is established, we can communicate without having negative feelings disturbing our concentration on the specific task to solve. For the Candidates C and D trust was established from the first day and they felt comfortable to form new relations.

To criticize my model, I will say that the most challenging was to categorize the answers from the informants. From the results, many statements could be categorized in several factors of the model because of its coherence. Reasons are that a quantitative research was conducted, and therefore during the depth interview, the meaning was to let the informant remember and reflect around their total experiences during the adjustment process. If I had used another method, the result might have been different. Although, I feel that the method shows coherences and results around the adjustment process in a good way. Also from my own experience at Q2S, it shows that the factors in my model were practiced and people felt included and appreciated.

Summary discussion

To summarize the discussion I found that the Candidates A and B expected the adjustment process to be more positive due to obstacles of forming new helping relations. The candidates C and D expected the adjustment process to be less positive, apparently because they managed to form even more positive relations than expected. From my work I will say that the persons who were happy managed to think positive and were motivated to form their helping relations self and also social networks. Therefore, I will say that the kind of support needed is to show an including welcome and to build a basic social arena where people can feel appreciated and accepted.

When the new international PhD candidates succeed in forming new, trusted relations from the very first days, they will easier feel comfortable and form their own helping relational networks (Kvalsund, 2006; Kvalsund & Meyer, 2005; Schein, 2011). Thus, I

suggest the organization and its' leaders should focus on a positive and including welcome where a few persons have the main responsibility. The positive welcome will spread positive emotions and feelings like belongingness which has effect on well-being and motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Whether my model is appropriate or not to clarify how the PhD candidates experienced their adjustment process is hard for me to conclude on, but I think so. Although, I can see that all factors included are of importance in coherence to build helping relations in organizations.

6. Conclusion

From the perspective of my problem addressed, I found that the Candidates A and B expected the adjustment to be more positive than experienced, and the Candidates C and D expected the adjustment to be less positive than experienced. My work suggests that the PhD Candidates A and B experienced the adjustment process as less positive than expected due to obstacles in forming positive helping relations in their belonging department. The Candidates C and D I will say experienced their adjustment process as more positive than expected due to success in forming new, positive helping relations. My work suggests that Candidates C and D experienced a good working environment, due to holding most factors from my model, and I will say from my work that a good working environment can work as a buffer against stress and loneliness. Also, I suggest, when experiencing a good working environment, the new cultural codes will sooner be learned and adapted.

Both Candidate A and Candidate B experienced a frustrating and lonely adjustment process. They had hoped and expected additional support from colleagues in their belonging Departments. Reasons why they felt lonely is challenging to explain, although, research says that social relationships affect human well-being. Both negative and positive feelings affect our thoughts, words and engagement, which in these situations might have restricted the Candidates behavior and motivation for approaching their new colleagues. Support in actual situations refers to the positive, potentially health promoting or stress-buffering aspects of relationships such as information and emotional concern. From research I found that the label "helping relations", to offer, give and receive appropriate help in formal professional relationships, will apply to most situations in a PhD's adjustment process. I found from one Candidate feeling lonely that the responsibility of the welcoming process were not clarified in the organization, which is understood to be a leadership responsibility. I suggest that in this organization awareness on relational competence will have positive effect.

From both of the Candidates feeling happy, I understand that the supervisor was in charge of the positive welcoming process. I suggest that these organizations and leaders have focus on relational competence, as it seems that all of the new colleagues included were forthcoming and helpful. I understand that trust was established from the first meetings as they were met with smile and empathy which made them feel happy. When trust was established from the first meetings, it can explain why they felt it was easy to approach and get to know their colleagues. When trust is established in a helping relation and the

socializing process has started positively, the process of building one's own needed helping relations and social networks can go on.

From the view of my model, I found that for the PhD candidates that expressed satisfaction and feelings of happiness, all factors in the model were implemented during the adjustment process. For the PhD candidates feeling frustrated and lonely, I will say that already from the first days and the welcoming experiences, the relational competence recommended from theory, were not implemented in their situations. Also, it seems like the other factors were not implemented satisfactory in the working environments, which had negative effect on their well-being. These factors are lack of awareness in the organization around forming good relationships, lack of locations for chatting and social gatherings. Also when not socializing properly in the local environment, a result will be missing feedbacks and little humor. Those are factors which can have positive effect on people's behavior and the sense of belongingness to the organization.

The core results of my work is that during the adjustment process for an international PhD candidate, several actors holding different cultural codes are involved, and the communication process of understanding how to offer, give and receive appropriate help is challenging in the organization. To establish awareness and knowledge around relational competence in the organization will benefit all involved parties to increase productivity and reach fantastic goals.

Further research

Further research I suggest should look into cultural analysis and learning cultures. Research shows that organizations holding multicultural networks require different kind of cultural management in order to improve communication and understanding. Analysis should give a basic to understand what tools and processes are available to lead those groups. They never met before and have to work together, therefore how to get these different cultures to work together? By learning cultures is meant that leaders continuously need further insight on how culture formations evolve. For international newcomers, is it understood that they easily adapt to the somehow individualistic academic culture as understood historically? When new cultural codes and beliefs are brought in by new members, new experiences and learning will create new beliefs, values and assumptions in the groups. Therefore the subsequent question emerges: what is the right way to behave in our group and organization? Actual organizations need to provide some concepts and tools that show leaders how to approach cultural challenges in order to be international outstanding.

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Appendix A – Research Information Letter

<div align="right">Trondheim, 21.01.2013</div>

Invitation to participate in the study "Relational adjustment in a new academic research environment"

Dear PhD candidate,

My name is Anniken Skotvoll, I'm 50 years, and lived all my life in Trondheim. Although, I like travelling and I'm interested in seeing and understanding other cultures. I am working as an administrator at NTNU, and at the same time doing a Master in Management, a program in Organization and Leadership at NTNU. I am studying more closely how and why people in organizations build and maintain relations.

In the recent years we have seen a considerable increase in the number of international candidates taking their PhD degree at NTNU. NTNU is therefore focusing on making the adjustment and stay for the international candidates as successful as possible. In this matter, I like to participate in asking you how you consider your adjustment process the first semester, and how you build relations when starting at NTNU. To explore this, I need to get in contact with candidates who themselves have experienced this adjustment process at NTNU. I am therefore inviting you to participate in this research project.

What will involvement entail?

If you agree to participate, an interview will be arranged. The interview will last about 40 minutes and it will be recorded. The interviews will be conducted at NTNU campus in January 2013. I am flexible regarding the time, and place of the interview. The language used will be in English.

Confidentiality and informed consent

The information from the interviews will be kept under secure conditions and treated confidential. The transcription will be kept on a pc secured with username and password, and the tape-recorded material will be erased when the thesis is finished. During the project period there will also be used codes to link the transcriptions to the particular interviewee. Both my supervisor and I will read the transcripts but I am the only one who will have access to the

codes and through this identity of the interviewee. Information that others might use to identify you will be kept out of the report. Although, a chance can be that participants may come to recognize their own statements. The project ends at the latest in September 2013, and then all identifying information will be deleted.

In order to participate, you will have to sign a consent form, but you will have the right to withdraw the consent at any time before the thesis is printed. You may also ask for the information collected from your interview to be deleted. Also, your identity or participation in this study will not be revealed in any way, and your relationship to me or the university will not be affected by your eventually withdrawing from the study.

Who runs the project?

The research project is being undertaken as a part of the requirements for a master's degree at NTNU, and I am under the supervision of Professor Ragnvald Kvalsund, Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management at NTNU. For questions, you can take contact by email: Ragnvald.kvalsund@svt.ntnu.no.

Contributions from the study

This project will contribute information about how PhD candidates experience adjusting to the new academic research environment at NTNU. I like to participate in asking you how you consider your adjustment process the first semester. The findings will be based on how the candidates themselves see this process. This is important information because it might contribute to a better understanding of the situation PhD candidates are in when adjusting to the new academic environment, and thus also be a resource when considering how to best support this group. Also – I want to add – we know that from experiences that many persons find it quite interesting to talk and reflect upon their own situation with someone else.

Participation in the study

If you would like to participate in the study, or if you have any questions about the research, please contact me by mobile no 990 22 656, or email: skotvoll@q2s.ntnu.no .

I need four informants, and for helping me, I give you two cinema tickets at Trondheim Kino. The project is supported by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Yours faithfully,

Anniken Skotvoll

Master student at NTNU, Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management.

Employed at NTNU, Faculty of Information Technology, Mathematics and Electrical

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My supervisor

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Phone office: 73 59 19 99

Appendix B – Consent Form

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I have received information and I am willing to take part in the study "Relational adjustment in a new academic research environment", by Anniken Skotvoll at NTNU. I understand that my confidentiality will be respected and that I can withdraw this consent at any time.

Date: Name:

                               Signature:

Appendix C – Interview Protocol

Commentary on the interview guide:

The questions in this guide represent main issues to be explored. Preferably, each participant will go through the same set of topics, although the order in which these topics are introduced may vary according to the particular interviewee.

1. Introduction

In this part of the interview I introduce the participant to the topic to be investigated, and to the interview situation. A main purpose is also to have the participants to sign the consent form.

a. This is me:

My name is Anniken, I am 50 years old, in addition to my job I am a master student at NTNU. I work at NTNU as an administrative person.

b. About the project.

The master project I am interested in is how international PhD students adjust to the new academic environment at NTNU. I am interested in your experiences with adjusting to your life as a researcher here at the university, and how this influences you. I am interested in how you meet new people, how new relations affect your adjustment the first semester. I am also interested in what were your expectations before arrival and what are your expectations regarding the rest of the PhD educational period.

c. About the interview.

There is no right or wrong answers. What I want is for you to share your thoughts and experiences, it is your experience that I am interested in. You decide what information you want to give me. If you have any questions during the interview, feel free to ask me.

The interviews will be recorded and I may take some notes. This is to ensure that I will not forget anything. I am the only person who will have access to these, and no one will be able to read your interview except from my supervisor and me. The interview will be approximately 45 minutes.

d. Consent form.

In order to participate I need you to sign a consent form. You should be aware that although you give your consent now, you may withdraw it at any point in the research process.

2. Demographics

Here I wish to get an overview over the person, to know something about the persons' background. Demographics registered were: Age, gender and nationality.

3. About the questions - Adjustment the first semester at NTNU

With these questions I want you to reflect on the process when you arrived at NTNU. I like you to tell me about how you consider your adjustment process the first semester, and how you met new relations, and how this influenced you during the first semester.

How do international PhD candidates experience the adjustment process in their new research environment the first semester, also what did they expect before arrival and what are their expectations for the future?

How do PhD candidates adjust when moving from another country to Norway and starting a PhD education at NTNU. Who are their influences? How do they learn to adjust?

4. The questions

A. The welcome

1. Can you remember the first day you arrived at NTNU;

2. To be more specific, in which way did NTNU welcome you?

B. Contact with others

3. Can you remember; what did you talk about?

     Did other persons present themselves in more details for you?

4. How did your Department introduce you to colleagues?

     Did one person introduce you to every single colleague?

5. Did you present yourself in a lunch meeting or similar?

6. How will you summarize the way you were offered support?

7. Which persons were your most important supporters in your daily life the first semester?

8. Can you remember how you met new people at NTNU, the first semester?

9. Were you invited in arranged meetings for all PhD candidates at NTNU?

10. Can you describe how colleagues meet you in the morning and during the day?

11. Can you describe how colleagues active contacted you to get to know you?

D. Stressors

12. Can you tell me about your most important challenges you have been facing?

E. Humor

13. How will you characterize the daily humor at your working place? Is it enough?

F. Expectations

15. Can you describe how you expected the relational adjustment to be?

G. Future

15. Regarding your situation today, how do you expect the rest of the PhD period to be?

16. Regarding introvert and extrovert personality, how do you characterize yourself?

Appendix D – Approval from NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

(NSD)

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
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Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Ragnvald Kvalsund
Institutt for voksnes læring og rådgivningsvitenskap
NTNU
7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 13.12.2012   Vår ref:32328 / 3 / AMS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 06.12.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

32328	*Relational adjustment in a new academic research environment.*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Ragnvald Kvalsund*
Student	*Anniken Skotvoll*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.
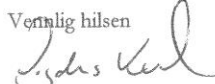
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 09.09.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Anne-Mette Somby

Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Anniken Skotvoll, Hospitalsløkkan 20b, 7012 TRONDHEIM

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