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Co-creation of an organisational culture

A qualitative study looking at factors used for creating an organisational culture

Master's thesis in Counselling
Supervisor: Jonathan Reams
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Abstract

The aim of this master's study was to examine the elements that influence the formation of the organisational culture in a recently established organisation. These factors include but are not limited to Schein's (2017) suggestion around three levels of organisational structure; artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (p. 18). The research involved conducting observations as well as interviews. The study aimed to explore the factors that leaders and employees prioritize in relation to the organisational culture, including their thoughts and actions in actively participating in the work environment.

A qualitative approach was employed to investigate the research question, utilizing observation and semi-structured interviews as the primary methods for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The interview guides were crafted by incorporating both observational data and theoretical literature. Subsequently, the collected data underwent thematic analysis, leading to the identification of four main themes and their corresponding sub-themes. These findings shed light on the key areas of exploration, namely new and unknown aspects, motivation, communication, and knowledge sharing.

The overall results of the study indicate that the organisation is currently in its initial stages, with little to no set routines or procedures in place. This situation may impact daily operations and lead to uncertainty among staff members. Additionally, being a subsidiary of a larger main organisation has led to a workforce composed of a combination of internally hired employees and those recruited externally from different organisations.

Both leaders and employees have similar expectations of the organisation, but their reflections may vary based on their role and position. However, there are indications that internally recruited employees from the main organisation have brought certain cultural aspects with them to the new organisation, which can be both positive and negative, as it can contribute to continuity and stability, but at the same time it can limit innovation and further development. Also, all employees are affected by the new form of responsibility that comes with the new way the hierarchy is structured in the organisation. This can lead to positive outcomes, such as employees taking greater ownership of their work, but it can also present challenges in terms of communication, decision-making, and collaboration. One reason for this can be the correlation between communication and motivation (Rajhans, 2009). Given these factors, it is important for leaders to closely examine how they influence the organisation.

Sammendrag

Hensikten med denne masterstudien har vært å undersøke hvilke faktorer som påvirker dannelsen av organisasjonskultur i en nyetablert organisasjon. Disse faktorene inkluderer, men er ikke begrenset til, Schein's (2017) forslag om tre nivåer i organisasjonsstrukturen: artefakter, overbevisninger og verdier, og grunnleggende underliggende antakelser (s. 18). Forskningen omfattet både observasjoner og intervjuer. Målet med studien var å utforske hvilke faktorer ledere og medarbeidere prioriterer i forhold til organisasjonskulturen, inkludert deres tanker og handlinger i forbindelse med aktiv deltakelse i arbeidsmiljøet.

Forskningsspørsmålet ble undersøkt ved å benytte et kvalitativt perspektiv, som innebar observasjon og semi-strukturerte intervjuer som metode for å få en dypere forståelse av forskningstematikken. Intervjuguidene ble utviklet basert på både observasjonsdata og teoretisk litteratur. Datamaterialet ble deretter analysert ved hjelp av tematisk analyse, som resulterte i fire hovedtemaer med tilhørende undertema som ga en oversikt over de mest sentrale temaene for utforskning: nytt og ukjent, motivasjon, kommunikasjon og kunnskapsdeling.

Studiens overordnede funn viser at organisasjonen er i en tidlig fase og at den på studiens tidspunkt mangler etablerte rutiner og prosedyrer. Dette kan påvirke det daglige arbeidet og skape usikkerhet blant ansatte. Videre er organisasjonen en datterorganisasjon av en større hovedorganisasjon, noe som har resultert i at arbeidsstokken består av en blanding av både internt rekrutterte ansatte og ansatte som er rekruttert eksternt fra andre organisasjoner.

Både ledere og ansatte har lignende forventninger til organisasjoner, men deres refleksjoner kan variere basert på deres rolle og stilling. Det dog indikasjoner som viser at de ansatte som er rekruttert internt fra hovedorganisasjonen har tatt med seg visse kulturelle aspekter til den nye organisasjonen, som kan være både positivt og negativt, da det kan bidra til kontinuitet og stabilitet, men samtidig kan det begrense innovasjon og videreutvikling. I tillegg påvirkes alle ansatte av den nye ansvarsformen som følger med den nye måten hierarkiet er oppbygd på i organisasjonen. Dette kan fremkalle både positive følger, som for eksempel at ansatte tar større ansvar for seg selv og sine arbeidsoppgaver, men det kan også skape utfordringer i forhold til kommunikasjon, beslutningsprosesser og samarbeid. Én årsak til dette kan være korrelasjonen mellom kommunikasjon og motivasjon (Rajhans, 2009). På grunnlag av dette kan det være relevant for lederne å undersøke nærmere på hvordan disse faktorene påvirker organisasjonen.

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1.0 Introduction

In a dynamic world where organisations are constantly being established and dissolved, innovation and novel ideas are essential for staying ahead. The organisational structure and communication between leaders and employees need to be reevaluated to ensure the survival of tomorrow's organisations. Technology has become a significant aspect of everyday work life, and despite concerns about automation replacing human workers, it is crucial to explore how humans and machines can work together to develop innovative products. Leaders must adjust their management approaches to effectively lead employees in this evolving landscape.

Organisational culture can be redesigned, using both established methods, and also new, innovative, untested methods. Renowned expert Edgar Schein (2017) highlights the challenge of defining culture, emphasizing that it is a collective outcome of shared learning. The core values, beliefs, and behaviours within a group form the cultural DNA that provides coherence and resilience to an organisation. Furthermore, Schein underscores the significance of recognizing that culture evolves through ongoing employee collaboration and interaction within the organisation. This made me curious as to how people in an organisation that is restructuring itself and are trying to create a new culture is helping each other embody or live these values and principles. Helping relations is a central theme in counselling, to detangle how people are making sense of and helping each other to co-create culture.

For a new kind of organisational culture to take place, there are some factors that needs to be taken into consideration, such as motivation, communication and sharing of knowledge.

1.1 Reason for the chosen topic

When I became an adult, with nothing much to show for in terms of education due to unforeseen events, I had to ask myself the stereotypical question "What do I want to be when I grow up?". The answer came when, I, after getting back into school, got a question from one of my teachers regarding if I wanted to help her out by recording some material for the following years students. I wanted to learn and teach, and eventually, if it feels right, be a part of an organisational culture that "draws outside the lines" of what used to be normal practice regarding how leaders and employees motivate, communicate, and share knowledge. I fell in love with HR and got my bachelor's degree, and through this master's programme have gotten the opportunity to dive deeper into the structures and communication in an organisation as well as getting some insight into what leaders do on a daily basis. What really sparked my interest in the theme of creation of culture, was one of the courses we had through the masters programme, where we looked at leadership and leaders and how they do things and linking it to the notion of culture, and seeing this in person during this project showed me that leading culture or creating culture is a very complex challenge.

When I got the opportunity to dig deeper into this organisation, I did not hesitate to take it. What is so special about this organisation is that it is brand new; right now, they are starting to move from the first phase of the organisation, establishing, to the second phase of production, and within their field, there is really no other organisation like this in

the world. Because of this, I had little to no information about the organisation going into the project. Therefore, I felt like the best way to conduct my research was through a combination of observation and semi-structured interviews.

1.2 Research question

Organisational culture has been researched countless times, and for countless years. However, no one has been able to conclude their research with “this is the answer”, and that is because culture is a living organism that changes as the organisation moves along; it is not just about behaviour, but also about the way individuals act together. Moreover, culture cannot be tied down to one specific term since no individual or group is alike, resulting in no single answer (Schein, 2017). The aim with this thesis is not to give one single answer to what organisational culture is, and how it is created, but to dig deeper into the research question and look at how one, new organisation works to create their culture. Due to this, the research question is:

How can leaders and employees work together to co-create culture in a new organisation?

Motivation is an essential element in shaping the organisational culture, as it refers to being driven to take action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This thesis aims to look deeper into the factors that motivate leaders and employees, shedding light on their significance. Additionally, the co-creation of organisational culture is influenced by communication and knowledge sharing, which will be explored in terms of processes, behaviour, various types of knowledge, and their impact on the culture.

The research question seeks the viewpoints of both leaders and employees regarding their preferences for the organisational culture. Furthermore, I inquire about the informants' perspectives on their potential contributions and collaborative efforts towards realizing the desired organisational culture. Because to co-create something means “to create something by working with one or more others” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In the following chapter, I will look deeper into concepts and definitions that are relevant to answer the research question.

1.3 Further structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured into six main chapters, with this being the first. Chapter two provides an overview of previous research and the relevant theoretical framework used to address the research question. Chapter three details the methodological choices, analysis process, and reflections on the researcher's role. Chapter four will present the findings, while chapter five will discuss these findings in relation to the theory presented in chapter two. Finally, chapter six will summarize the thesis, provide concluding remarks, address limitations, and point out areas for further research.

2.0 Theory

In this section, I aim to provide an overview of relevant previous research and theories in the relevant areas: the definition and structure of organisational culture, motivation, communication, and knowledge sharing. Numerous sources exist in these fields; however, I have made a selection based on what I consider to be relevant to the thesis research question and the research findings. This chapter also forms part of the basis, along with the findings in chapter 4, for the discussion in chapter 5.

2.1 Defining organisational culture

Organisational culture is something that have been discussed profusely in literature. First, we must see an organisation's culture as a product of a composition of a group of people working together. Second, this group of individuals need to learn their place within the group before we can start discussing what culture we can see. Also, it is important to note that every organisation is different when it comes to culture, because every individual who works there is different. Defining what organisational culture really is, in a clear way, turns out to be rather difficult. This is because no two cultures are the same, therefore, one cannot use evidence from one group culture as a conclusion for another.

One of the leading contributors to organisational psychology, Edgar Schein (1990), defined culture as

A pattern of basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves problems regarding external adaptations and internal integrations, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, is taught to new members as "the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

Another definition of organisational culture that is more detailed comes from Paais & Pattiruhu (2020)

Culture is the total thoughts, works, and results of human actions, which are not rooted in their instincts, and therefore can only be triggered by humans after going through a learning process. Culture is the essence of what is essential in organizations. The activities of member commands and prohibitions describe something that is done and not done that regulates the behaviour of members. So, culture contains what may or may not be done so that it can be stated as a guideline used to carry out organizational activities. (p. 580)

It is evident that even though different definitions emphasise different aspects of culture, both of these definitions showcase the fact that organisational culture is created by the individuals that work there, and that they work together. It is clear that defining such a huge topic is proving to be difficult, and that one may have to combine several definitions in order to grasp every side of the organisation and its contents because culture is a product of shared learning (Edmondson, 2012; Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 6).

2.2 Creating and designing organisational culture

New organisations are formed on a daily basis, and one of the things that needs to be in place when creating a new organisation is how you want it to be designed and how you want the interaction between leaders and employees to be. An organisation starts as a concept, or a “design”, before being brought into life. Romme (2003; referred to in Burton & Obel, 2018) argues that the “idea of a design involves inquiry into systems that do not yet exist – either complete new systems or new states of existing systems” (p. 2-3).

Organisational design involves determining the optimal structure for an organisation to operate with maximum effectiveness and efficiency. It encompasses aligning various elements such as structures, processes, leadership, culture, people, practices, and metrics to support the achievement of the organisation's mission and strategy (Burton & Obel, 2018). This shows that when a new organisation is being designed and developed, there are endless possibilities as to how one wants to design it. There are possibilities to create an organisation where the chain of command or how the various tasks are being solved is different from what has been done by similar organisations before.

Furthermore, regardless of the size of an organisation and the number of individuals working there, it is important to recognize that an organisation is ultimately made up of human beings. As social creatures, human beings require a certain level of interaction and connection. Therefore, effective management of the organisational structure is crucial in order to achieve collective goals. These goals encompass both the needs and desires of the employees as well as the objectives of the organisation itself. The organisational structure plays a vital role in establishing the relationship between tasks and employees. Additionally, it is responsible for assigning, determining, and coordinating roles, responsibilities, and authority within the organisation (Burton & Obel, 2018). Communication serves as the key mechanism through which all of these elements are facilitated, and its significance will be explored later on in this chapter.

2.2.1 Designing culture in a project-based organisation

The organisation that is studied in this thesis can in some ways be regarded as a “project-based organisation.” This is because they produce their products based on contracts. Project-based organisations encompass a range of organisational structures that establish temporary systems to conduct project-related activities. These organisations, in their diverse forms, offer a rapid and adaptable approach to leveraging knowledge resources. By presenting each project as a temporary and short-term endeavour, project-based organisations can effectively navigate obstacles to organisational change and innovation. Unlike the establishment of a permanent new department or division, this approach poses less risk to existing interests. Project-based organisations are utilized in various industries such as accounting, computer hardware, transportation, and construction to cater to the unique and customized demands of clients. These organisations often engage in negotiations and interactions with clients regarding the innovative design of products and services. (Hobday, 1998; Sydow et al., 2004, p. 1465).

2.2.2 The structure of culture

Organisational culture is something that has been researched for decades. Kundu (2010) sheds light on the fact that "organisational culture" has been the focus of exploration for many decades, and that attention has shifted from identifying the meaning and value of culture to seeing that organisations are made up of many different cultures. Kundu also highlights Pfeffer's theory that "any organisation can have countless different and competing cultures, and that each of these cultures develops its own unique structures and ideologies" (Pfeffer, 1981; Kundu, 2010, p. 49). From this, one can understand that it can be difficult to explain all the phenomena that emerge and form organisational culture.

However, one of the researchers that comes up the most when one searches for material regarding organisational culture is Edgar Schein. Schein emphasises that the structure of culture that presents within a group can be divided into three different levels, differentiated by how visible they are, and how hard they are to see. Schein & Schein (2017, p. 18) presents these levels as (a) artifacts, (b) espoused beliefs and values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions. For researchers reviewing culture within an organisation, it can therefore be essential to keep these levels in mind while observing and talking with employees.

1. Artifacts

- Visible and feelable structures and processes
- Observed behavior
 - Difficult to decipher

2. Espoused Beliefs and Values

- Ideals, goals, values, aspirations
- Ideologies
- Rationalizations
 - May or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts

3. Basic Underlying Assumptions

- Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values
 - Determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling

Figure 1: Levels of organisational structure (Schein & Schein, 2017, p. 18)

Artifacts is the level where observation is easiest. This level represents the visible and feelable structures that the group has. Though it may be difficult to decipher, this is also the level in which behaviour can be observed. It is here that alliances within the group start to form. The artifacts level is also where the manifestation of the culture happens. An example of such visible manifestation can be the dress code that the organisation has decided on (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Espoused beliefs and values

This is where the individuals' ideals, goals and values are reflected and maybe even tested out. The individuals may reflect on their own assumptions on, for example, what is right and what is wrong to do in a given situation. A solution to a problem is not,

however, considered to be the groups collective decision or meaning before it is shared, tested, and confirmed. Espoused beliefs and values are also the level in which the organisation explains their culture to individuals outside of the organisation. Although these expressed beliefs and values from the organisations point of view are “working”, they may not in the eyes of the groups that work within the organisation (Schein & Schein, 2017). For example, if the leader of an organisation believes that something is being done the way that they want it to be done because it looks good on paper, does not mean that the employees feel the same way. They might think, or know, that the leader’s way of doing things may take more time and cost more money than doing things the way they believe is the right way.

Basic underlying assumptions

When individuals stop noticing attitudes or solutions to problems, and they go on to become automatic. Since they have been successful before, this can be said to have become a basic underlying assumption. If new people enter an already established environment, this can lead to instability in the group since any new assumptions can lead to discomfort and uncertainty. Individuals, as a group, would like to have a stable and predictable environment, but in order for the organisation's culture to develop, it is important that all individuals have the opportunity to address their implicit assumptions so that the integrity of the group is not compromised (Schein & Schein, 2017).

2.2.3 Structure in a learning organisation

“The organisations that will truly excel in the future will be the organisations that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organisation” (Senge, 2006, p. 4).

Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline. The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization (2006)* presents his theory regarding learning organisations. The central premise of this work is that ultimately, organisational success cannot be achieved without individuals and teams learning from each other. Senge describes five disciplines for the learning organisation: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. In the context of this thesis, team learning in particular will be in focus and is addressed in more depth in section 2.4.2, while this and mental models will be explored in relation to section 2.4.3.

Learning organisations can exist due to the fact that fundamentally, we all possess a desire to learn. Humans are inherently curious and adept learners. Learning organisations can thrive because not only is learning a natural inclination for us, but we also derive great pleasure from the process of learning. It can be argued that the entire global business community is evolving into a learning community, where individuals are collectively embracing the concept of continuous learning. Moreover, there seems to be a growing trend towards the establishment of learning organisations. The shift in focus from material wealth to a more profound appreciation for work has led individuals to view work not just as a means to an end, but as a source of intrinsic fulfilment (Senge, 2006).

2.2.4 Culture in a project-based organisation

It can be argued that an organisation's culture plays a crucial role in shaping its management system and practices. By establishing norms and standards for operation, the organisational culture provides stability to the firm's methods of operation.

Consequently, the organisational culture influences decision-making processes, and the way staff members react to the environment. Being aware of the organisation's culture enhances the likelihood of learning becoming an inherent process within the organisation. This is because a thorough understanding of the organisation's culture entails identifying and acknowledging the implicit assumptions and beliefs that are deeply ingrained within the organisation (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008).

It is also important to note that external influences play a role in shaping the culture of an organisation, as organisations tend to mirror the cultural norms of the nation, region, industry, and occupation in which they operate. Consequently, an organisation's culture may embody various beliefs that are not internally generated (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008). This does not necessarily mean that the culture of an organisation is exclusively "one way or the other", because it can present itself differently while the organisation is performing different tasks or projects.

In organisations that are project-based, the organisations knowledge, abilities, and resources are developed through the implementation of large-scale projects. These projects often serve as the primary focus of the business and the standard method for pursuing new opportunities. By organising work in a project-oriented manner, organisations can adapt effectively to evolving organisational requirements. However, project-based organisations encounter notable obstacles in attaining economies of scale, coordinating resources across multiple projects, fostering overall organisational growth, and encouraging widespread learning within the organisation (Hobday, 2000; Boh, 2007, p. 28).

2.3 Motivation's role in developing a culture

Motivation is a key factor in shaping the organisational culture. It is crucial for both leaders and employees to recognize their own motivations as well as those of their team members to cultivate a productive work atmosphere. Since motivation differs from person to person, leaders must make an effort to comprehend the distinct needs and aspirations of each individual. This approach enables the creation of an organisational culture that promotes development, involvement, and achievement. Essentially, organisations should establish a setting where employees can perform tasks in a manner that inspires them individually to remain committed to the organisation. In this section of this chapter, the focus is on leaders and employee's motivation, how they are motivated and how they can contribute to the team's motivation.

2.3.1 Leaders motivation

"Leadership is a process to influence existing activities, primarily to conduct organizations in groups to achieve goals set from the beginning" (Mitchell & Scott, 1987; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020, p. 579).

The leadership style used by the general management is often a reflection and suited to the behaviour of the employees. The personality, values and qualities of the leaders tends to affect the ongoing operations and the development of the company (Drewniak et al., 2020, p. 400).

The leader bears some of the responsibility of establishing a harmonious equilibrium between the requirements of the employees and the objectives of the organisation. This task can be challenging as it necessitates the motivation and encouragement of the employees in order for them to find satisfaction in their work. In every organisation, performance is evaluated in various ways, and if the leaders aspire to enhance the organisation's performance, they must possess an understanding of how to inspire and motivate their employees (Chen et al., 2012; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020, p. 578). It is therefore crucial that the organisations employees are motivated to do their work and to do their best. Motivation is a powerful tool that can make someone act towards a particular goal. Due to this, the leaders bear some of the responsibility of motivating their employees.

Motivating employees is crucial for the growth and sustainability of an organisation. This highlights the significance of leaders and employers in establishing methods to inspire employees to enhance their job performance, thereby improving organisational performance. Employee motivation enables leaders to ensure the progress and development of the organisation. By effectively and efficiently applying various forms of motivation, leaders can achieve consistent and desirable progress within the organisation (Kalogiannidis, 2021).

As mentioned earlier, leaders play a crucial role in motivating their employees. While financial compensation may be considered the most important motivational factor, there are other, non-financial variables such as organisational culture, work environment and job satisfaction. These motivational factors are essential in boosting employee morale and enhancing their overall performance (Ramahan et al., 2020).

Another factor that leaders need to take into consideration for motivating their employees is trust. If leaders trust that their employees will take on and execute their tasks without having to micromanage them, can give them a higher sense of independence and boost their motivation regarding executing the task at hand. By motivating the employees high drive, self-sufficiency and accomplishments, the leaders instil a sense of self-fulfilment that helps the employees to get tasks done without being under the constant watch of the leader. This leaves the leaders to focus on different more impending tasks (Drewniak et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Employees motivation

"Employees are likely to stay in organisations where they believe that their capabilities, contributions and efforts are appreciated" (Febrianti & Se, 2020; Ali & Anwar, 2021, p. 22).

The term "employee motivation" is hard to define because there is a relationship between motivation and job satisfaction. While motivation is principally concerned with the goal of directed behaviour, the job satisfaction is related to the fulfilment. There is also a possibility that an employee is enjoying all the job-related activities but still has a low level of motivation (Ha et al., 2020; Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Employees who are satisfied with their work are necessary for enhancing productivity and quality. The degree of job satisfaction is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, which I will come back to later in this chapter. Also, the social

connections within the work group will contribute to determining individuals' success or failure at work. Moreover, the behaviours that contribute to the organisation's success are more likely to occur when employees are adequately motivated, exhibit a strong commitment to the organisation, and derive a high level of satisfaction from their job (Riyadi, 2020; Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Motivation plays a significant role in shaping an employee's performance at work and subsequently impacts the organisation's performance. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are other various factors that can also influence the performance of highly motivated employees. These factors include attitude, task complexity and prevailing working conditions to mention a few (Kalogiannidis, 2021).

2.3.4 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

From the previous section in this chapter, it is clear that intrinsic- and extrinsic motivation needs to be elaborated in a broader sense to highlight and dive deeper into different types of motivations that are present in the eyes of leaders and especially employees.

Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 54) states that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something". A person who has no drive or inspiration to act is characterised as unmotivated, while a person who has high drive or a desire to achieve goals is characterised as motivated. Motivation is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon, as individuals may have different understandings or degrees of motivation, and they may respond to different types of motivation.

2.3.2.1 *Intrinsic Motivation*

Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 56) define intrinsic motivation as «the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence». The definition of intrinsic motivation shows that when an individual feels moved to action by amusement or satisfaction rather than pressures or rewards, they will be positively moved to solve a task presented at hand. In other words, people are not only motivated intrinsically, as we are active and curious by nature. However, for intrinsically motivated people, the reward is performing the task or action itself that is the motivational drive. It is therefore not the benefits nor the rewards that comes after the task or action that has been done that is the motivational drive (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022).

On one hand, intrinsic motivation is inherent to individuals. On the other hand, it is present in the connection between individuals and their activities. Certain activities may evoke intrinsic motivation in people, while others may not, and not everyone is intrinsically motivated for every specific task. As intrinsic motivation is intertwined in the relationship between a person and a task, and some authors have described it as the task being captivating for the person in question, while others have defined it based on the gratification individuals derive from engaging in intrinsically motivated tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic motivation is widely regarded as a beneficial quality in the workplace, due to its positive impact on performance, creativity, general job satisfaction, and employee morale. However, individuals who are highly interested in specific aspects of their work

may tend to prioritize those tasks over others that are necessary but less engaging. This can inevitably cause buildup of work and affect the workplace, morale, and the general work environment negatively. Additionally, employees who have a strong passion for their work may feel compelled to work longer hours or be taken advantage of by leaders who assume that their enthusiasm translates to a willingness to take on more responsibilities, and therefore do not mind the extra workload placed on them (Fischbach & Woolley, 2022).

2.3.2.2 Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation can be described as *motivation driven by external rewards*. It therefore occurs when an individual engages in an activity where the goal is to achieve a specific outcome. For example, an employee that performs a task due to his or her personal conviction that it is valuable for their personal profession. This makes him or her motivated by its instrumental value rather than his or her genuine interest in the matter (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A form of extrinsic motivation is "regulation through identification", where an individual recognizes the significance of a certain behaviour and has consequently embraced its control as their own. For instance, an employee that commits names and information about clients, because they view this as an important part of their job as a sales rep to know their clientele by heart. This feels like an important and essential skill to have in their line of work and puts great importance on this skill (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Another type of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Integrated regulation involves fully incorporating identified regulations into one's sense of self. This process entails self-reflection and aligning new regulations with one's existing values and needs. As individuals internalize the reasons behind their actions and integrate them into their sense of self, their extrinsically motivated behaviours become more self-determined. Although integrated motivation shares similarities with intrinsic motivation, since it is autonomous and free from conflicts, it still remains extrinsic due to actions being driven by integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

As extrinsic motivation stems from behaviours that do not exist fundamentally it requires external influence. Individuals are more likely to engage in these types of behaviours because they are valued by significant others, like their co-workers, managers, leaders, etc., that they have a connection with. This therefore highlights the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness to facilitate internalization within individuals, groups, or cultures that are working towards a common goal (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.4 Communication and knowledge sharing

Communication and knowledge sharing is essential for any organisation, especially one that is relatively new. An organisation that is still in the start-up phase has a unique opportunity that established organisations don't have - they have the choice to do things a little differently than others in the same industry. When it comes to communication and knowledge sharing, the focus has long been on doing things that you know work, but perhaps with a few tweaks to stay relevant, the organisation can stand out. Today, there's a greater focus on technology, competition and staying "ahead of the game", which also requires better communication and a willingness to share knowledge. In this

part of the chapter, the focus will therefore be on the communication and sharing of knowledge within the organisation.

2.4.1 The importance of communication

Effective communication within an organisation is important for meeting the primary needs of employees, which include information on personal matters, job-related issues, and organisational decision-making. The method of spreading this information and the channels used are key factors to consider. The nature of the information often determines the most suitable communication channel. For personal information concerning an individual or a small group, face-to-face interaction is usually the most effective. On the other hand, when dealing with impersonal information that involves entire teams, forms, procedures, or databases can be utilized for communication. The choice of communication channel can significantly impact employees. For example, if a leader publicly announces an employee's mistake to the entire organisation, it can erode trust in leadership and lead to employee disengagement, ultimately affecting the organisation's success (Ruck & Welch, 2012).

Internal communication satisfaction can be defined as "employees' satisfaction with specific aspects of communication in interpersonal, group and organisational contexts" (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009; Verčič, 2021, p. 2). Effective communication is crucial for enhancing employee engagement. Within the framework of an organisation, employees can either be engaged or disengaged, and this is influenced by various factors, including internal communication.

In other words, internal communication is vital in establishing and maintaining effective communication systems between employers and employees, facilitating the exchange of ideas, information, attitudes, and emotions. It is essential for organisational success, improving internal relationships and communication between employees and leaders. When managed well, internal communication can increase awareness of threats and opportunities; however, poor communication can be risky. It enhances an organisation's productivity, performance, and focus on external customers (Verčič, 2021).

2.4.2 The impact of communication on knowledge sharing culture

Communication plays an important role in the organisations culture. This is because, as Rajhans (2009) states "there exists a correlation between communication and employee motivation" (p. 145). In other words, if leaders communicate with their employees in an efficient and professional manner, this motivates them to perform better and can develop a team spirit which is essential for the organisation.

Communication is essential for individuals and groups to align their efforts towards common objectives. It plays a crucial role in various aspects such as socialization, decision-making, problem-solving, and change management. Effective communication can inspire, foster trust, establish a sense of unity, and encourage active participation. It also serves as a platform for expressing feelings, sharing aspirations, and commemorating achievements. Ultimately, communication serves as the foundation for individuals and groups to comprehend their organisation, its purpose, and significance (Rajhans, 2009).

The organisations culture influences how employees think, act and respond. This also applies to how knowledge is shared throughout the organisation due to the artifacts, beliefs and values, and assumptions that are mentioned earlier in the chapter. The behaviour and willingness of employees to share knowledge within the workplace can be influenced by the organisational culture, either by supporting or hindering knowledge-sharing initiatives. It is therefore important to consider how the communication within the organisation plays out. Also, the organisation must look at which forms of communication it uses and to which degree it is promoting knowledge sharing (Ng, 2023).

One important factor in knowledge sharing is trust. Trust is built upon confidence in others' abilities and intentions, as well as the belief that they will act as expected. If employees are certain that a person lacks the necessary competence for their role or if they perceive them as disinterested, their trust in that individual will diminish. Conversely, if a person demonstrates personal integrity, fairness, and support for their colleagues, employees' trust levels are likely to increase. People are hesitant to share personal and important knowledge with those they do not trust. Therefore, trust serves as the foundation for interpersonal cooperation, enabling knowledge sharing and facilitating meaningful dialogue among individuals. It is important to note that it takes time to build up trust between and among individuals, so the organisation needs to give the employees an arena where this kind of relationship can be nurtured if the organisation wants to gain success (Ng, 2023).

Eppler (2007) says that "one can view knowledge communication as the (deliberate) activity of interactively conveying and co-constructing insights, assessments, experiences, or skills through verbal and non-verbal means" (p. 291). Oftentimes, it is the manager or leader who possesses the power to make strategic or tactical choices for a given task. Nevertheless, they frequently lack the specialized knowledge necessary to make well-informed decisions on intricate matters. By entrusting this decision-making process to an expert, who can analyse the situation more reliably due to their professional training and experience, the manager or leader have installed a kind of trust in employees that can make a difference in the way employees throughout the organisation views communication and knowledge sharing culture.

Knowledge sharing is a normal human behaviour that applies to lot of aspects in life and is also true for knowledge sharing between employees of an organisation. This behaviour is a form of social interaction where humans share their experiences, skills, and resources between each other to further knowledge acquirement. Knowledge sharing is thusly a great part of innovation and development of the workplace when employees learn and collaborate to exchange task-related information and expertise (Yeboah, 2023).

2.4.2.1 Explicit and tacit knowledge

Several categories of knowledge have been identified, however, there are two types that have stood out as more relevant for this thesis. These categories are *explicit knowledge* and *tacit knowledge*.

Explicit knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and are easily communicated and shared in the form of hard data, scientific formulae, codified procedures, or universal

principles. Thus, knowledge is viewed synonymously with a computer code, a chemical formula, or a set of general rules (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Explicit knowledge is the knowledge that is easily taught due to it being tried and tested as answers to problems before. This type of knowledge is shared with the organisations employees because it has proven to work before. Explicit knowledge is predictable and stable, making it profitable to a certain extent (Smith, 2001). However, there are factors, such as marketplace competition and a change in the customers' needs that requires organisations to come up with new knowledge to solve its problems because the explicit knowledge is not enough anymore. When the organisation reaches this point, they need to look at their work pool to see if it contains some tacit knowledge that can be used.

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is very personal and hard to express. It is deeply rooted in an individual's action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values, or emotion he or she embraces. Tacit knowledge can be difficult to communicate or share with others (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Tacit knowledge is not something that is found in manuals, books, databases, or files. It is technical or cognitive and is made-up of mental models, values, beliefs, perceptions, insights, and assumptions. Technical tacit knowledge is demonstrated when people master a specific body of knowledge or use skills like those gradually developed by master craftsmen. Cognitive tacit knowledge incorporates implicit mental models and perceptions that are so ingrained they are taken for granted. People use metaphors, analogies, demonstrations, and stories to convey their tacit knowledge to others. The value of tacit knowledge, like customer goodwill, is often underrated and underutilised in the workplace (Smith, 2001).

2.4.2.2 Communication and knowledge in team learning

When it comes to team learning, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the key aspects when it comes to communication and knowledge sharing, is its collaborative nature, which sets it apart from individual learning within a team. Senge (1990) defines team learning as "The process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire" (p. 236). This is why researchers in this field advocate for the importance of dialogue and discussion as essential elements in achieving team learning. While dialogue and discussion serve as two distinct forms of communication within a team, they both play crucial roles in the learning process. Therefore, in order to fully leverage these two forms of communication, teams must become proficient in the practices of dialogue and discussion, as well as develop the ability to differentiate between the two in order to effectively transition between them. Teams must understand that discussion is valuable in the decision-making process when consensus needs to be reached and decisions need to be made, while dialogue is geared towards exploring new and deeper perspectives on complex issues. Hence, striking a balance between dialogue and discussion is imperative for teams dedicated to learning (Rebelo et al., 2019).

2.4.3 Knowledge sharing processes and behaviour

Knowledge sharing holds immense importance in the day-to-day functioning of organisations. "Cultures that value creativity and ideas exchange are more likely to

support knowledge management initiatives” (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015, p. 146). Effective knowledge sharing processes are therefore essential for the advancement of organisations, as their progress may heavily rely on their capacity to generate and disseminate knowledge.

The act of knowledge sharing refers to employees making their opinions, skills, and know-how accessible to others within the organisation. This act of sharing knowledge not only helps in solving problems and developing ideas but also fosters mutual assistance among employees (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015). Knowledge sharing also has the potential to transform individual knowledge into collective knowledge within groups and organisations. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand that knowledge can only be shared through the active participation and collaboration of the individuals who possess it (Suppiah & Sandu, 2011; Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015). It is therefore important for the organisation to have a clear understanding of how to inspire and effectively communicate with their employees to foster knowledge sharing.

Formal and informal knowledge sharing are two distinct methods. Formal knowledge sharing involves structured training programs, while informal knowledge sharing occurs through personal relationships where individuals learn and exchange knowledge. Although both approaches facilitate knowledge sharing, evidence suggests that informal environments and relational learning channels are more commonly used for knowledge sharing (Yeboah, 2023).

It is important that the organisation decide whether to let employees participate in knowledge sharing processes or not. Also, this behaviour from the organisation lets the employees know if they are open for suggestions regarding this matter. This can be through for example feedback, where a leader can make suggestions about what they think can be and/or cannot be done, creating an open arena for ideas and enhancing motivation for sharing knowledge and contributing to the organisation’s performance (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015).

When team members perceive learning as a threat, they tend to respond defensively when faced with a problem that requires learning. This defensive response leads to addressing the symptoms of the problem (learning gap) rather than the problem itself, resulting in a "symptomatic solution". In other words, the focus shifts from the need for new understanding and behaviours to merely reducing the perceived need. Defensive routines not only hinder the emergence of conflicting ideas but also impede team learning as a whole. To foster learning within teams, it is crucial to cultivate reflection and inquiry skills, as well as create a team learning climate that defuses defensiveness (Rebelo et al., 2019).

There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration when one is trying to foster knowledge sharing, two of which are *mental models* and *team learning*.

Mental models are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (Senge, 2006, p. 8). It can be considered as tacit knowledge, since our actions are often shaped by unconscious beliefs that we are not fully conscious of. He also describes mental models as "active". For instance, if we perceive a coworker as lazy due to taking multiple breaks throughout the day, our behaviour towards them would differ compared to if we

viewed them as industrious. Individuals with contrasting mental models may witness the same situation and provide varying descriptions, as they focus on different aspects and draw different conclusions (Senge, 2006).

Team learning encompasses the acquisition of skills in dialogue and discussion, with the aim of achieving a collective understanding that surpasses the comprehension of any individual team member. The existence of team learning relies on the opportunity for practice and experimentation. Practice can be manifested in two ways: the repetition of dialogue techniques to ensure the team's internal coherence, and the provision of technical resources for the team to experiment with its concepts as a unified entity. However, it is crucial to establish the discipline of systems thinking and explicitly recognize mental models before team learning can take place (Senge, 2006).

While project-based organisations have acknowledged the advantages of knowledge transfer, the level of effectiveness in this transfer can greatly differ among different organisations. The ability to effectively manage their knowledge is often limited by their capabilities in creating, valuing, absorbing, and sharing knowledge. Therefore, it becomes crucial for project-based organisations to have a comprehensive understanding of knowledge management and how they can effectively utilize and integrate their scattered knowledge (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008).

2.4.4 Knowledge-sharing mechanisms

To facilitate the efficient exchange of knowledge among various projects, mechanisms for sharing knowledge play a crucial role in enabling individuals to access valuable information from other projects. Knowledge-sharing mechanisms are defined as «the formal and informal mechanisms for sharing, integrating, interpreting and applying know-what, know-how, and know-why embedded in individuals and groups that will aid in the performance of project tasks» (Boh, 2007, p. 28).

There are two aspects to knowledge-sharing mechanisms: personalization versus codification and individualization versus institutionalization. Individualized knowledge-sharing mechanisms promote knowledge sharing at the individual level and are typically informal and unstructured. On the other hand, institutionalized knowledge-sharing mechanisms facilitate collective knowledge sharing and are usually formal and integrated into organisational routines and structure. The distinction between codification and personalization lies in the type of knowledge being shared, whether it is codified knowledge or tacit knowledge. Similarly, the distinction between individualization and institutionalization pertains to whether knowledge is shared at the individual level or at a collective level (Boh, 2007, p. 29-30). This concept is closely connected to the concepts of tacit and explicit knowledge which have been mentioned earlier in this chapter.

3.0 Methods

This chapter will give an overview of the various approaches used to gain an understanding of my research question. The basis of the analysis (chapter 4) and discussion (chapter 5) comes from a combination of observation and interviews. This gave me the opportunity to see the topic from different angles, as well as a deeper insight into the organisation. In this chapter I will be looking at the design of the research, what types of sources I used, practical implementation, how the data was analysed, quality considerations and lastly reflections on my role as a researcher.

3.1 Research design and choosing a qualitative approach

Research serves the purpose of addressing inquiries and gaining fresh insights. In various scientific disciplines, research is commonly employed to elucidate the characteristics of an object or occurrence, uncover the connections between phenomena, or forecast forthcoming events (Marczyk et al., 2005). The research that has been conducted in this thesis does not qualify as a "pure" case study, but it has elements of a case study. In a case study, engaging in conversations with individuals and observing their behaviours in their natural environments using a qualitative research design can provide valuable insights. Therefore, I have landed on conducting the research in a qualitative manner.

Qualitative researchers commonly gather diverse types of data, including interviews and observations, rather than depending on a solitary data source. Subsequently, they meticulously examine all the data, categorizing or identifying themes that are relevant to all the sources of data. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The proximity to reality is a significant benefit in qualitative research, and this proximity does not inherently diminish the validity of findings (Silverman, 2020). Qualitative research methods are frequently employed to elucidate individuals' perceptions of a particular phenomenon or process, offering a more profound comprehension of the phenomenon and more detailed descriptions of real-world scenarios compared to quantitative research methods. Case studies involve in-depth exploration of a single case, allowing researcher to delve deeply into the complexities and nuances of a particular situation. This approach enables researchers to capture rich, contextual details about the phenomenon that is being researched (Silverman, 2020).

3.2 What a case study is

According to Thagaard (2018) case studies involve research designs that concentrate on delving deeply into a limited amount of information about specific units. They are essentially detailed examinations of a small number of units of analysis. The primary objective is to gather comprehensive information about the units or cases under investigation (p.51). These units can range from individuals to groups or even organisations. In cases where the study focuses on larger units like organisations, the analysis is centred on the organisation as a whole rather than on the individual members the researcher has data on. The units are scrutinized through thorough analyses utilizing a variety of data sources. Because the research conducted in this thesis is a section of a case study, I am not following a specific phenomenon or project from beginning to end. While it is not a comprehensive case study, the limitations of a master thesis and time mean that I focus on the elements of observation and interviews, that are parts of the

foundation of a case study. This was decided in a discussion I had with my supervisor. Since the research concentrates on certain aspects of a case study rather than all of them, it should still not be assumed that it lacks significance for individuals other than the researcher. The point being that my focus is to make sense and highlight some specific themes that are of interest both for me as a researcher, but also for the organisation that I conducted the research in. Tight (2017) noted that when examining case studies, the "social truths" of an organisation might be revealed. Thus, when presented the outcomes, the leaders can take action based upon the results (p. 30). For instance, when examining the collaborative efforts of leaders and employees in shaping the organisational culture of a recently established company, conducting observations and interviews can prove valuable in comprehending and investigating the unfolding processes.

3.2.1 Types of sources for research

When conducting research, there are several different types of sources that can be utilized, and deciding which ones to use can be difficult as they all have their strengths and weaknesses. In this thesis case studies were considered to be the most appropriate design in terms of gathering information. However, as mentioned above, due to limits regarding time etc., I was not able to conduct all parts that are associated with a case study. Therefore, I will not delve into all the methods that correspond with case studies.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that case studies encompass a wide array of concepts, spanning from individuals to organisations. By establishing a real-world context through on-site observations and participant interviews, case studies enable researchers to meticulously examine the site and conduct in-depth explorations (Taherdoost, 2021).

My focus on information sources revolves around exploring how two types of sources can shed light on the phenomenon central to the research question. The sources deemed suitable for this thesis are observation and interviews. While observation and interviews each possess their own strengths and weaknesses when considered independently, combining them has the potential to enhance the study if executed effectively (Tight, 2017).

3.2.1.1 *Observation*

Marshall & Rossman (2016) define observation as "systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, interactions, and artifacts in the social setting" (p. 143). Observation is used as a method in qualitative research because it can allow the researcher to get to know the people that are working directly with the subject that they want to learn more about. Having the opportunity to interact with them and learn their routines can be very relevant to the project. As Dingwall (1997) says "in observation, we have no choice but to listen to what the world is telling us" (p. 64).

Observation can therefore be a valuable source of information regarding the everyday life of the subject that is being researched. This also gives the researcher an idea of how the culture in the workplace plays out (Thagaard, 2018). A situation that can be relevant to observe can be e.g. a meeting between leaders and operators. Silverman (2020) refers to observation as essential if one wants to understand a culture. Observation as a research method is complex because it requires that the researcher uses their senses as

well as being aware of their role as a researcher so that they can collect data that is relevant (Baker, 2006). The phenomena that are relevant or most interesting to observer in the field, is the reoccurring activities.

3.2.1.2 Interviews

Interviews can be defined as purposeful conversations and social interactions between a researcher and an informant (Ryen, 2002). The dynamics of the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee are influenced by their individual characteristics, which shape the interview situation. Interviews are particularly effective in gaining insights into how interviewees perceive and comprehend themselves and their surroundings. The narratives shared during interviews can also be seen as a form of social action, as individuals engage in interaction with the researcher by expressing their experiences through words (Thagaard, 2018).

The semi-structured interview is perhaps the most used type of interview in the field of social sciences. In this approach, the researcher prepares a set of main questions or topics in advance, without specifying the exact wording or order of the questions. These interviews resemble informal conversations but include a greater emphasis on the questions that the interviewer intends to ask the interviewee (Ryen, 2002). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer typically relies on prepared questions based on prior research and observations of the interviewees' living or working environments. The interviewer could further explore the responses by utilizing cues such as "please elaborate" or "can you clarify that?". Interviews are appropriate for gathering interpretations, experiences, or narratives from individuals, especially when the required information cannot be obtained through any other means (Silverman, 2020).

Given that the interview is a form of social interaction, it is crucial for the researcher to remain composed and empathetic, employing the technique of "active listening" to enable the interviewee to freely express themselves and share their experiences. Additionally, it is vital for the researcher to strike a harmonious balance between establishing trust and maintaining professionalism in their role (Ryen, 2002).

3.2.2 Challenges regarding observation and interviews

Various methods present challenges, and this section will discuss some of the challenges related to observation and interviews. Observation alone may not be sufficient for conducting a thorough study in a master's thesis, but it can serve as a valuable tool to witness and experience the phenomenon under study in its natural setting (Dingwall, 1997). However, observing something can be challenging as the subjects being observed may alter their behaviour to align with the phenomenon in a way different from their usual conduct. There are four key challenges associated with observation. The first challenge involves determining what to observe, ensuring that the researcher focuses on observations that are relevant. The second challenge is recognizing and acknowledging the researcher's subjective involvement in the observation process. The third challenge is deciding how to document what is being observed, such as through recording or note-taking. The fourth challenge is articulating the observations and events that occurred during the observation. It can be complex for the researcher to convey what was observed at a previous time and express it in a manner that is understandable to individuals other than the researcher (Bardon et al., 2020, p. 2-4).

There are various challenges associated with using interviews as a research method. One challenge is that the researcher may rely on information from a particular source to describe something specific. However, the interpretation of a question or topic may differ between the researcher and the informant. A common objection to using interviews as a method is that while qualitative interviews can be credible, they may also be biased because the researcher selects the questions they want answered (Kvale, 1996; Ryen, 2002). In other words, the questions themselves may be reliable, but it is important to assess whether they are leading. Additional challenges include the possibility of the informant misinterpreting questions or providing false information in order to protect themselves or present a more favourable image to the researcher (Potter, 2018).

3.3 Practical implementation

This section provides an overview of the research methodology, encompassing the recruitment of participants, utilization of various data sources, creation of the interview guide, and execution of the interviews.

3.3.1 Selection and recruitment of participants

In the initial process of this thesis, I had to first decide on what I wanted to research. In the autumn of 2023, I made the decision on the topic I wanted to explore and identified a suitable organisation. With the assistance of my supervisor, I was able to establish contact with the organisation's HR department. This person acted as a gatekeeper in terms of allowing me to research something within their organisation. De Laine (2000, in Clark, 2011) defines gatekeepers as "the individuals that act as intermediaries between researchers and participants" (p. 486). I had a meeting with my gatekeeper where we discussed the assignment and relevant topics. After the meeting, I was directed to the new, subsidiary organisation they had established. Through communication via phone calls and email with my new contact person, it was decided that observing and interviewing employees would be the best approach for the research project. This involved two days of observation and interviews with six employees, four of which were leaders, and two employees. During the first day of observation, I discovered that my contact person had scheduled interviews without consulting the interviewees first. As a result, I took extra care in being transparent as I explained the project, their rights, anonymity, and other important details. This also resonates with what Tracy (2010) characterizes as sincerity (p. 840). My initial knowledge was not so much about the subsidiary organisation, as it is relatively new, but did have knowledge about the main organisation that I had the initial contact with. I knew that this knowledge could influence my data and analysis, therefore I was mindful of it. Nevertheless, my existing knowledge of the organisation may have provided me with valuable insights in crafting questions and communicating effectively, thereby fostering a positive rapport with the informants and demonstrating comprehension of their work environment. For further information regarding the informational letter, please see appendix A.

3.3.2 Observation in the organisation

The observation I conducted was over two days. On the first day I was able to observe a meeting that they conduct between the morning- and afternoon shifts. Before the meeting started, my contact person presented me and why I was there. I assured everyone that attended the meeting that both them and the organisation were going to

be anonymous before I handed out consent forms that all the participants of the meeting had to sign. My role in this meeting was purely to observe, and I only wrote what I saw and heard, and no interpretations. For example, if someone made a statement, I wrote "statement", and noted if there was anyone else that supported that statement. My placement in the room was in one way not ideal, as I sat behind most of the workers that actually said something, which did not give me clues such as facial expressions etc., however, I did get to blend in more, since few of the participants actually saw me, which I think led me to having more data than I would have if I had faced every participant.

On the second day of observation, I was able to sit at a desk in the open office space. I blended in more with the employees while I worked on my thesis. This gave me an opportunity to observe the employees in the organisation in a more natural way. I got to see interactions that I would not have if I sat in a closed office, and I got to walk around peeking in at different rooms such as the breakroom while employees were taking short breaks as well as lunch. I noted down interactions and behaviour, such as laughter, shifts in mood etc. I noted all of these things down, which formulated my field notes. These fieldnotes help the researcher to recall their experiences and allow us to process our experiences along the way (Thagaard, 2018, p. 84).

3.3.3 Developing the interview guide

Semi-structured interviews are commonly arranged based on a topic guide that consists of a sequential arrangement of general subjects. Each subject consists of a series of questions that serve as the foundation for the conversation between the researcher and the participant. These subjects are structured around fundamental ideas that the researcher has identified (Knott et al., 2022, p. 1). The interviews were partly based on theoretical findings before the observation, such as motivation, communication, and knowledge sharing. The other part was based on my findings during the observation at the organisation. The combination of this type of observation and following up with semi-structured interviews made it possible to get a broader understanding of the culture in the organisation. Semi-structured interviews provide a level of flexibility that benefits both the researcher and the participant. This format allows the conversation to delve into topics in greater detail if desired, while also allowing for the omission of irrelevant ones. Such flexibility enables the inclusion of unexpected and unforeseen elements within the research scope (Knott et al., 2022, p. 11). For further information about the interview guide, see appendix C.

3.3.4 Conducting the interviews

Prior to commencing the interviews, I utilized my background knowledge of the primary organisation to build trust and maintain a professional demeanour. This initial information served as a conversation starter, helping to put the informants at ease before delving into the interview process. Opting for semi-structured interviews enabled me to pose precise questions that elicited insightful responses. I also made sure to provide space for the informants to share their relevant experiences and perspectives. Establishing a strong rapport with the informants was a key focus from the outset. Throughout the interviews, I remained mindful of the potential for varying interpretations of the same scenarios (Silverman, 2020). This awareness became particularly evident during the analysis phase when I compared the interviews with the observational fieldnotes.

The study involved six interviews, each lasting an average of forty-five minutes. These interviews took place in person, either in a meeting room or the employee's private

office. I recorded the interviews on a digital voice recorder, after getting permission from the informant, so that I did not have to write anything down during the interviews, this allowed me to be present during the interviews. Recording can be essential to accurately capture the informant's precise words. Moreover, it enables the researcher to focus on determining which follow-up questions to pursue, rather than being distracted by taking notes (Knott et al., 2022). Conducting face-to-face interviews allows the researcher to observe the informant in their professional setting, providing valuable insights (Potter, 2018, p. 163). Furthermore, this method facilitates a smoother flow of conversation and eliminates distractions such as computer noise. Additionally, face-to-face interviews minimize delays between questions and answers, promoting spontaneity in the conversation. However, researchers must remain highly attentive to accurately interpret responses and non-verbal cues (Opdenakker, 2006). In cases where the informants expressed uncertainty regarding the questions, I was prepared with follow-up questions or examples to assist them in reflecting on specific inquiries.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is a dynamic process that requires researchers to constantly switch between analysing data from a distance to draw conclusions and immersing themselves in the data to confirm their insights through analysing fieldnotes and interview transcripts (Knott et al., 2022). This iterative process helps in organizing the writing process effectively. It is important to recognize that qualitative data analysis is intertwined with data collection and creation methods, as they influence the analytical procedures (Thorne, 2000).

3.4.1 Transcription and coding of data

I started the process of working with my data immediately after conducting the interviews. This is because I knew that I had to go through the voice recordings multiple times to ensure that I got all the information that I wanted transcribed for the research, which is a lengthy process. Transcription is a transformative process, where the verbal interview data is converted into a written transcript in which the researcher should carefully consider the potential impact of misinterpretation in the final analysis (Knott et al., 2022). During the analysis process, I took measures to anonymize all information regarding the informants, such as their names to safeguard their identities. After combining the transcriptions from observations and interviews, I gathered around 60 pages of transcribed material, which served as the groundwork for further analysis.

When analysing the collected data further, thematic analysis (TA) was chosen as an appropriate method. Braun & Clarke (2006) says that "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). They also highlight that TA is adaptable through its theoretical freedom that has the potential to offer a comprehensive and detailed analysis of data. Throughout the course of my coding procedure, I made use of computer applications like the "speech to text" tool, which is readily available to students at NTNU. Additionally, I employed NVivo to effectively collect and organize the various categories. In my process of making and narrowing down codes I focused on specifying them to themes that were the most important ones in relation to my project. This resulted in four main themes with subthemes, which was used to make up the thesis. In my writing process on this thesis I had physical copies of the transcripts beside me.

3.5 Quality considerations

3.5.1 Generalizability

Generalizability pertains to the extent to which the insights gained from a specific project can be applied to different contexts. It also involves assessing whether the findings are meaningful to individuals who have knowledge of the subject matter being investigated (Thagaard, 2018). According to Hays & McKibben (2021), qualitative research encompasses four types of generalizability. The initial type, known as *naturalistic generalizability*, relies on the readers' experiences and familiarity with the study topic and context within their personal and professional realms. The second type, *transferability*, places the responsibility on researchers to provide sufficient information for readers to assess the applicability of findings across different situations or contexts. *Analytic generalizability*, the third type, involves researchers translating their findings into established concepts or theories. Lastly, *intersectional generalizability* refers to the depth of understanding a community and its intersections achieved through thorough research (p. 179). Generalizing from a single master's study might be difficult due to the constraints related to time and space (words), which can impact the readers capacity to evaluate the study's quality. What can be difficult in terms of this specific thesis, is that the organisation where I conducted my research is relatively new and that the way they produce products is new, making it hard to grasp since there is no prior research to look at for this specific type of organisation. Also, the time and word limit might not give the themes enough space to elaborate in greater detail.

3.5.2 Reliability and validity

The reliability of research refers to the credibility and consistency of the results, as well as their ability to be replicated by other researchers in different situations. It also includes the likelihood of participants giving varying responses when interviewed by a different researcher. The validity of research results and data interpretation is closely linked. It refers to the accuracy and soundness of the researcher's interpretations. To improve validity, researchers should be transparent by explaining their theoretical perspective and showing how their analysis supports their conclusions. Validity is enhanced through a critical review of the analysis process (Thagaard, 2018). Due to the lack of public information available about the organisation where I conducted my research, it can be challenging to assess the reliability of it. In terms of ensuring the research's validity, I strived to be as transparent as possible, as well as using two sources to study the same phenomenon. As a result, descriptions of the procedures for obtaining informants, the gathering of data material and the analysis process are described above.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

When conducting a comprehensive study, it is crucial to address ethical considerations. Research that involves close interaction between the researcher and the individuals being studied, such as through observation and interviews, yields data that can be linked to the participants (Thagaard, 2018). NESH (2021) has established various guidelines regarding ethical conduct, one of which emphasizes the importance of considering the well-being of individuals: "Researchers have a responsibility towards all those involved in or participating in the research. They must uphold their human dignity and ensure their personal integrity, safety, and welfare" (p. 8, my translation). Ethical considerations

should be upheld throughout the entire research process, even beyond its completion (Silverman, 2020).

3.5.3.1 Informed consent

Considering ethical factors is essential when conducting research on individuals and their thoughts and experiences. Participants should be fully informed about their involvement in the research project and provided with comprehensive information about the project (Ryen, 2002). This information should clearly outline the purpose, methodology, and approach of the research, as well as explain what data will be collected, how it will be used, and who will have access to it. It should also describe the procedures for processing, storing, using, and reusing research data, while ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Obtaining voluntary consent from participants, without any undue pressure or restrictions on their freedom of choice, is of utmost importance (NESH, 2021, p. 19-20). In my case, I used a standardized template provided by SIKT, which included information about the study's purpose, responsible parties, and confidentiality measures. However, I discovered that my contact person had not explicitly asked the informants to participate in the research, which could have negatively affected the study. Nevertheless, before conducting the interviews, I made it clear to the informants that their participation was voluntary. I assured them that if they chose not to participate or wanted to withdraw from the project at any point, their decision would be respected, and any data collected about them would be promptly deleted. For more information on informed consent see appendix B.

3.5.3.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a crucial ethical consideration that must be incorporated to safeguard both the participants and the organisation. When researchers assure informants of confidentiality, they are making a commitment to treat the research data with confidentiality and refrain from disseminating it in any manner that exceeds the agreed terms (NESH, 2021). It is essential to provide information regarding who will have access to the data throughout the project, which in this case was limited to my myself and my supervisor. This information was stated in the information letter. The principle of confidentiality imposes certain responsibilities on how the researcher handles the information shared by the participants. Moreover, confidentiality holds research significance beyond participant protection; anonymizing the participants in the presentation of the findings helps direct the reader's attention towards comprehending the social phenomena elucidated in the analysis (Thagaard, 2018). Additionally, I had to sign an NDA (Non-disclosure agreement) from the organisation where I conducted my research, which can be seen as another layer of commitment for me as a researcher to uphold confidentiality regarding the organisation and their employees.

Throughout the transcription process, I used codes instead of names for both my observation notes and transcribed audio files. I informed participants at the start of the meeting observation and before each interview that the audio files would be deleted after the project ended. I also anonymized any organisational information, including the names of the main and subsidiary organisations involved in the research, during transcription. To enhance confidentiality, I kept the signed consent forms, in paper form, in a secure location that only I could access, minimizing the risk of participants being identified through the transcribed data.

3.6 Reflections on my role as a researcher

Throughout the qualitative research process, the researcher plays a crucial role in making various decisions. At each stage of this project, I have been mindful of my own involvement, ensuring that my prior knowledge of the main organisation did not hinder my ability to remain open and transparent in this subsidiary organisation. Additionally, I have consciously avoided dwelling on any information I may have heard from individuals working in the main organisation, as disclosing the topic of my research could potentially bias my evaluation of the observation and interview data I have collected. My objective was to gather unbiased information without imposing any labels on people's statements or actions. I am confident that I have successfully achieved this and that the empirical findings accurately reflect the intended responses of the participants. Further elaboration regarding considerations I made on my role as a researcher that may have impacted on the project, is discussed in the sections above.

4.0 Empirical findings

In this chapter, the findings from the analysis of the data material will be presented and will work as a basis for the discussion in chapter 5.

This chapter is divided into several larger categories which include subcategories, which are the themes I want to describe. All quotes are marked with quotation marks and are translated by me from its original language Norwegian to English. The informants have been given the following random pseudonyms, regardless of their gender, in order to protect their anonymity: Christian, Jackson, Richard, Alex, Bill & William. Christian, Richard, Alex and William are leaders, or functionaries (F) as the organisation calls it, and Jackson and Bill are employees, or operators (O). During the interviews some of the informants had more to say than others.

The main categories, with subcategories are illustrated in the model below

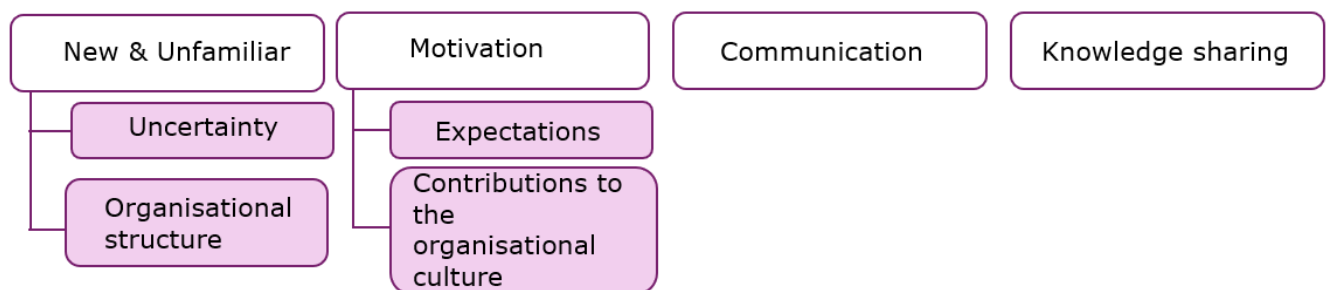


Figure 2. Model of themes found.

4.1 Findings from observations

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to observe the people who work in the organisation over two days. On the first day, I was given a tour of the organisation's premises and got to meet several of the people who work there, then I got to observe a shift meeting they have every weekday. This is to inform the evening shift what the day shift has done, as well as what remains to be done. This meeting took place in the break room. Both functionaries and operators were present. Richard (F) was the person responsible for the meeting, and therefore also led the meeting. The employees were briefed on the day's agenda and priorities, as well as an update on how far the outgoing shift had come. I noticed that several of the employees took the floor and either made statements or asked questions. Especially when an issue was raised with a piece of equipment that the workers themselves had the opportunity to decide how they wanted it made. On day two, I had the opportunity to sit in the open-plan office and work. This gave me a unique opportunity to "blend in" with the employees and perhaps gave me a chance to "take the temperature of the organisation".

My conclusion from this meeting is that the functionaries want to collaborate with the operators so that they feel a sense of ownership in the organisation. The functionaries give the operators choices about what they want to do, and that they are open to suggestions and opinions. As a result of day two, I was able to reinforce my impression that this organisation is more open in terms of communication and has a flatter

hierarchical structure than what I have experienced in previous organisations. Functionaries who had their own offices were rarely there alone, it was often that operators from the "floor" came by and asked questions or needed help with something. This helped to reinforce what I wanted to dig deeper into during the interviews, such as motivation and the relationship between functionaries and operators.

4.2 New & unfamiliar

What is special about the organisation I got to research is that it is a relatively new start-up subsidiary; the first employee was hired about a year ago. One of the people I interviewed had not even worked at the new organisation for more than a month at the time of the interview. The fact that everything is so new also affects the organisation in several ways; things are not quite in place and there are several fixed routines that are still being formed. This is precisely what forms the basis for the "new & unfamiliar" category.

In the new organisation, the workforce is made up of employees recruited both internally from the main organisation and externally from other organisations. This leads to a mixed workforce, where some of the employees have changed job titles and somewhat different work styles or positions.

The informants came up with several answers and points during the interviews where they themselves referred to the fact that things were still so new and that they are still in a start-up phase, or phase 1 as they themselves called it. William (F) described the job as *"a job without a job description"*. Alex's (F) answer is consistent with what William said, when he says that *"in the beginning my role was loosely defined, so I feel that I have largely helped to define it as it is spanning out now"*. The same applies to Christian (F) who also expresses that his role has *changed from the time he was hired until now*.

Also, during Christian's (F) interview, he talks about innovation and development being a big focus during this phase, but also that he wants to have a bigger focus on working with the operators, or any colleague for that matter. He states that *"sometimes we may have to waltz between what one has to do, figure out how to adapt to others and how to claim one's own place"*. Because the longer time things take, the greater the need for knowing how things are going to be dealt with. No one has *"walked this path before"*, so figuring out what needs to be in focus at the time is a matter of balance and figuring things out as they go.

It is clear that among the employees, that their job has changed a lot since the recruitment and hiring process. Several functionaries have seen that their role cannot be put under a fixed description, but that it is adjusted and changed as the organisation develops. For the operators, it is not as "fluid" when it comes to role description and what they do, but they have pointed out some changes from previous positions, although they are more of an elevation of what they were doing before.

4.2.1 Organisational structure

Organisational structure has a lot to do with how employees work together on a day-to-day basis, and one of the things that I noticed not only during the observation but also

during the interviews was that this organisation is structured in a slightly different way to the main organisation - there is, for example, a flatter hierarchical structure.

Christian (F) pointed out that *"the idea behind the way the organisation is structured is that most things should be worked on, solved and decided in teams"*. The teams should be composed of employees with different knowledge and roles in the organisation so that they form groups that can play off each other; so-called autonomous teams. The aim is for employees to work across areas and be able to assist where needed; so-called multi-discipline. Having autonomous teams is also something several of the informants mentioned and perceived as positive. Because this can mean that they are getting a clearer picture of what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and what they themselves can contribute with. Also, this can provide learning opportunities and expand each employees knowledge regarding the projects they are working on.

Alex (F) also pointed out that the way the organisation thinks about this way of structuring itself was *one of the things that attracted him to the organisation*. He found it exciting that the organisation was intended to be slightly different in terms of hierarchy and structure. At the same time, the organisation is still in the establishment phase, and something Alex (F) talked about was that the structure is still not set, which may mean that the operators in particular are still a little uncertain about such collaboration. *"The hope is that by having a flatter hierarchy from the start will help to create a flatter structure and a somewhat simpler working day"*.

One of the things that several of the internally recruited employees pointed out is that one of the management levels, the "foreman", has been cut out in the new organisation. This means that each individual employee comes to the fore to a greater extent. Bill (O) says that *"I feel that I have gained more ownership of the workplace, and that this means that I also feel a greater sense of responsibility"*.

It is clear that an organisation as new as this one is, the structure has not settled down yet, and perhaps hasn't reached everyone. But it is also clear that the way in which the organisation is structured is a common reason why several of the employees, both functionaries and operators, applied to join the organisation. Perhaps this way of structuring will also reach out to more departments at the main organisation if it works.

4.2.2 Uncertainty

It goes without saying that when a completely new type of organisation is formed under another organisation, it comes with some uncertainty. This can be many things, such as the organisational structure described above. Another factor may be that workers have been recruited both internally from the main organisation, but also externally from other organisations.

Part of the uncertainty that was captured during the research process was that routines had not yet been established, and that this could create some uncertainty about the work and conditions of other employees. In addition, the organisation is working with new technology, where there are not yet any blueprints or drawings of how things should be done. Richard (F) points out that the technology they are working with is *not new, but the way in which it is used is, and that the organisation really feels like a test station at the moment*. Not all aspects of the organisation are in place yet, and the roles of the

employees, as Alex (F) mentions, may become more segregated in the future. However, that can only be speculations as the organisation is still expanding and moving through its initial phases.

4.3 Motivation

During the research process, I talked to all the employees about motivation and what it looked like for them. This is because motivation can be many things, but also because it is a driving factor for wanting to go to work and develop. When it comes to observed motivation, if you can call it that, there was a lot of laughter in the offices where I spent my time while I was there. In addition, I saw collaboration between employees with similar jobs talking loudly about both how to improve things, but also asking for help. During the interviews, motivation and what motivates each individual was one of the core questions I asked.

The common thread running through all the responses was that all stakeholders said that there is something new and exciting happening. For example, Jackson (O), who had been working for the main organisation for a long time and was getting tired of his job before this subsidiary organisation was created. For him, thus new subsidiary organisation was perhaps the key to why he is still employed by the main organisation, he says: *"I was really ready to leave and start somewhere new because I wanted to learn something new and something that challenged me; and here I get that"*.

For Christian (F), motivation came in the form of *helping to build something new and being able to have a greater focus on working as a team with employees*. Alex (F) expressed that his main motivation was *his interest in technology and the aspect of being involved in designing and developing something new*. In addition, he sees the opportunity as unique as there are no similar jobs in his neighbourhood. One of his biggest motivating factors is, as he says, *"It is one thing to develop something concrete within production, but being able to help develop your own position was something that was very exciting for me."*

William (F) expressed that some of his motivation lies within him having free reigns within the aspect of creating what he thinks has to happen for the organisation to succeed. His main interest lies in trying to create the culture that they are wanting to have and that every employee is committed to and want to work together for the organisation to succeed. He wants to spread this type of workplace and work environment to the world. While Bill (O), talked about the concept of this new organisation as intriguing in addition to him being tired of his old tasks as his main motivation for applying to the new organisation. Not that his new tasks are that much different from before, but that they may be executed in a different way. Through these answers, as well as similar answers from the other informants, it is clear that the organisation has managed to distinguish itself from others, which motivates many, perhaps especially those who have been employed by the main organisation for many years.

4.3.1 Expectations

Due to the nature of the organisation being as new as it is, it was natural for the subject of expectations to come up. It may be somewhat difficult to give concrete examples of expectations at this point in time, as there are still many new things to be implemented in the organisations everyday work. However, the answers that came up varied greatly among both functionaries and operators. They talked about expectations they have of themselves and expectations they have of others in the organisation.

Jackson (O) talked about having a sense of a greater degree of independence and interest. Also, his hope is that every employee takes responsibility for themselves. He feels that the employees within this new organisation *"have become more self-directed"* and that every individual still *"need to be more curious about the things that are happening"* in order for the organisation to thrive.

William (F) expresses that he has never felt that he *"have had to be clear about any expectations, as I feel that we have a common goal that we should work towards"*. This includes clarification of expectations. Collaboration between the functionaries and the operators seems to play a central role in all of the informants' responses, as they all say that it is easier to communicate with each other in the new organisation than they have felt in previous organisations. But this is something I will come back to later in the chapter.

Richard (F) is perhaps the functionary who works closest with the operators, so his expectations are more in the form of wanting to work more towards design, while also wanting to make things easier for production. In the long term, he therefore expects to be at the forefront of the organisation's projects and for the operators to be more independent. This corresponds well with what Bill (O) says about also wanting to be ahead of the deadline so that they can produce more. This is also something several of the informants mentioned - the want to be ahead of the production plan in order to excel the main organisations plans for the subsidiary organisation.

Christian (F) talked about how it was a bit difficult to set certain expectations at this point. Of course, the "general" expectations of how he wants the daily operation of the organisation to function came up. However, he reflected on how one of the most demanding tasks he and other functionaries have *"is that everyone should feel a sense of community and that they feel included, that they are part of the same thing in order to create a unified organisation"*. Further he said that *"Ensuring that every employee feels valued and included within the organisation is a top priority for me"*.

4.3.2 Contributions to the organisational culture

This is perhaps the most important aspect, as it is precisely the organisational culture that is at the heart and core of this thesis. What I wanted to get answers on from the informants was mainly how they thought that they themselves could contribute to forming the organisational culture. For the functionaries, it was mostly about their role in relation to the operators, while for the operators there was a trend towards their role in relation to other operators and between operators and functionaries.

During the days I was at the organisation observing, I noticed that there was almost constantly a physical conversation between a functionary and an operator, or several operators and functionaries. This may perhaps indicate that the individuals in the various roles work together to solve problems, for example, as soon as they arise. This was also something Christian (F) talked about in his interview. He was clear that he wants the functionaries and operators to "play on the same team". In addition, he expressed that he wanted closer relationship building, as this can lead to individuals being more confident in each other, also when it comes to talking about everything, including things that happen in the employee's private life. This corresponds well with what Jackson (O) said that "work environment and culture is so much more than just work, it can also include talking about leisure".

Alex (F) reflected on how he must ensure that he is able to take in how the structure of the organisation is established and what other people in the organisation are doing. "I need to be flexible and keep up with what is required of my role in the phase we are in now. in addition, I need to be available with the expertise I have, as well as being patient, flexible and solution-oriented".

One thing that can be a little difficult to pinpoint at this phase in the organisation is that there seems as if there is not a profound professional environment yet. A concern that Christian (F) rose was whether or not the organisation was considered as being attractive as an employer. There are professionals and experts that work there, but due to its novelty, his concern there may not seem to be an established "professional environment" from an outsider's point of view yet.

Another thing I noticed was William's (F) comment that he tries to "take every opportunity to have a chat with whomever it might be". This shows that the functionaries also try to co-operate with the operators. Alex (F) pointed out that due to the newness of the organisation the employees "need to be available and willing to share for example competencies and/or experiences so that each individual contributes to the making and development of the culture".

Lastly, Richard (F) talks about "being open for suggestions to e.g. equipment that can make the operators days easier, and that they should come up with suggestions or wants in terms of what they need for this to happen". He states that "*If the operators feel that they are included in these types of decisions this may give them more of a sense of ownership*".

4.4 Communication

One thing that recurred both during the interviews, but which I also picked up during the observation, was that the focus for everyone was communication between all employees, regardless of role, and that this is central to realising their wishes regarding the organisational culture.

When asked general questions about how the individuals perceive the communication in the organisation, the answers were unambiguously "good". None of the operators feel that it is difficult to get hold of the officials if they need to. Jackson (O) elaborates with an example:

If two people with different skills are working on the same thing, the person with the main responsibility can express their wishes about how they want the job to be done and, in this way, the two of them can organise the job so that it can be done in the best and easiest way.

Facilitation is therefore a point that comes up, because if you can communicate together about how to solve a task together, this can save both time and possible frustration.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, it is clear that having a "low threshold" for communication between all parties is important. Alex (F) says that he doesn't feel that operators and functionaries are keeping to themselves in the new organisation, as many may have experienced in previous organisations. One factor why this may be the case is that the operators and functionaries work under the same roof, with only a door/gate and stairs separating the offices from the production. This also makes it easier for the functionaries to understand what the operators are talking about - as they can go and see the product they are talking about if it concerns a product.

4.5 Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is perhaps one of the things this organisation has brought to the fore. All employees are recruited to the organisation - no one is placed there by the main organisation. In order for the organisation to succeed, it is essential that employees share their knowledge in order to develop both themselves and the organisation.

The first point that came naturally when it comes to knowledge sharing is training. All respondents answered that the main organisation requires all employees to have a certain amount of training on the same subject. This general training is something everyone has to go through. Furthermore, none of the respondents answered that they have received specialised training in what they are currently doing. *"There are no routines for specialised training for the various roles yet. We're still in the process of creating routines; they haven't been established yet. Everything is new, including the way things are done"*, is the answer Richard (F) gives. Alex (F) is perhaps a little more reflected in his answer when he says that *"the long-term goal is for us to structure the training better; we may not have shared our expertise yet, but since the organisation is still in the establishment phase, we have had to prioritise"*. This may indicate that the management and officials have thought about it, but simply haven't had the time to structure it at this point.

As William (F) explains, one of the knowledge-sharing initiatives currently underway in the organisation is that they have built up a production system that includes TV screens throughout the building where the production status will be available to everyone and shared in real time. This measure wasn't up and running while I was at the organisation, but I noticed that there were several screens up on the walls. The reason for this measure is, as William (F) says, *"a measure that deals with all employees being always aware of the status of the project in production"*.

Operators Jackson and Bill probably have not realised all the measures that the organisation is working on yet. But they clearly state that they do not see it as a problem to contact others if they need help from someone with different or more expertise. At the

same time, they are willing to learn if there is a need for more specialised expertise from them.

4.6 Summary

So far, in this chapter, I have presented the findings from the analysis of the data material. In this section, I will therefore briefly go through the key points for each theme.

New & unfamiliar: Since this is a brand-new organisation, for many it can feel like a testing ground for how things should be and what the positions will be like. This is reflected in the job descriptions, where several of the informants say that their role is created as the organisation develops. The structure is also unusual for everyone, as the foreman level has been removed from the organisation and employees have greater responsibility for themselves and their colleagues.

Motivation: The common denominator for everyone is that they feel motivated to work in the new organisation. This is partly due to their ability to challenge themselves and work together to create the workplace they want it to be. The employees have a greater sense of independence and work together to achieve goals. The functionaries have worked hard to create a space where each employee has the opportunity to realise themselves and their goals through their work, which also shines through in my findings. A lower threshold for functionaries and operators to talk to each other also helps to shape the organisational culture in a direction where collaboration between all employees is included and heard.

Communication: Throughout the process of observation and interviews, it is clear that communication between all parties in the organisation is crucial to how the organisational culture is shaped. During both observation and interviews, it became clear that both functionaries and operators feel that communication is currently good. The functionaries are dedicated to have a low threshold for the operators to come and talk to them about anything.

Knowledge sharing: Since most of the roles in the new organisation are still being developed, there is currently no set routine or formula for knowledge sharing, but during the interviews it was explained which measures are intended to be implemented in the near future. However, the informants emphasise that sharing one's own knowledge, as well as being open and willing to receive knowledge, is essential for development within the organisation.

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter, my focus will be on the significant discoveries that have been presented in chapter 4. I will thoroughly examine these findings in connection with previous research and the theoretical contributions made in the field. The foundation for this analysis lies in the experiences shared by the informants and the pertinent theory discussed in chapter 2. The themes that will be covered in this chapter are: Design of an organisation, organisational structure, learning in a project-based organisation, motivation and communication and knowledge sharing. For me, as a researcher, all of the themes that are presented in this chapter is interconnected. However, the themes will be presented in a linear matter. In this chapter, the functionaries (F) will be presented as “leaders”, while the operators (O) will be presented as “employees”.

5.1 The design of an organisation

The way that an organisation is designed is part of the decision on how things are intended to work or play out in the organisation, whether it is about structure, hierarchy or how the employees communicate and share knowledge. There are different ways of designing an organisation, and it is therefore important that the founders and leaders of an organisation talk about and reflect on what they want their organisation to look like and how it can be to work at. Some questions that they can use in this thought process and that can be points for discussion can be, for example, “What are we trying to create?” and “How are we trying to design different parts of the organisation to achieve this?”

In the organisation that is the focus in this thesis, the organisation has a design that may be typical for their type of industry, but that is hard to narrow down into one specific “design type”. The organisation is in one way project-based, as they rely on contracts and projects for their production. However, the work staff is the same on almost every project, which makes it atypical as a project-based organisation. The adaptation between a hierarchical, yet flat structured organisation and a project-based organisation makes it somewhat difficult to define. One thing that Richard (F) mentioned in his interview, was that, «we are very focused on resource management here - we need to move to object management; that the object should go through as quickly as possible». This indicates that the organisation has a lean, agile type of approach to their organisational design. A project-based organisation can also be called an “agile organisation” because it shares the same characteristics. Lauenroth (2024, n.p.) states that an agile organisation “is characterized by its ability to adapt to new market requirements in a short amount of time”, but how do you bring that mindset? During my observation at the organisation in this thesis, I heard that someone mention that they were already looking at adapting the production lines in the building – a building that was not there a year ago – because they wanted to be ahead of the potential contracts that could come in.

To have the organisation be somewhat based upon projects seems to be a good fit for the industry in which they are operating. One thing that indicates this is that projects present ideal circumstances for generating fresh insights. Projects entail the creation of novel products or services to be executed by a highly independent, multifunctional or multidisciplinary group. The lack of strict hierarchy and the variety of perspectives at play are likely to foster a conducive environment for creativity and innovation. The effectiveness of project-based organisations is contingent upon decentralized team

collaboration and the initiatives of project managers who operate with a certain level of autonomy. Effective coordination within and between parts of the organisation is crucial for ensuring that knowledge acquired in one project is preserved for future use in other projects, as well as for enhancing project processes over time. (Sydow et al., 2004).

5.1.2 Organisational structure

As part of the organisational design, the organisational structure plays an important role in the daily operations. The structure of an organisation helps to determine who can make decisions and how information is shared or disseminated, this is something that will be discussed further when the theme of communication and knowledge sharing is presented. How the organisation is structured in terms of roles and who has the power to make decisions is also relevant. In the organisation where I conducted my research, clear, conscious choices have been made in relation to how the organisation is structured and how they want the structure to be. However, there are always things that can be improved.

When analysing the data material it became apparent that many informants mentioned the organisation's structure. The organisation in question has taken a unique step in their field by eliminating one of the management levels, the foreman. This deliberate decision was made by the leaders during the organisation's "design" phase. William (F) highlighted that this change was intended to be a part of the organisational culture, empowering employees to take more responsibility in determining their tasks and priorities. Additionally, removing the foreman is expected to facilitate easier communication between employees and the necessary leaders. However, the absence of a foreman may also lead to confusion and uncertainty regarding the organisational structure and hierarchy. This raises questions about the need for external hierarchy in terms of roles, charts etc, as well as self-organisation around tasks, purpose, and values.

As stated in chapter 2, the organisational structure plays a significant role in establishing internal relationships within an organisation. This structure assigns and determines roles, which helps to prevent misunderstandings (Burton & Obel, 2018). It can also allow employees to communicate directly with individuals who have more authority, eliminating the need for intermediaries like foremen. Due to this, individuals might organise themselves around task accomplishment, projects or what they think their purpose is rather than the organisational structure or hierarchy of positions. During the interviews, Bill (O) told me that he felt more freedom in this new organisation, meaning that he had a greater sense of accomplishment because he felt that he did not have the foreman "breathing down his neck". While I was at the organisation observing, I went into the break room at one point to get some water and noticed that there were several employees sitting at a table discussing tasks. I sat down to check my phone and overheard them talking about not knowing what to do, and since they did not know, they just took a break. I asked someone about this later and got an answer

This is something that was in some way common to do in the main organisation. If they did not get directions from the foreman or a leader and they did not know what to do, they took a break. Sometimes, when they are tired, they would, and still do in the new organisation, stop work earlier and just wait until the next shift start and let them do the work instead.

This leads me to think that there are some negative aspects of removing the foreman, as a person who would overlook the production and maybe clarify questions and tasks for the employees. Also, this may indicate that some of the attitudes of the employees, in this case specifically those that came from the main organisation, brought with them a mentality of shoving the work on someone else when you do not want to do it yourself. This can indicate that it is an aspect of organisational culture that employees have taken with them, and that it still plays a role for their everyday lives in the new organisation.

Another thing that is worth mentioning is the structure of project-based organisations, who produce their products based on contracts. Their structure involves several different structures that are established temporarily. However, the organisation can adopt some of the structures and make them a part of the organisation's everyday operations since it can provide stability to their methods of operation. As mentioned previously, the organisation that is the focus in this thesis, is somewhat project-based since their production and daily operations are based on contracts. Most of the employees that came from the main organisation are, as Richard (F) mentioned, used to the type of production that goes on in the new organisation, it is just some of the technology that is different. This causes the structure of the organisation to fluctuate between a hierarchical structure, where it is the leaders who decide more in the daily operations, and a flatter structure, where the employees are more in charge of their tasks. The fact that some of the cultural aspects from the main organisation, such as the employees taking additional breaks or shifting work to the next shift, can indicate that this mindset is something that is not so simple to change.

Additionally, external influences contribute to shaping the organisational culture, indicating that the culture does not have to be strictly one-sided (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008). In the organisation where I conducted my research, the decisions regarding what the product should look like in terms of function and purpose is made by the company who has given them the contract – they have the final say in the design of the product. However, as several of my informants mentioned, the types of products they produce are in some ways similar to the products produced in the main organisation, causing several of the employees to be familiar with the product types. Therefore, they have good feedback as to what could make the product better than what it was anticipated to be. In other words, they can, from the drawings of the products see what can be improved and go to the leaders that are in contact with the buyer about possible improvements. There are several examples of agile organisations that apply these type of production methods, with Tesla being one of the frontrunners. Tesla innovate so fast that in the production line, almost every car is unique because people will make changes and it will be implemented into the car that is on the conveyor belt now, not the car before – and they are constantly doing this (Daum, 2022).

Starting a new job can induce stress, particularly when the organisation, as the one I have researched, is newly established. Throughout my period of observation and interviews within the organisation, it proved challenging to discern the structure of the culture in relation to Schein's levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (2017, p. 18). The organisation's daily operations had not yet been established, and all systems were not fully operational during the time of this study.

During the days where I got to observe the organisation, I did witness unplanned interactions between various employees and leaders, where initial connections were met

with serious facial expressions and concern that eventually transformed into smiles and laughter as they collectively resolved issues. This made me curious if this is due to the removal of the foreman, since the main organisation or other organisations that the informants mentioned, had to go to their foreman with their problems or concerns and then the foreman had to take those problems or concerns further up the "chain of command", which can lead to misinterpretations or misunderstandings. Furthermore, I thought about if the employees were nervous about how things would play out during this contact, if the concerned appearance was a result of a new issue, because within this organisation they are not necessarily able to immediately "know" the right answer like they might have with traditional structures.

However, Jürgen Klopp said something during a recent press conference, that can also be a way to look at how a new organisations structure is built, "If we fail, then let's fail in the most beautiful way" (Hunter, 2024). There is something about that attitude that is not about positive or negative outcomes, it is about something more fundamental and about the opportunity for learning. The organisation in this thesis is still in its initial stages, with leaders and employees alike in the process of learning "what goes where" and "who does what". Linking this to the quote from Klopp, they can focus on learning from processes around their tasks or projects, solving problems etc., implicitly or explicitly, and can experience that no matter the outcomes, something in this new structure and organisational culture works. When a task is presented, the challenge is not to fall back or rely on old habits.

5.1.3 Learning in a project-based organisation

In today's global economy, all organisations must learn to evolve if they wish to survive. However, there are some aspects of learning that can be difficult to comprehend for both leaders and employees of an organisation. The organisation may want to push, for example courses on their employees, because they want their organisation to master some content or say they have some specific competence. While at the same time, the employees may not want to participate in that course because they do not understand what they will get out of it, due to them not being interested in it.

In project-based organisations there is rarely an arena present where leaders and employees can conduct an open and honest analysis of failures and mistakes. It is unfortunate that successful projects merely indicate the adequacy of methods used for a specific task, while failed projects often provide more valuable insights (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008). Luckily, in the organisation that is being investigated in this thesis, there was room for this type of analysis. In fact, all the leaders that I interviewed were clear that they wanted to create an arena for this, because unlike typical project-based organisations in general, they are made up of a permanent work force that will collaborate on all projects in the organisation.

Furthermore, when looking at how the organisation is designed and structured, there seems to be an interest from the leaders to foster learning. During the interviews, all of the informants brought up the fact that the organisation is brand new. Moreover, Christian (F) emphasized the desire for all employees to be able to contribute to multiple areas of the organisation, being so-called "multidisciplinary" and working in teams. The leaders need to look at what it is in the design of the organisation – if there is a focus on learning or fostering learning. This raises the question of "Have they mentioned this explicitly or is it just lying there implicitly?" In order for the organisation to foster a

culture of learning, it is essential to establish a space where open dialogue and discussion are encouraged. This enables the creation of a collective understanding that surpasses the knowledge of any individual member, ultimately leading to a team comprehension (Senge, 2006).

Being a type of project-based organisation has both benefits and challenges to it. First of all, the most beneficial point that the organisation has, since it does contain the same work staff on all of the organisation's projects, is that they have time to reflect on and analyse difficulties or failures that occur during or after the production (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008). If the organisation did not have the same workforce for all of their projects and did not institutionalise some kind of reflective process after the production, they would risk losing their employees due to burn out and lack of commitment. It is through the process of analysing and reflecting on the work that has been done – both what was positive and negative – that they foster organisational learning. If this is not done, they risk running from one project to another, not bringing the potentially valuable lessons (or knowledge) from the previous project with them.

In considering the more ambiguous or problematic aspects of projects, it is evident that the advantages of highly concentrated, efficient, and independent knowledge work conducted within projects also come with their corresponding disadvantages. Maintaining a strong focus on the project often results in a lack of concern or disregard for matters outside of it. Working at a fast pace leaves little time for reflection and documentation of experiences or lessons learned. Additionally, autonomy can lead to the development of a knowledge silo within your project team, isolating it from other projects or the broader organisation. In the organisation in question though, the leaders made it clear that they did not want to compromise things such as safety, which is one of their main concerns and focus. Also, their extensive meeting schedule, which they have in various teams and on several platforms to get everyone up to date and checking the status of the production and what they are going to do next. However, the employees did not say anything in regards of excessive meetings, leading me to wonder if they are included in these types of meetings or not. The leaders may need to look into whether they include their employees enough in terms of gaining valuable knowledge before, during and after the project. To promote learning between projects and across organisational levels, firms or collaborative groups may employ various strategies and methods to facilitate knowledge transfer (Sydow et al., 2004). This is something that I will come back to later in the discussion.

To sum up this section, the culture of an organisation is greatly influenced by its design and structure. It is crucial for leaders and employees to consider how they want their organisation to appear, as there are various approaches to designing an organisation. For instance, in a project-based organisation that relies on contracts, effective coordination is essential within and between organisations to ensure that knowledge gained from one project is preserved for future use in others (Sydow et al., 2004). Similarly, if an organisation in an industry with a hierarchical structure decides to transition to a flatter structure, they must recognize that the structure plays a role in the decision-making process for assigning roles and responsibilities (Burton & Obel, 2018). Additionally, organisations must prioritize learning and development in order to evolve and thrive. This can be achieved by fostering a culture of learning through open dialogue and discussion, which facilitates the creation of a shared understanding (Senge, 2006).

5.2 Motivation

Motivation emerged as another significant theme during the analysis process. It plays a crucial role in shaping the organisational culture, as highlighted in chapter 2. However, deciphering motivation can be challenging since it varies from person to person. Some individuals prioritize external factors like rewards, bonuses, or professional growth to establish a stronger connection with the organisation. On the other hand, some find intrinsic motivation in the tasks themselves, finding them inherently rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Given these individual differences, it is essential for leaders not only to understand their own motivations, like Christian (F) who wishes to prioritize employee well-being, but also to identify what motivates each and every employee. Motivation does not conform to a universal mould. By recognizing what motivates their employees, leaders can effectively engage and inspire them, which in its turn can lead to increased job satisfaction.

It became evident from the interviews that several of the employees, including both functionaries and operators, had found new motivation since they started working for the new organisation. Jackson (O) had contemplated leaving his job in search of something new, as he had grown weary and desired fresh challenges. William (F) found motivation in the freedom to create what he believed was necessary for the organisation's success and prosperity. One factor that can be daunting is the fact that everything is still so new, and thus, mistaking work ethic for motivation. However, Alex (F) highlighted the positive momentum of being able to shape his own role, which can be seen as intrinsic motivation and appears to be the prevailing type of motivation among all the interviewees. What I see from this, is that when employees are motivated, they are more likely to be productive and perform their best. An increase in productivity benefits not only the individual but it can also contribute to the overall success of the organisation.

As mentioned previously, leaders must recognize the sources of motivation for both themselves and other employees. One way they can do this is by looking at which leadership style they want to pursue and that aligns with their own and their employee's behaviour. Since leadership is a process to influence others (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020), the style they use is often a reflection of and suited to the behaviour of the employees. Since leadership involves influencing others, the leadership style often reflects the leader's personality, values, and qualities. This, in turn, impacts the ongoing operations and growth, making the leader partially responsible for fostering harmony between employee needs and organisational objectives (Drewinak et al., 2020).

In contrast, employees must communicate their motivational factors to both their colleagues and their leader. Failure to do so may result in a lack of satisfaction with their work. This can lead to frustration and conflicts as to how to actually perform the tasks. This fosters a need for communication between the leaders and the employees, because fostering healthy conflict can actually foster learning, because it is putting them in a position where they cannot rely on assumptions about or a manual that says "this is how you do it". They actually have to learn and that will inevitably mean that people have different ideas which stimulate them, meaning that they have to go through a process where conflicts can actually be potentially healthy. Whether they are or not is another matter that only the individuals that are involved can answer.

One of the driving factors for motivation in this organisation can be that the new organisation produces their products in a new, revolutionary way. The technology they are using, as Richard (F) said, is not new, but the way in which they are using it is. This causes the employees to work in a way that they have not done before. This might be both motivating and demotivating at the same time, because it can be difficult to not have anyone that is specialized operating the technology in the context they do, which can lead to frustration and conflicts on how to actually perform the tasks. However, by having some initial training in the technology, having good communication and getting words of encouragement from their leaders and fellow employees, many frustrating thoughts can be dealt with before they escalate into big problems. The organisation may have thought about this already, that the unclarity may produce conflict, but if it is held in a healthy way, it can lead to a good process and growth in both competency and the ability to have good learning processes.

To sum up, motivation is a key factor in shaping organisational culture. Leaders who understand and leverage different sources of motivation can create a positive work environment. There are various types of motivation that need to be identified so that the leaders know what they can do if some of the employees start "falling behind" or seem unmotivated. The two types of motivation that are of most relevance for the organisation that is being researched is extrinsic, with external factors such as rewards and bonuses, and intrinsic motivation, where internal factors such as deriving motivation from the tasks themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Driving forces supply motivation in the organisation discussed in this study could be its novelty and innovative production methods. Hence, it is crucial for organisational leaders, including those in the study, to identify their own sources of motivation as well as those of their employees.

5.3 Communication and knowledge sharing

Communication is essential in any organisation, especially effective communication. When there is a lack of communication between leaders and employees, it can lead to poor task performance and delays. To foster a collaborative organisational culture, all employees must work together, and this requires effective communication (Rajhans, 2009). Communication is closely linked to motivation, as they mutually influence each other. Without communication, there can be little to no motivation, as individuals need to communicate their ideas and goals to others.

One of the contributing factors to this might be that the leaders and employees work within the same building, with only a flight of stairs and some doors dividing the production from the offices. The leaders and other employees also share the same breakroom and often eat lunch together. Not only does this make it easier to "break the ice", but it can also help lowering the threshold for making conversation. This informal arena can therefore contribute to making the leaders and employees more "on the same level", in other words, it can make it easier for them to talk to each other regarding both formal topics regarding work, but also about personal things that happen outside of work. This indicates that the organisation has a mix of structural designs that affect the organisational culture. As mentioned in 5.1.2, the structure in the organisation that is being researched, fluctuates between being hierarchical, where the structure is more formal and everything must be "brought up through the chain of command", and a flatter structure, where employees have more responsibility in deciding how tasks should be conducted. Looking back at the findings from my observations regarding the employees

taking breaks or shifting work to the next shift in relation to this fluctuating between structure, shows that the culture has not yet made it clear where in the structure responsibility lies, and this unclarity of communication and knowledge might have a negative impact on the organisation's daily operations.

This also leads me to think that if the design of the building can trigger this kind of communication, it can also help the leaders in figuring out what motivates each employee. Additionally, it supports previous research that emphasizes the connection between communication and employee motivation (Rajhans, 2009). This also fosters trust between the leaders and the employees, a factor that can be of big relevance when it comes to both communication and knowledge sharing. In regard to trusting either another employee or a leader, Ng (2023) stresses the importance of time, time to build trust between individuals. As I see it, if an employee does not see a leader as fair and supportive, they will not trust that leader enough to share either personal or important knowledge, causing that knowledge to either be hidden or lost.

Creating different arenas where employees can converse and share knowledge is important for the structural aspects of the organisation. The leaders also have to be available and eager to learn new things – they need to lead by example. One way they can do this is by creating an environment that fosters dialogue and discussion, and where this is encouraged, which has been mentioned in the design and structure of an organisation. The organisation needs to assess the types of communication it utilizes and the extent to which it encourages knowledge sharing and team learning (Ng, 2023). In other words, communicating with others and being available to share one's knowledge as well as being interested in learning something new is important for both motivation and how willing individuals will be to share their knowledge. As I see it, by communicating and encouraging knowledge sharing, the employees may feel more comfortable in talking with their leaders and peers. Creating a space that is open and inviting may lead to better collaboration, communication and essentially a better working environment.

The organisation has different platforms for sharing information, such as meetings, emails and at the time of the observation and interviews, TVs on several walls with the purpose of giving a visual representation of the organisations production in real time. Another thing that was interesting to talk about in regard to information sharing is training, specifically about what the leaders and employees learn in their training. When it comes to training, all of the informants said that every employee, no matter what role they had, got the same "basic" training and information. There is no special training connected to any role. Alex (F) expressed that this is something that he wants to work with, to generalise special training for different roles. This can be clever for ensuring that employees who have the same or similar tasks does or solves things the same way – as a kind of "quality control". It can also be about building shared knowledge or shared mental models, which enables norms that represent the culture. Team learning, as Senge points out, involves the harmonization and enhancement of a team's abilities to achieve the outcome that its members genuinely aspire to. Mental models refer to the deeply rooted beliefs, generalizations, or visualizations that shape our perception of the world and guide our decision-making (Senge, 2006).

By implementing specialised training, it creates a new arena for knowledge sharing in the organisation. In any organisation, knowledge sharing is important. This is because every

individual possesses knowledge, and their knowledge may contribute to new ways of doing things, changing procedures or giving different solutions to problems. As mentioned in the theory chapter, there are different types of knowledge, and for the organisational culture it can be beneficial to recognize and orient themselves about the different kinds of knowledge that the employees possess. Moreover, knowledge sharing does not mean that one wants to solve a problem, it can also promote collaboration and cooperation among the employees (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015).

Knowledge transfer involves interpersonal communication, and while technology can facilitate the sharing of explicit knowledge, transmitting tacit knowledge (and generating new knowledge through the conversion of information into knowledge) requires social interaction and human cognition, for example discussion and dialogue, or team learning. Therefore, any examination of knowledge transfer must consider the organisational culture. Developing efficient multidimensional methods to enable the input and access to information is crucial. Additionally, creating effective strategies to distinguish valuable information from irrelevant data is essential. Project-based organisations must establish an organisational culture that promotes and streamlines knowledge transfer (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008).

Explicit knowledge is easier to detect, as it is classified as knowledge that is easy to transfer, such as hard data and formulas (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This also makes the knowledge more predictable and stable. However, it is not enough for an organisation to only possess explicit knowledge, because with new competition and a change in the customer's needs (Smith, 2001), there emerges a need for other types of knowledge, such as tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is harder to teach or transfer, because this type of knowledge is highly personal and hard to express (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). To share this type of knowledge the individual who possesses it can communicate it through for example metaphors or stories (Smith, 2001).

Out of these two types of knowledge, the tacit knowledge may be the one of most interest to leaders of an organisation. This is because, as Richard (F) mentioned in his interview, the employees have a different way of seeing what actually works, they use the equipment every day, and over time they may come up with better solutions to a task. Making the employees a part of the decision making in the organisation, like e.g. coming up with different equipment or tools, can foster more sharing of their tacit knowledge, and make them want to try make it explicit. This leads me to believe that if leaders do not encourage employees to share their knowledge, there is a possibility that solutions or methods are "lost", which in its turn may lead to employees wanting to leave the organisation and thereby take their knowledge with them elsewhere. One can look thereby look at sharing tacit knowledge as a form of dialogue, because one can explore what is assumed, and this helps individual as well as team learning. additionally, it creates a shared vision and better collective.

To summarize, there are several factors that influence how communication and knowledge sharing shape organisational culture. The fact that the leaders and employees work within the same building helps foster communication in that they can get a hold of the other faster than if they were working in separate buildings. Also, providing various platforms for employees to engage in conversations and share knowledge, such as dialogues and discussions with leaders, promotes team learning. These platforms can be formal or informal, ranging from meeting rooms to break rooms. Additionally, having

diverse platforms facilitates the sharing of both explicit and tacit knowledge. The organisation studied in this research demonstrates a combination of structural designs that impact its organisational culture through communication and knowledge sharing. What it needs to take a look at though, is if some of the cultural aspects that employees from the main organisation have brought with them hinder the communication and knowledge sharing and hinders the organisational culture from being formed in the direction that the leaders want it to look like.

6.0 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to enhance understanding of the elements influencing the development of organisational culture. After reviewing various sources such as books, articles, and research papers, as well as personal findings gained through observation and interviews it became apparent that organisational culture is not solely established by leaders but rather the entirety of the workforce. This discovery led to the formulation of my research question:

How can leaders and employees work together to co-create culture in a new organisation?

On the basis of my research, I would say that organisational culture is a product of co-creation between leaders and employees that centres around motivation, communication, and knowledge sharing – all while having the organisations goals in mind. What I have found is that organisational culture is an ingrained part of the work environment often forgotten and ignored, left to live its own world with the excuse that organisational culture just exists by itself in a *que sera sera* fashion. By this I mean that organisational culture might not be the theme that is brought up or discussed the most within an organisation, but that it could benefit from more explicit attention being paid to it.

A new organisation with a different story, along with innovative methods of producing products, can provide both motivation and uncertainty. Motivation plays a vital role because if an individual is not motivated at work, they will not realise their fullest potential. This can lead to employees taking extra breaks, or stopping work early, pushing the tasks on the next shift like I discussed in chapter 5. It is therefore important to figure out how leaders and employees can contribute to each other's daily work, and leaders have a specific obligation to not only understand what motivates themselves but also what motivates their employees. The findings demonstrate that all participants, regardless of their role, are motivated by the novelty of the organisation and the new and intriguing challenges it presents, such as the new ways of using technology.

On the other hand, the novelty can contribute to a sense of uncertainty and tension regarding individual roles within the organisation, which can impact the co-creational aspect of the culture. If leaders and employees aim to collaboratively shape the organisational culture according to their desires, there is a potential risk that the culture and hierarchy may revert to the industry's conventional norms. Through the process of conducting observations and interviews, it became evident that the collaboration between leaders and employees is crucial in establishing an organisational culture that fosters growth and success for all. When it comes to the structure of the organisation's hierarchy, the findings indicate that they have tried to opt for a flatter hierarchical structure, deviating from the industry norm, which can have both positive and negative consequences. The organisation chose to eliminate the foreman position, and this leaves some of the responsibility of completing their own tasks in the hands of the employees. This perhaps boosts morale, but it is vulnerable to low motivated individuals that will skirt responsibility.

My findings emphasize the importance of individuals and teams learning from one another within the organisation for the greatest organisational success. During the initial phases of culture design and development, it is imperative to engage in discussions

about motivation, effective communication among all staff members, and determining the optimal approach for knowledge sharing and retention within the organisation. Communication and knowledge sharing emerged as the most prominent factors, and they also held the utmost importance for the organisation. Consequently, it is imperative for leaders to dedicate time to actively listen and learn from their employees. Without effective communication, knowledge sharing simply cannot flourish.

6.1 Limitations of the study

The research I conducted has its limitations, and in order to maintain transparency throughout the thesis, I wish to provide further details on some of these constraints. My preconceptions about the main organisation have somewhat influenced the research process, making it challenging to avoid getting "stuck" in that mindset when observing or receiving interview responses that aligned with those preconceptions. Simultaneously, I have strived to differentiate between the main organisation and the new subsidiary organisation under study. Another limitation of this research, as previously mentioned, is the lack of public information on the new organisation, making it difficult to separate actual findings from information on the main organisation. Furthermore, the scope of the assignment has restricted the exploration of other potentially interesting findings and delving deeper into the assigned topics.

6.2 Implications for further research

The research answers the question posed in the thesis, but there are additional intriguing questions that can be explored regarding collaboration and co-creation of organisational culture. It would have been fascinating to delve deeper into the extent to which employees have carried over elements of the parent organisational structure into the new organisation and how it continues to develop.

Given the organisation's newness during the study, there are ample opportunities to observe how the factors examined in this study will change and evolve over time. This aligns with Schein's (2017) concept of the initial stages of organisational culture formation, characterized by leaders and their beliefs about the desired culture, which eventually requires adaptation and further development for the organisation's survival. It remains uncertain what the organisation and its culture will look like in one year, three years, or five years, but that is something that would be interesting to see.

6.3 Reflections

As a master's student, I have found it most fascinating and very privileged to be able to witness how this project has expanded beyond the mere investigation of the initial stages of organisational culture. It has also sparked my curiosity to observe the evolution and transformation of organisational culture in general. Having the opportunity to go into an organisation with so little knowledge about it beforehand gave me the confidence to be a little more curious and ask questions that I had little clue as to what would be the answer. The findings both surprised me as well as were as expected in some ways, due to my pre-knowledge about the main organisation. One of the things that surprised me was the desire to create an organisation with a different view of hierarchy and the leaders wish to collaborate more with all of the employees in terms of co-creating culture.

Something that I expected due to my pre-knowledge, but that I thought would be hard to figure out through this project, was imprinted expectations or views regarding pushing work onto the next shift, because I knew that some of the employees were recruited from the main organisation. This was a find that was in some way surprising, because I knew that as a researcher, going into an organisation, you might not figure out these types of behaviour, since individuals may want to portray as "better than they really are" in the sense of showing themselves and their organisation from the best possible behaviour for outsiders. However, going into the project, trying to be as open as well as being transparent gave me the opportunity to leave my prejudice behind and let the findings speak itself.

This project has taught me a lot about research and about myself. The period in which this research was conducted, brought more challenges than I could have anticipated. For instance, trying to negotiate where their timetable did not fit mine and visa versa. The organisation needed to take time out of their regular work schedule in order to let me conduct my research, resulting in challenges on my part, since the project has a short timeline. This project was an adaptive challenge for me, where there was a lot of frustration in the beginning, which led me to having to work like hell at the end.

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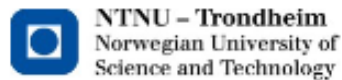
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Appendices

Appendix A: Information letter



Are you interested in taking part in the research project “Leadership and developing an organisational culture”?

This is an inquiry regarding participation in a research project where the main purpose is to investigate what leadership looks like when founding a new company. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This master's thesis purpose is to conduct research on how leaders select employees for a new company, as well as the development of an organisational culture between both parties.

Who is responsible for the research project?

NTNU, Department of Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because, during the project you either have a leadership position [REDACTED] or you are employed at the same company.

What does participation involve for you?

If you choose to participate, it will involve:

- Being observed in a meeting
And/or
- An interview with me (Cecilie Sundal) with a duration of approximately 1 hour.

Please note that there will be taken audio recording of the meeting and/or interview. Further information regarding storing and usage of data is described below.

Participation is voluntary.

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this informational letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- It will be the researcher; master's student Cecilie Sundal and supervisor Associate Professor Jonathan Reams from NTNU, who will have access at the responsible institution.
- I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.
- The data used as empirical evidence in the master's thesis will be anonymized so that information cannot be returned to you as a person or your firm.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end within June 2024. All data will be anonymised immediately and deleted at the end of the project.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data that is being processed about you.
- Request that your personal data is deleted.
- Request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified.
- Receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- Send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with NTNU, SIKT AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- NTNU, Department of Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning via Supervisor Jonathan Reams, email: [REDACTED]
- SIKT, Norwegian Agency for shared services in education and research, by telephone: +47 73 98 40 40

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Reams
Associate Professor/supervisor

Cecilie Fjerdingen Sundal
Master's student

Consent form

I have received and understood the information given about the project "Leadership and developing an organisational culture" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- Being observed in a meeting
- To participate in an interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 20th, 2024.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix B: SIKT approval

13.02.2024, 15:05

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger



Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer
793273

Vurderingstype
Automatisk

Dato
10.02.2024

Tittel

Master Thesis about leadership and developing an organisational culture

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring

Prosjektansvarlig

Jonathan Henry Reams

Student

Cecilie Fjerdingen Sundal

Prosjektperiode

16.02.2024 - 30.06.2024

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2024.

[Meldeskjema](#)

Grunnlag for automatisk vurdering

Meldeskjemaet har fått en automatisk vurdering. Det vil si at vurderingen er foretatt maskinelt, basert på informasjonen som er fylt inn i meldeskjemaet. Kun behandling av personopplysninger med lav personvernulempe og risiko får automatisk vurdering. Sentrale kriterier er:

- De registrerte er over 15 år
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke særlige kategorier personopplysninger;
 - Rasemessig eller etnisk opprinnelse
 - Politisk, religiøs eller filosofisk overbevisning
 - Fagforeningsmedlemskap
 - Genetiske data
 - Biometriske data for å entydig identifisere et individ
 - Helseopplysninger
 - Seksuelle forhold eller seksuell orientering
- Behandlingen omfatter ikke opplysninger om straffedommer og lovovertrедelser
- Personopplysningene skal ikke behandles utenfor EU/EØS-området, og ingen som befinner seg utenfor EU/EØS skal ha tilgang til personopplysningene
- De registrerte mottar informasjon på forhånd om behandlingen av personopplysningene.

Informasjon til de registrerte (utvalgene) om behandlingen må inneholde

- Den behandlingsansvarliges identitet og kontaktopplysninger
- Kontaktopplysninger til personvernombudet (hvis relevant)
- Formålet med behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Det vitenskapelige formålet (formålet med studien)
- Det lovlige grunnlaget for behandlingen av personopplysningene
- Hvilke personopplysninger som vil bli behandlet, og hvordan de samles inn, eller hvor de hentes fra
- Hvem som vil få tilgang til personopplysningene (kategorier mottakere)
- Hvor lenge personopplysningene vil bli behandlet
- Retten til å trekke samtykket tilbake og øvrige rettigheter

Vi anbefaler å bruke vår [mal til informasjonsskriv](#).

Informasjonssikkerhet

Du må behandle personopplysningene i tråd med retningslinjene for informasjonssikkerhet og lagringsguider ved behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Institusjonen er ansvarlig for at vilkårene for personvernforordningen artikkel 5.1. d) riktighet, 5. 1. f) integritet og konfidensialitet, og 32 sikkerhet er oppfylt.

Appendix C: Interview guides

Intervju guide leader

Takk for at du deltar. Dette intervjuet vil bli tatt opp og slettet etter at oppgaven er avsluttet. Svarene vil bli anonymisert, men det kan henvises til sitater. Du har rett til å avbryte intervjuet når som helst, og trekke deg fra prosjektet. Varigheten på intervjuet er beregnet til ca. 1 time.

Det overordnede temaet for mitt prosjekt er ledelse og det å skape en organisasjonskultur. Det er vanskelig å definere hva organisasjonskultur egentlig er, men man kan se på det som at den omfatter de felles verdier, normer og virkelighetsoppfatninger som utvikler seg blant medlemmene i en organisasjon. Essensen i dette prosjektet er å se hvordan ledere samarbeider med de ansatte for å danne en organisasjonskultur.

Oppstart

1. Fortell meg litt om din rolle og din jobb i denne organisasjonen.

Hoveddel

2. Hva var din motivasjon for å starte i denne nye organisasjonen?
 - a. Var det noe spesielt som appellerte til deg? E.g. indre motivasjon, ble du rekruttert etc.
3. Har du lagt merke til eller har noen konkrete forventninger til din rolle? Fra ledere og operatører?
 - a. Har du gjort noen justeringer i din lederstil i denne nye organisasjonen? I så fall, hvilke signaler brukte du som basis for disse endringene?
4. Hva har endret seg mellom din forrige jobb og denne?
 - a. Er det noe som er bedre eller verre/annerledes nå enn tidligere?
5. Har du hatt noen opplæring i den nye jobben?
 - a. Får alle medarbeidere den samme opplæringen? Lærer de det samme? (Operatører og funksjonærer får åpenbart noe ulik opplæring).
6. Hvordan utveksles kunnskap i organisasjonen?
 - a. Har du et eksempel på dette? For eksempel, hvordan informasjon spres i organisasjonen?
Sammenlignet med enten denne eller andre organisasjoners måte å utføre dette på.
7. Hvordan opplever du det å stille vanskelige eller ubehagelige spørsmål?
8. Har du noen tanker om hvordan din rolle kan bidra når det kommer til arbeidskultur og -miljø?

Avslutning

9. Er det noe vi ikke har snakket om som du ønsker å dele?
10. Er det noe mer du tenker jeg burde vite om?

Interview guide employee

Takk for at du deltar. Dette intervjuet vil bli tatt opp og slettet etter at oppgaven er avsluttet. Svarene vil bli anonymisert, men det kan henvises til sitater. Du har rett til å avbryte intervjuet når som helst, og trekke deg fra prosjektet. Varigheten på intervjuet er beregnet til ca. 1 time.

Det overordnede temaet for mitt prosjekt er ledelse og det å skape en organisasjonskultur. Det er vanskelig å definere hva organisasjonskultur egentlig er, men man kan se på det som at den omfatter de felles verdier, normer og virkelighetsoppfatninger som utvikler seg blant medlemmene i en organisasjon. Essensen i dette prosjektet er å se hvordan ledere samarbeider med de ansatte for å danne en organisasjonskultur.

Oppstart

1. Fortell meg litt om din rolle og din jobb i denne organisasjonen.

Hoveddel

2. Hva var din motivasjon for å starte i denne organisasjonen?
 - a. Var det noe spesielt som appellerte til deg? E.g. indre motivasjon, ble du rekruttert etc.
3. Har du lagt merke til eller har noen konkrete forventninger til din rolle? Fra funksjonærer og evt. Andre operatører?
 - a. Hva mener du at din rolle kan bidra med når det kommer til arbeidskultur og -miljø?
4. Kan du gi meg et eksempel på hvordan kommunikasjonen mellom funksjonærer og operatører er?
 - a. Har du et eksempel på noe motsatt?
 - i. Et eksempel på noe sjeldent dersom informanten drar frem et eksempel som kan ses på som vanlig, eller et eksempel på noe som forekommer mer sjeldent dersom svaret på hovedspørsmålet fremstår som vanlig.
5. Kan du beskrive hvordan det er å få tak i funksjonærene?
 - a. Er det noen det er lettere å komme i kontakt med enn andre?
6. Kan du beskrive en situasjon hvor du hadde behov for å ta opp noe som var ukomfortabelt? Eksempel: at man ikke går godt overens med andre kollegaer eller ryktespredning.
 - a. Hva gjorde at dette var ukomfortabelt for deg?
Dersom informanten forteller at de aldri føler seg slik;
 - b. Kan du forestille deg en situasjon som kunne blitt ukomfortabel for deg å snakke om/diskutere? Hva kan dette være og hvorfor kan det være at du føler det slik?
7. Opplever du at alle ansatte (operatører) får den samme opplæringen? Her menes det som er relevant for alle å lære – ikke spesifikke ting som kun angår noen roller.

8. Har det vært noen form for utveksling av kunnskap enda?
Med dette refererer jeg til ting man har lært fra andre organisasjoner (enten ved andre avdelinger eller fra andre utenforstående organisasjoner) som en tar med seg og implementerer i den nye organisasjonen.

Avslutning

9. Er det noe vi ikke har snakket om som du ønsker å dele?
10. Er det noe mer du tenker jeg burde vite om?



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology