A critical exploration of the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining desired organizational cultures

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Master's thesis has been to explore the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture. A desired culture is a culture with shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping the organizational members perceptions, behaviours and understanding. A desired culture will help to create a common identity and a sense of belonging to the organization which is important for the organization to function as a group and to reach its common goals.

Often there is a lack of leadership commitment when contributing to desired organizational culture and the research reported on explores elements of importance for formal leaders contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture.

The research questions then becomes:

1) What would be the desired organizational culture and why?

2) How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?

The theoretical framework on which this research is based is linked to organizational culture and to leadership theory. The methodological approach has been qualitative interview analysis.

The findings in this Master's thesis suggest that a desired organizational culture is a must to work effectively together with a common understanding of who we are as an organization and how we work. Desired culture will ensure a higher level of cooperation amongst employees, simplify decision making and ensure effective and sound communication. Behaviours which are valued by the organization and lived by formal leader's shape the way people behave in the organization, thus it is of utmost importance that leaders show commitment to the organizational culture that they want to see reflected in the organization. Psychological safety is a feature of organizational culture which the primary findings confirm those of the secondary findings as an important element for the formal leader to focus on

when contributing to the desired organizational culture. A working environment characterized by psychological safety is a necessity for people to feel secure and thus being capable of changings ones behaviour. When in a psychologically safe environment the organizational members will feel safe to challenge the status quo and to voice new ideas. In addition the results show that trust its formal leaders and their ability to walk the talk is essential in order for others organizational members to follow.

Based on secondary and primary findings the following recommendations are provided to practitioners:

Leaders must:

1) commit to the desired culture and the journey towards creating and sustaining it
2) be involved in contributing to as well as living the values underpinning the desired organizational culture
3) ensure psychological safety and trust

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research questions will be defined and justified. Contribution will be outlined and the context will be provided. The theoretical framework and research methodology will be introduced. Core definitions essential to the research will also be presented.

Organizational culture was introduced by Pettigrew in 1979. He introduces the idea that culture can be seen as a competitive advantage by connecting the organizational culture to the business strategy and its need for change, Pettigrew (1979). Peters and Waterman (1982) give several examples of American companies that have done very well. Some of these are IBM, Hewlett – Packard, Johnson & Johnson, Mc Donald's, 3 M and Boeing. The reason for their success is based on their organizational culture. Peters and Waterman (1982) introduced organizational culture as the answer to why some organizations succeed whilst others fail. Deal and Kennedy (1983) made the same claim. They succeeded with their simple message saying that the key to success lies in creating the right organizational culture. Schein (1985) has later defined culture as "the way we do things around here". Warrick (2017) agrees that organizational culture can have a significant impact on organizational performance but goes further in suggesting that organizational culture also has a significant impact on employee motivation and turnover in the organization. According to Warrick (2017), companies with a healthy organizational culture, in which the employees thrive, will excel at sales and stock increases.

There is a need for a sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than oneself. Organizations need to reengage their people to work together for a common purpose. There is a need for a desired culture, a culture with a shared set of values and beliefs which is the foundation that all the organizational members build their perceptions, behaviours and understanding from (Yukl, 2012) and (Barney, 1986). A desired culture will have a common identity where all the organizational members hold the same fundamental ideals and principals. A desired culture will help to create a sense of belonging to the organization which is important for the organization to function as a group with a common understanding of how the job is to be performed and how to reach its common goals. This not only builds community, but also drives efficiency and creates more opportunities for innovation.

There is often a lack of commitment from the formal leaders on the work and the constant focus needed in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. Should the formal leaders fail to live by the values and not behave in accordance with the desired organizational culture, the members of the organization will have no reason to follow course, (Boonstra, 2013). Hence this thesis will take a particular look on the leadership role and which implications leadership has in contributing to and sustaining an organizational culture. In particular this thesis will look at how the formal leaders can use their role to contribute to the organizational culture from where it is today to how one would like the desired organizational culture to be. The purpose of this thesis is to gain a more scientific understanding of the role of the formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture. To do so, it is important to have a good understanding of the different elements that an organizational culture consists of. In chapter 2, this thesis will look more into the three levels an organizational culture consists of; artefacts, values and assumptions, (Schein, 1987).

1.1 Definitions

From this introduction the research questions become:

What would be the desired organizational culture and why?

How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?

Barney (1986, p. 657) defines organizational culture as "a complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions and symbols that define the way in which the firm conducts its business". Organizational culture is one of the attributes and characteristics that set an organization apart from another. It also shows how the organization will handle its employees, customers, suppliers and competitors.

Today there is no widespread consensus of what the term "leadership" means. Kempster et al. (2001) refers to Drath (1994) who claims that leadership is more than a person. According to Rost (1991, p.11) "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes".

These and other definitions will be discussed more in depth in chapter two.

1.2 Background to the organization

This thesis has looked at a company in the Norwegian oil and gas industry. The respondents have been chosen from one of the office locations and of which five formal leaders and five other organizational members have been chosen to reflect on the organizational culture and on the role of the formal leaders in contributing to an organizational culture.

The company which has served as primary data in this thesis was recently merged. It consists of two companies with a long track record on the Norwegian Continental Shelf both with very different organizational cultures. Since the merge of the two companies, a third company has been bought.

Soon after the merger the organization was introduced to a set of values. An expectation from the CEO towards the Leadership team was that all formal leaders were to introduce the values to their department and to start living by them. For a number of reasons this was not fully done in all departments. As a newly merged Company many different focuses were on the agenda and the organizational culture did not get the focus which was needed and which it deserved. One might argue that the lack of knowledge and understanding of what organizational culture is and which important mechanisms it serves could be an underlying factor as to why not all leaders took on board the call which they were given.

To enable the leaders to take on board the values in their department, workshops on the company's values and culture were offered to all departments. The focus in the workshops was for the groups to reflect on what the values meant to them, and which actions the team could take to achieve the desired behaviour. A focus area for most of the departments was to become one team. The challenge was then to define the actions needed to be taken to reach the desired behaviour of working together as a team.

Many of the formal leaders interviewed for this thesis refer to a Pulse Survey which has been conducted twice in the company to measure how the company relates to the organizational values and culture and the importance of it.

1.3 Context

Empirical studies by Ogbonna and Harris (2000) and Puni and Bosco (2016) address the direct connection between leadership styles and corporate culture and the lack of academic research in that field. There have also been studies connecting leadership and organization which apply a national value perspective and not the cooperative perspective (Hofstede, 1980; Ardichvili and Kuchinke, 2002). According to Hofstede (1980) leadership in organizations can be interpreted differently according to different national cultural values. One will approach how to exercise leadership differently according to one's national culture, that being e.g. in Germany, France or in Great Britain.

Little empirical research has been done on organizational culture and leadership (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). Much of the interest in organizational culture has derived from the assumption that organizational culture can lead to superior organizational performance and for generating competitive advantage. There seems to be a general opinion that if a company has certain aspects which makes it stand out in a way that is difficult for other companies to copy those aspects gives you a competitive advantage.

No research has been found on the relation between leadership and organizational culture contribution in the oil and gas industry in Norway. This thesis will aim to fill this research gap.

A qualitative research was conducted with key organizational members in the organization. They responded to an in-depth interview to explore their perspective on the current organizational culture and what is their understanding, experiences, perceptions and opinions, and what attitudes and reflections do they have about changing the organizational culture in the company. This thesis has looked at one company in the Norwegian oil and gas industry in particular. However the findings from the in-depth studies and the theoretical material will be transmittable to companies in general.

1.4 Disposition

Table (1) Thesis disposition

R, A & O	Description	Where
Research questions	1) What would be the desired organizational culture in the company and why. 2) How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture*?*	Chapter 1 Introduction chapter Chapter 4 Findings& discussions Chapter 5 Conclusions & Recommendations
Aim1	To explore and provide expertise advice in the areas to practitioners.	Chapter 5
Objective 1	The first chapter of the thesis deals with the research questions. It also describes which constraints are chosen for the project.	Chapter 1 Introduction chapter
Objective 2	The second chapter is devoted to the theory used in the thesis. Current theoretical perspectives and previous research will be reviewed here.	Chapter 2 Critical literature review
Objective 3	Chapter three will cover methods used and how data is collected and processed. Method will be identified which is relevant to the research questions.	Chapter 3 Methodology
Objective 4	Critical analysis and discussion of research findings will be presented and discussed at the same time in light of the questions posed by the student and the relevant theory that exists.	Chapter 4 Findings& discussions
Objective 5	The most important research findings will be summarized and the main problem described will be answered. A list of recommendations will be presented for practitioners.	Chapter5 Conclusions Chapter 6 Recommendation

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical review of relevant theory on the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining desired organisational culture. As such, the focus will be on the essentials of leadership as suggested by Rost (1993) – leadership as a verb – rather than on peripheral elements such as skills, characteristics, 'born or bred'. Although important, contents (private, versus public versus third sector), Rost's (1993) third category of leadership theory and practice, will not form the focus of this thesis

2.1 Organizational culture

The basis for the concept of organizational culture was laid in the 1980s and up to the mid-90s. Many of the theories on organizational culture from this era are considered seminal readings (e.g., Alvesson, 1993; Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, and Martin, 1985; Hofstede, 1980; Martin, 1992; Schein, 1985; Schneider, 1990; Trice and Beyer, 1993), and these theories form the basis for today's research on organizational culture.

There are many definitions on what organizational culture is, but they all seem to share the same main elements. According to Ke and Wei (2008) organizational culture is defined as a set of common values, beliefs and assumptions within the organization. This set of basic beliefs influences employees' perceptions and behaviour. Culture is often manifested in terms of behaviour and values adopted. Ke and Wei (2008) suggest that culture is generally understood as the social glue which holds organizational members together which is expressed through the values, social ideals, and beliefs that members of the organization share.

Schein (1985, p. 7) defines culture as:

> *"A pattern of basic assumptions - created, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems with external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked sufficiently well to be considered true and taught to new members as the right way to perceive, think and feel about these issues"*

Grigoruta and Corodeanu (2005) studied how to manage organizational culture in a global organization in the process of integrating Romania into the European Union. They discovered that organizational culture is historical and structured in ways that it can remain unchanged despite who is at the top and who the employees are. The members of the organization become a part of the organizational culture when they join the company – they themselves are not the ones influencing the organizational culture. When recruiting new members to the organization a vital part of the recruitment process is to understand whether the person in question will fit with the organizational culture. Do they have the DNA that we are looking for. Can you relate to the values that the desired organizational culture are based on. Are you a team player that values the input from your colleagues or do you prefer to work by yourself. Do you take sole credit for what is the result of teamwork. Do you make decisions based on the values that the organizational culture is based. Grigoruta and Corodeanu (2005) suggest that culture is an integrated part of the process when making personal choices. It affects what the organization feels, its concerns and its ability to deal with problems.

Yukl (2012) and Barney (1986) define organizational culture as a complex set of values, perceptions, assumptions and symbols which determines the way the company does its business. Organizational culture is one of the characteristics that set a company apart from another. It also shows how the company will handle its employees, customers, suppliers and competitors. Barney (1986) argues that for a company to provide a sustainable competitive advantage through its culture, three conditions must be met. The culture must be valuable, it must be rare and the culture must be imperfectly imitable.

If an organizational culture is to lead to superior performance as well as to generate competitive advantage, it requires a common organizational culture that is adhered to by the entire organization which is being reflected in a common way of thinking and behaving.

2.2. Desired features of organizational culture

Delic and Nuhanovic (2010), argue that organizational culture, which they see as a set of shared common beliefs and values that provide a consistent set of basic assumptions and preferences for the members of the organization, serves several functions. They claim that culture will ensure a higher level of cooperation amongst employees. Culture can simplify decision-making and implementation and it can ensure effective and sound communication. This thesis will add that culture will add a purpose to the organization about what they do and why they do it.

Schein (1987, p. 41) refers to Parsons (1951) and Merton (1957) who argue that culture will help solve two fundamental challenges which all organizations have:

1) Survival and adaptation to the external environment
2) Integration of internal processes to ensure the ability for continued survival and adaptation

External adaptation has to do with the leader and the group's view on the environment and how to survive in it (Schein, 1987). According to Schein (1987) it is vital for the survival of an organization that it is able to adapt to the constant changes in the environment. Only then can it survive the competition. External adaptation says how organizational culture will create a common understanding of the challenges that may arise. One of the functions of the organizational culture is to develop a common understanding of the changes which are necessary to take in order to survive. To master the task of adapting to the external environment the organization needs to focus on mission and strategy, targets, funds (e.g. organizational structure, reward system and separation of powers), evaluation (e.g. evaluation and control systems) and improvement (develop a common understanding on improvement strategies), (Schein, 1987).

Internal adaptation deals with the leaders and the group's shaping of the internal relationship between the members of the organization to make the group effective and safe in order to survive in the external environment. Schein (1987, p. 54) refers to Homans (1950) who argues that the internal adaptation process will both influence and be influenced by the

external adaptation system. In order for the organizational culture to be effective certain elements need to be in place. Those are; common language and conceptual framework, the group's boundaries and criteria for incorporation and exclusion, power and status, closeness, friendship and love, reward and punishment and ideology and "religion". One the most important criteria for a culture is a mutual understanding of who is in and who is out (Schein, 1987). When recruiting new members to the organization the company has to have a clear understanding of who they want to recruit. As part of the recruitment process there needs to be a focus on the organizational values and a clear expectation that the new organizational members can identify with them. If there is no such match between the organizational values and the values of a possible new member, he or she will not become part of the organization. Separate sets of conceptual framework will make it impossible to communicate together as different members of the group have different understanding of various concepts and as such will make not be able to function as a group. Common organizational culture provides a pattern of interaction that creates a community where you work effectively together. In short the organizational culture is a result of how the organization adapts to the external environment and how it develops and takes care of itself.

This thesis will later explore how formal leaders can contribute to and sustain a desired organizational culture. To do so, it is important to have a good understanding of the different elements that an organizational culture consists of. According to Schein (1987) an organizational culture consists of three levels; artefacts, values and assumptions. This can be illustrated in Schein's Organizational model:
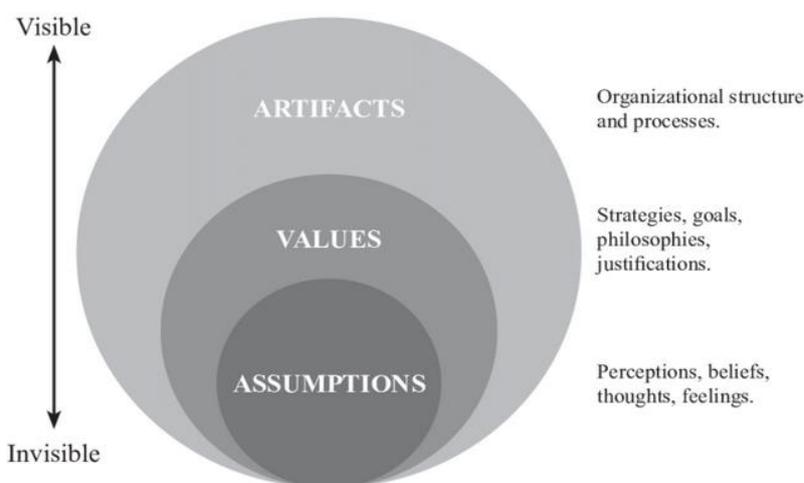
Table (2)

Artefacts or cultural expressions are the outer level of culture, which consists of the physical and social environment of an organization. These represent the visible elements in the organization, the ones you can see or hear. Artefacts can typically be seen in the office layout, that being open landscape or cubicles, the office dress code; formal or informal, the stories that the employees tell, rituals and ceremonies; the things that employees do every day that bring them together. One cannot interpret an organizational culture based on cultural expressions alone. Still cultural expressions form a say of associations and perceptions that are initiated when interpreting the culture. Cultural expressions are often seen as the climate in the organization as it is visible and shows the expression of an organizational culture and how the working environment in the organization builds the more basic culture through behaviors, attitudes and emotions that characterize the organization (Tidd and Besant, 2013).

Tidd and Besant (2013) claim that the following must be present to create a good organizational climate:
- Trust and openness
- Involvement and challenge
- Support from co-workers and formal leaders
- Freedom

One might also add psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) which is linked to trust and openness as a requirement for a good organizational climate. This element will be further explored later in this chapter when looking into elements that will support the leader in contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture.

Values and norms is the second level in organizational culture. Values are less visible than behaviours and artefacts. According to Alvesson (1989) values are the organization's stated values and rules of behaviours. The values of an organization will say something about how the members of the organization are expected to behave and which sets of values they should hold and identify themselves with. Often you will see the values printed on leaflets and posters in the office location to remind both employees and business partners of the value foundation that the organization is built on and consequently which values they should hold.

According to Hill and Jones (2001) the values of an organization are essential elements of the organizational culture and include the general criteria, standards, or guiding principles that the members of the organization refer to when determining which types of behaviours, events, situations and outcomes relating to the organization's activities are desirable or undesirable. Hill and Jones claim organizational values as the beliefs and ideas about what kind of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate kinds or standards of behaviour organizational members should use to achieve these goals. Hills and Jonas (2001) argue that for values to become effective and meaningful in the organization the organizational values must be formally articulated. The espoused values should set forth the principles and values that the organization wants to achieve. An organization formed to support community development will generally embrace economic independence and self-help as its core values. Profit organizations tend to mention profitability as one, but not the only, value of importance. Regardless of the type of organization the values that the organization has chosen is one of the ways that the members of the organization can identify mutually shared goals, missions and track progress.

Argyris and Schøn (1978) differentiate between the values that are expressed by the organization and the values that the organizational members hold. The expressed values are the ones that the management have described and should be represented in all of the members of the organization. However, the values that the members in fact hold and behave in accordance with are the values that describe the actual organizational culture.

The last level of culture is assumptions which are based on basic assumptions and a mutual acceptable way of perceiving the world. This is the unconscious level of culture, in which the underlying values have for a period of time been transformed and are being taken for granted as an acceptable way of perceiving the world. This level arises when the organization based on past experience adapt to internal and external conditions. The assumptions form the process for how the tasks are to be solved (Schein, 1987). There is a common understanding of what works best in the environment in which you operate.

According to Deal and Kennedy (1982, p13) "every organization faces different realities in the marketplace depending on its products, competitors, customers, technologies, government influences, and so on". For them to be successful they will need to focus on a desired

organizational culture which supports the strategy of the organization. Some organizations are aiming at growth and therefore will need an organizational culture based on values which supports the organization in growing and expanding. Deal and Kennedy (1982) claim that business environment is the one element which has the greatest impact on determining the desired organizational culture. An organization which is focused on development and research will need an organizational culture which makes thought through decisions before actions are taken. Well thought through decisions here are key as they do not know if the final product will be successful.

Cameron and Quinn (1999), claim that there are different organizational culture types which may contribute to organizational success depending on the needs of the external environment and the strategic needs of the organization. From their Competitive Values Framework (CVF) there are four dominant organizational culture types; hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy. Clan which is based on a cooperative culture is based on high affiliation and values teamwork and participation. Typically this would be a desired organizational culture for organizations acting as a family which has social features as trust, solidarity and unity. The hierarchy culture reflects values and norms associated with bureaucracy. This is an organizational culture type where leadership is effective because it is in mechanical and bureaucratic organizations which value order and rules. Market culture or competitive culture on the other hand is desired when the organization is looking for stability and control. The emphasis is on efficiency and achievement. In the competitive culture one will find employees that thrive on success. Global businesses which have effective relationship between suppliers, customers and external stakeholders are of this organizational culture (Cameron and Quinn, 1999).

The last of the four organizational culture types is Adhocracy. This is a developmental organizational culture which is based on risk taking, innovation and change (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1991). Organizations which are entrepreneurial, flexible, innovative and creative will thrive in an external oriented and dynamic structure.

2.3 Leadership

Barker (2001, p. 491) defines leadership in three steps: „First, leadership is a function of individual wills and individual needs, and the result of the dynamics of collective will

organized to meet those various needs. Second, leadership is a process of adaptation and of evolution; it is a process of dynamic exchange and the interchanges of value. Leadership is deviation from convention. Third, leadership is a process of energy, not structure. In this way, leadership is different from management – managers pursue stability, while leadership is all about change". This definition emphasises on the importance of change as a vital part of leadership. It also emphasises on leadership as process. Rost (1991, p.102) claims that „Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes". This definition is followed by Burns (1978, p. 425) who suggests „Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independent or mutually held by both leaders and followers". Burns claims that leadership is not the same as leaders. Kotter (2013), states that leadership has something to do with leader traits and behaviours. Leadership is a verb, not a noun, By (2019, p. 3). According to By (2019) leadership is something everyone can do and which is a responsibility that we all should contribute to. This thesis will focus on the formal leader role in contributing to and maintaining organizational culture. It can be argued that contributing to and maintaining organizational culture is a shared responsibility by everyone in the organization. This will not be the focus of this thesis as we would like to explore the formal leader's role in contributing to and maintaining the organizational culture. By (2019) suggests that leadership is the shared pursuit of delivering on purpose. There is a need to understand the reason why we exist and what is the purpose of the organization. Kempster et al. (2011) refers to leadership as purpose. They suggest building purpose as the fifth element into Grint's framework. They argue that purpose in a general sense being an aim or an objective which is to achieve a goal in a particular context. The purpose of an Oil Company would be to produce oil. That is the reason why the industry exists. Kempster et al. (2011) refer to Frankl (2004) which argue that purpose is central in everyone's life. Happiness comes from fidelity to a worthy purpose. Grint (2005) divides leadership into four categories. The first is leadership as person (who). The second category is leadership as result (what), the third leadership as position (where) and the last category being leadership as process (how). The first category has to do with the person and whether it is in the capacity of who they are that make them leaders. The second category questions whether it is what the person achieves that make he or she a leader. The third category understand leadership as

position as in where the leaders operate that makes them leaders and last the focus is on the process and if it is how you get things done that makes you a leader.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter this thesis is in support of Rost's (1993) definition of leadership as a verb.

2.4 Elements effecting the role of the formal leaders

In this chapter we will explore three elements which will be important for the role of formal leaders when contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture. According to Tidd and Besant (2013) certain elements must be present to create a good organization climate; trust and openness, involvement and challenge; support from formal leaders and co-workers and freedom. Based on this list, this thesis will explore how formal leaders may use the elements of leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust in their role to contribute to and sustain desired organizational culture.

2.4.1 Organizational culture and Leadership commitment

By exercising effective leadership, formal leaders can build, contribute to and sustain a desired organizational culture (Warrick, 2017). Warrick (2017) argues that leaders influence the organizational culture through strategies, values and by example. Behaviours which are valued by the formal leaders shape the way people behave in the organization. When contributing to an organizational culture the members will look to what the board and the leaders actually do. According to Warrick (2017) members of the organization will adhere to behaviours which are valued and rewarded. To contribute to a strong culture, the formal leaders need to be clear about which norms and behaviours the organizational members should follow. Which behaviours are rewarded in the organization, how the resources are distributed, who are being promoted and what is being communicated in the organization. This needs to be clearly reflected from the organizational side in terms of bonuses being linked to the organizational culture. When recruiting the organization will look for new organizational members that fit the values and can clearly identify with them. Those being

promoted are the ones that can identify strongly with the organizational culture and promotes the values in the organization. This is not the only criteria for being promoted in the organization, but should be an important factor when such considerations are being made. An important part of the leadership training should be the organizational culture aspect.

According to Boonstra (2013, p. 126) leaders are able to influence their followers subtly through exemplary behaviour. This is done when showing what the desired behaviours are in their daily interaction with employees, and thus being a role model by committing to the organizational values. The values that the leaders promote must be visible in their daily behaviour. Any team of formal leaders involved in contributing to a desired organizational culture needs to require an understanding of what the cultural assumptions and behaviours are and to lead by example. Should the formal leaders fail to live by the values and not behaving in accordance with the desired organizational culture, the members of the organization will have no reason to follow course. According to Yukl (2013) leaders communicate their values when making statements about values and objectives important to the organization and when describing the strategies and plans for achieving them. Only when the formal leaders and the board show its unconditional commitment, responsibility and its engagement will the members of the organization follow.

If there is no connection between what is stated and what is being practised, the leaders will lose credibility and respect. Boonstra (2013, p. 127) claim that leaders in cultural change are aware of their role and position:

- *They do what they say and they behave in accordance with the values that they promote themselves*
- *They make clear why they make certain choices*
- *They are aware of the influence they have and the position they occupy*
- *They demonstrate exemplary behaviour and are a role model to others*

.

The emphasis on organizational values when being expressed in the behaviours of the leaders will eventually lead to the desired employee behaviour, which will help the organization to accelerate its performance.

2.4.2 Psychological safety

"Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes", Edmondsen (1999). You know you will be met with a positive response when airing your thoughts or proposing new ways of doing things. In psychologically safe organizations no one will think less of you if you make a mistake or should you as ask a naïve question. As opposed to an organizational culture which drives on fear or anxiety, by not welcoming ideas or questioning the status quo. There should be room in organizations for airing your thoughts and to challenge the leader decisions in a safe environment.

Psychological safety dates back to early research on organizational change by Schein and Bennis (1965), who discussed the need for psychological safety to help people cope with significant change. Schein and Bennis (1965) proposed that a work environment characterized by psychological safety is necessary for individuals to feel secure and thus capable of changing their behaviour. Schein (1985) later claimed psychological safety as a feature of organizational culture. Outspokenness and participation are central markers of an organizational culture (Collins and Porras, 1994; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; de Pree, 1987).

Schein claimed that anxiety can arise when individuals cope with the uncertainty of innovation, for example, and an organizational culture may exacerbate or mitigate this psychological state.

Organizations which are lacking psychological safety are according to West (1990) less likely to engage in behaviour which promotes creativity. For fear of being ridiculed or worse punished they adhere from asking questions or admitting to mistakes. "Participativeness and safety are characterized as a single psychological construct in which the contingencies are such that involvement in decision-making is motivated and reinforced while occurring in an environment which is perceived as interpersonally non-threatening", West (1990, p. 311). We may draw from this that psychological safety is a vital element in building an organizational culture which will cater to a climate that welcomes questions that challenges the status quo in order to learn and improve.

Psychological safety is the knowledge that the organizational members feel that they can freely speak up should there be any critical conditions that they observe at the workplace with no fear of any negative consequences from the organization. One will not lose out of on an opportunity for promotion, lose your social status nor lose your job. As mentioned above psychological safety also concerns the organizational climate in terms of if there is a culture to voice your opinion and to contribute to an environment in which it is looked upon as positive engagement to have a different perspective than what is the perspective mostly advocated in the organization.

According to Owens and Hekman (2012) humble leaders can build psychological safety by acknowledging that other perspectives than those of which they inhabit can be valuable. Through their daily leadership these leaders demonstrate that employees' critical statements represent a positive and desirable improvement tool, and work actively to analyze and improve the conditions discussed. In this way humble leaders contribute to the experience of increased psychological safety. Schein (1993) points out that when leaders legitimize the making of mistakes and celebrate the differences between the various team members and reward those that contribute to innovative thinking, they indicate to the teams and to the organization that it is safe and welcome to challenge the status quo and to foster new ideas. According to Boekhorst (2015) leaders that value the inclusion of the organizational members will give them a chance to raise their voice for generating, promoting and implementing useful ideas. This will contribute to a culture where the ideas and the opinions of the organizational members are highly valued and respected.

2.4.3 Trust and leadership

Trust is an important part of the organizational life. The feeling of trust or distrust that the employees have for their managers and colleagues will affect the organizational behaviour and the relation between the employees and the formal leaders.

The importance of trust in organizations has been explored by many researchers. Kramer (1999) claims that managers, or formal leaders, play an important role in the organization to determine the level of trust. "Managers initiate most vertical exchanges; thus, whatever level

of trust or mistrust is evident in their actions may well be reciprocated. Moreover, managers design reward and control systems that are visible displays of base levels of trust and mistrust within departments or the organization as a whole" (Kramer, 1999, p. 20). Managers are the ones controlling which information is given to the organization and which information is allowed to be shared and thus determines the level of trust within the organization. According to Kramer (1999) it is the attitude and behaviour of the managers that will determine the trust level expectations in the organization. He claims the manager's core belief is setting the overall predispositions for the trust or distrust in the organization.

Rosen (1998) suggest that organizational trust consists of two parts; trust and trustworthy. Trust is related to believing in other people whereas trustworthy reflects on deserving the trust that other people feel for you. Trust is one of the important elements of effective relations. Trusting your formal leaders and colleagues and them trusting you is of vital importance. Rosen (1998) claims trustworthiness as one of the most important qualifications for a formal leader. Trust is what holds the leader and his followers together. Trust is the main resource of the leader's positions (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 1998). Organizational trust is the individual's understanding of the organizational support, the belief that the formal leaders are trustworthy and the will that the organization is open, concerned and reliable in the relation between the employees and the organization (Mishra, 1996).

According to Tschanen-Moran (2001) there are a lot of benefits of having a trustworthy atmosphere. It plays an important role in openness for development, effective communication and an overall organizational effectiveness. When there is trust in the formal leaders and in the organization there is an engagement from the employees to commit to development and organizational change.

Typically you will find in organizations undergoing extensive change e.g. in mergers that there is a lack of trust in the management. This stems from the uncertainty which exists. There is often limited control of resources and information. Failure to fulfil espoused commitment will lead to reduced trust and disbelief will emerge. Distrust can emerge in two ways, through lack of confidence in others or as a perceived hostility from others (Govier, 1992). In organizations with lack of trust you will find a decrease in organizational commitment, professional satisfaction and a bad working environment (Buyukdere and

Solmus, 2006, Asunakutlu, 2007). Hence the formal leader depends on the employees' trust when wanting their commitment to change.

According to Whitener et al. (1998) there are five categories of behaviour that the leader may make use of that impact trust. These include behaviours consistency, behavioural integrity, participative decision-making, communication and demonstrating concern. The analysis by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) gives insight into which behaviour correlates mostly with trust. What is highly associated with trust is fairness. You trust your leader when he or she treats everyone fairly and does not have anyone that they openly favour in the group.

2.5 Summary

Based on the list by Tidd and Besant (2013) which claim trust and openness, involvement and challenge, support from formal leaders and co-works and freedom to be vital elements to create a good organizational climate, this thesis has identified; leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust as elements the formal leader may use in their role to contribute to and sustain desired organizational culture. Psychological safety has been added to the list, as it is linked to trust and openness and serves as a requirement for a good organizational climate. In this chapter a critical review of relevant theory on the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining desired organisational culture has been provided. The elements identified; leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust will together with the research questions inform primary research and discussions.

3.0   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, a description of how the thesis was conducted will be given as well as the method. The research questions; What would be the desired organizational culture in the company? and How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?, will be linked to the research paradigm. The choice of paradigm will then inform the other methodological decisions. Furthermore, the research ethics and the qualitative criteria are considered.

In research knowledge is sought to understand social reality. This is a process which can be understood through preparation, data collection, data analysis and reporting, (Johannessen et al., 2016). This thesis aims explore whether Psychological safety, Leadership commitment and Leadership and trust plays an important role for formal leader when contributing to and maintaining the organizational culture in the organization.

3.1 Research paradigm

Social science research is often done based on theoretical or methodological traditions. It is these traditions that is called research paradigm. According to TerreBlanche and Durrheim (1999), the research process has three major dimensions; ontology, epistemology and methodology. A research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking which define the nature of enquiry along these three dimensions. Ontology and epistemology aspects are commonly referred to as a person's worldview. The choice of research paradigm reflects our belief about the world we live in and the world we want to live in (Lather, 1986). The phenomenological approach is the study of the "phenomena" or the appearances of things. A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon, (Creswell and Poth, 2017). From the table (3) below we can see that information is gathered in a variety of paradigms spanning from one end to another.

This thesis will be based on basic beliefs characterized by a constructivist/interpretive paradigm by which seeks to explain the reality. This choice was made based on that there is no simple truth or reality in connection with the research question of this thesis. Reality is created by individuals in groups. Consequently the choice of method fell on qualitative interview. With regards to the epistemological side of this choice of paradigm this thesis seeks to discover the underlying meaning of the role of the formal leader in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture.

	Positivism	**Post Positivism**	**Critical Theory**	**Constructivism**
Ontology (Nature of reality)	Reality exists separate from and not dependent on the observer, and can be known	There exists a separate reality, but it can only be known imperfectly	Reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, & gender values.	Reality is a social construction. Individuals have interpretations of reality.
Epistemology (What can be known)	Dualist / Objectivist Findings are True	Modified Dualist / Objectivist; Findings are probably true	Transactional / subjectivist / value mediated findings	Transactional / subjectivist / created findings
Methodology (How it can be known)	Experimental / manipulative; Hypotheses verification; Generally Quantitative; Testing	Modified Experimental / manipulative; Hypotheses falsification; May include Qualitative methods	Dialogic / Dialectical	Dialectical Hermeneutical

Table (3), Denzin & Lincoln (2005)

Paradigm	Ontology *What is reality?*	Epistemology *How can I know reality?*	Theoretical Perspective *Which approach do you use to know something?*	Methodology *How do you go about finding out?*	Method *What techniques do you use to find out?*
Positivism	There is a single reality or truth (more realist).	Reality can be measured and hence the focus is on reliable and valid tools to obtain that.	Positivism Post-positivism	Experimental research Survey research	Usually quantitative, could include: Sampling Measurement and scaling Statistical analysis Questionnaire Focus group Interview
Constructivist / Interpretive	There is no single reality or truth. Reality is created by individuals in groups (less realist).	Therefore, reality needs to be interpreted. It is used to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities.	Interpretivism (reality needs to be interpreted) • Phenomenology • Symbolic interactionism • Hermeneutics Critical Inquiry Feminism	Ethnography Grounded Theory Phenomenological research Heuristic inquiry Action Research Discourse Analysis Femenist Standpoint research etc	Usually qualitative, could include: Qualitative interview Observation Participant Non participant Case study Life history Narrative Theme identification etc
Pragmatism	Reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situations.	The best method is one that solves problems. Finding out is the means, change is the underlying aim.	Deweyan pragmatism *Research through design*	Mixed methods Design-based research Action research	Combination of any of the above and more, such as data mining expert review, usability testing, physical prototype
Subjectivism	Reality is what we perceive to be real	All knowledge is purely a matter of perspective.	Postmodernism Structuralism Post-structralism	Discourse theory Archaeology Genealogy Deconstruction etc.	Autoethnography Semiotics Literary analysis Pastiche Intertextuality etc.
Critical	Realities are socially constructed entities that are under constant internal influence.	Reality and knowledge is both socially constructed and influenced by power relations from within society	Marxism Queer theory feminism	critical discourse analysis, critical ethnography action research ideology critique	Ideological review Civil actions open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, open-ended observations, and journals.

(Patel, 2015, s.1)

Table (4)

3.2 Methodology

There is a common distinction in research approaches in social and organizational research between qualitative and quantitative research. According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) the difference between the two approaches lies in the technique of data collection and in the method to analyse the collected data. Bryman and Bell (2011) differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods to obtain research results by application of statistical method (quantitative) or by interpretation (qualitative). Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 717) claim that qualitative research is characterized by "quantification in the collection and analysis of data" with a deductive and objective approach that has similarities with research methods in natural sciences. Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p.1) define qualitative research as "inductive study of socially constructed reality, focusing on meanings, ideas and practices, taking the native point of view seriously, without questioning either the wider context of it or the process forming it". According to Bryman and Bell (2011) this is a research strategy that is interpretivist and usually inductive.

According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010), the research purpose plays an important role when choosing a research approach. Further they say that quantitative research emphasizes on testing, verification and a generalizable approach which relies on facts and logic. The qualitative research on the other hand focuses on the understanding of processes through interpretation. In addition, the context in which the research was conducted is another indicator for a suitable method, (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010).

Environments which require an understanding of the processes, behaviours and experiences through observation and which consists of different cultures than their own are most often more suited for qualitative approaches, (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). This thesis makes use of a qualitative research approach to studying social interaction, (Bryman and Bell, 2011), as it aims to look at social situations in practice that are not of laboratory nature.

As the aim of this thesis is to explore the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining organizational culture, it calls for an understanding and closeness to the studied objects that requires insights based on qualitative approaches. Further, choosing qualitative

over quantitative techniques is caused by the suitability of qualitative research for groups and organizations as well as being dictated by the chosen paradigm. This thesis aims to examine the relation of individuals with their employer's values and tries to capture a close-up within the organization. This type of single phenomenon is typical for qualitative research, (Creswell and Poth, 2017). Qualitative research method allows explorative research to apply unstructured methods. That is e.g. questions may be changed or added during the course of an interview to get a better understanding for the studied subject, (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010).

3.3 Methods

It has been important to get an understanding of whether the three elements (here: leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust) are important «tools» that formal leaders may use towards the organizational members to contribute to and sustain organizational culture. To achieve necessary insight into how both formal leaders and members of the organization see these elements as a vital part of contributing to organizational culture, in depth interviews have been chosen.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stress the importance of understanding the content and the purpose of the study in order to choose the right method. Much time and effort was put into the research questions and then to find the key questions for the interview guide to provide the answers to the research questions.

According to Johannesen et al. (2016), qualitative interviews are the most commonly used method to collect your own data material. This method is very useful when studying opinions, attitudes and experiences, (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). One to one interviews are suitable when you want the perspective of the informants.

The interview guide has been created based on the problem, the research questions and the literature review. It was important to have the right research questions in order to get the answers that would answer the research problem. Thereafter time was spent on finding the key questions to answer the research questions.

It has been important to get an understanding of how the formal leaders may contribute to and sustain a desired organizational culture based on their role. How do the formal leaders see their role in contributing to a desired organizational culture and how do the organizational members see how formal leaders may use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture.

The interview guide has been divided into four main themes; organizational culture, psychological safety, leadership commitment and trust. The wording of the questions in the interview guide has been expressed to allow for open questions to avoid that the interview objects should be led to answer the questions in any particular way. To the greatest extent possible, questions have been sought which will allow the interview object to answer the questions as freely as possible. The one to one interviews were recorded and thereafter transcribed. The transcribed interviews were then analysed and discussed based on the literature review.

All interview objects had prior to the interview received an invitation letter informing them of the intention of the interview and what the interview sought to achieve as well as definitions of the terms used in the interview guide.

3.4 Reasoning

Bryman and Bell (2015) argue that it is useful to consider the relationship between theory and research as deductive and inductive strategies. The inductive approach is when the theory is an outcome of research whilst the deductive approach is the process in which theory leads to observations or findings. The deductive strategy is mostly linked to quantitative studies, whereas an inductive approach is generally associated with qualitative approach, (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

When using deductive reasoning it may be difficult to rely on strict logic of theory testing and falsifying hypotheses as it can be difficult to know how to choose the theory to be tested. Inductive reasoning on the other hand can have a weakness in no amount of empirical information will necessarily enable building of theories.

Abduction is a process that starts with a puzzle or surprise and afterwards one tries to explain it. The researcher meets empirical phenomena that existing theory cannot explain. It involves going back and forth in reasoning where empirical social world is a source for theoretical ideas and providing the best explanation from different interpretations (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

For this thesis the inductive approach has been used by comparing findings with existing theory.

3.5 Pilot Study

After completing the problem and the interview guide a pilot interview was conducted. Kvale (1997) recommends that the pilot interview takes place before the actual research starts. This recommendation has been taken into consideration. To obtain the most efficient results and to avoid any misunderstandings, a pilot study was conducted with a close colleague and necessary modifications were done to the interview guide. Some of the questions were rephrased to avoid misunderstanding. One question was taken out and replaced with a new question. Conducting the pilot interview provided a confidence that the voice recording worked satisfactory, also when doing the interview in a video conference setting. The interviews were planned to be performed face to face, but as the corona situation sat in and the office building was replaced by home office, the interviews were conducted by video conference. Full focus was on the interview and no notes were taken as to be fully aware of the answers given and to follow up on interesting viewpoints or to guide the interview object in the right direction. The interview guide was not communicated to the interviewees ahead of the interviews, this in order to avoid rehearsed answers.

3.6 Sampling

It is common to have a strategic selection, which is very different from a representative selection. Representative selection is common in academic research, (De nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteer, 2010). Strategic selection was chosen to obtain the necessary

dissemination in organizational form which was desirable. Strategic selection means that "We choose informants which have characteristics or qualifications that are strategic relative to the problem or the theoretical perspective of the study", Thagaard (2009, p. 55). Factors which have been taken into consideration in this thesis are to look at the formal leaders' role both from the perspective of formal leaders but also from the perspective of the members of the organization.

Five formal leaders and five other members of the same organization have been chosen to be part of the strategic selection. The interviewees have been chosen based on their knowledge of the subject and also to reflect both the formal leaders' reflections and those of the organizational members' views in order to achieve an overall balanced view. They have also been chosen as they have all been available to the researcher (Thagaard, 2009), availability selection. At the same time they serve as a strategic selection as they possess the knowledge which is being researched.

3.7 Data analysis of qualitative data

Most data collection methods will require a certain amount of manipulation before the data material can be used for analysis. This is called data reduction (Blaikie, 2010). The challenge is often to get something sensible out of a large amount of unstructured data. A good starting point for a meaningful interpretation and analysis is by reducing, sorting and systematizing the data material.

According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009) there are several levels of interpretation. One is the level of self-understanding, which is a summary of the researcher and respondents' understanding of what is being said. Another is common sense level, which is a general interpretation and therefore has a broader frame of understanding than the one of the informant's. A theoretical level may be used where there is a theoretical framework used for interpretation.

Most analysis, however, will incorporate decontextualization and recontextualisation. In decontextualization, only parts of the material are looked at. When recontextualizing, the parts are put into a new context which is in line with the context the data material was taken

from. It is during this process that new knowledge is being created (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The constructivist/interpretive paradigm was chosen to fit the research questions; What would be the desired organizational culture in the company? and How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?, will be linked to the research paradigm. Hence the choice of paradigm has informed the decision of thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) define thematic analysis as:

"A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data."

Thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is simple to use which lends itself to use for novice researchers who are unfamiliar with more complex types of qualitative analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Even so there may be pitfalls to avoid. One of which is to mismatch between theory and analysis claims. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.26) "A good thematic analysis needs to make sure that the interpretations of the data are consistent with the theoretical framework". An implication to thematic analysis is that it has limited interpretative power beyond mere description if it is not used within an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made, (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By using thematic analysis in this thesis the aim is to discover common themes and patterns from the interviews and to compare them to the existing theory.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

The concepts of reliability and validity can largely be seen in the context of strengths and weaknesses in the research. One can judge the quality of each research design by testing its reliability and validity (Yin, 2014).

Reliability is an indication as to whether the survey shows the real situation and to which degree the results can be verified. Reliability concerns the accuracy of the data in the survey,

which data has been used, how it has been collected and how the date is being processed (Johannessen et al., 2016).

According to Johannessen et al., (2016), in quantitative research strict requirements apply to reliability as opposed to qualitative research where reliability is difficult to measure as the data collected is contextually dependent and the observations are valuable.

Validity related to whether what has been investigated is in accordance with the purpose of the study. Validity as well as reliability is about whether the research has been done in a satisfactory manner. By explaining how the material has been collected and analyzed, we can argue that the research has been conducted in a credible way (Johannessen et al., 2016).

As in all research, the credibility of the research must be questioned. Are the findings credible? How is the connection between the answers given in the interviews and the phenomenon being studied (Johannessen et al., 2016). This thesis has to do with how the organizational members experience the organizational culture and how the formal leaders may use their role to contribute to and sustain organizational culture. It is the main findings in the company which this thesis has looked into which will form the foundation for this research. To ensure the validity of the research study, organizational members on different levels of the organization were interviewed.

3.9 Ethical issues

According to Johannessen et al. (2016) ethical issues will arise when research touches upon people in connection with data collection. As research is dependent on cooperation and coordination amongst different people within different research areas, there is a need for ethical guidelines to promote those values which are important for this cooperation. These values are; trust, probity, accountability and mutual respect.

The anonymity of the interviewees in this thesis has been secured. The participants were informed ahead of the interviews that the data would be anonymised. No names have been given nor which company the interviewees work for. This has been done in line with the guidelines which say that in processes where data is converted to empiricism, descriptions

and interpretations should be lifted from the individual level or shall not be traced to individuals (Johannessen et al., 2016).

3.10 Summary and reflection on challenges

In the research study, the previously mentioned research paradigm formed the basis for the research. A qualitative approach has been used. A semi-structured in-depth interview with managers and employees at different levels were completed. Voice recordings were made of the interviews and they were transcribed and analyzed. Validity and credibility are also reviewed in this chapter. These concepts have been explained in relation to the research program that has been completed.

In this thesis a variety of opinions have been voiced through the interviews and this thesis has aimed to voice all the different points of views to reflect those of the interviewees. The interviewees have been chosen based on their knowledge of the subject and also to reflect both the formal leaders' reflections and those of the organizational members' views in order to achieve an overall balanced view. However, it can be challenging not to ascribe the interviewees' opinions that they do not possess, in order to match them with one's own understanding of the research problem. It has therefore been vital to ask follow up questions to avoid any misunderstandings and to do the transcription carefully to make sure no subjective interpretations have been added. A bias cannot fully be excluded from qualitative research. The research problem was chosen based on own experience working with culture in which often a lack of commitment from formal leaders were observed. Nevertheless a bias has been eliminated as much as possible by reflecting opinions of different stakeholders in a balanced way.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter will present and discuss primary findings in conjunction with secondary findings to answer the following research questions; What would be the desired organizational culture in the company and why?, How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?

Based on the research questions informed by the secondary research, the following themes form the basis for the outline of this chapter:

1) Desired organizational culture in the company

2) Leadership commitment

3) Leadership and Psychological Safety

4) Leadership and trust

It has been important first to get an understanding of the desired culture in the organization before this survey will give a description of how the organizational members and formal leaders reflect on how the formal leaders may use their role to contribute to a desired organizational culture.

4.1 Description of respondents

In this section factual information will be given concerning the respondents' seniority and their level of education. The respondents are all members of the same organization, merged from three previous organizations.

Table (5)Table of respondents

Respondent	Gender	Role	Level of Education	Years of experience
R 1	Female	Org member	Master's degree	12
R 2	Male	Org member	Master's degree	7
R 3	Female	Formal leader	Master's degree	4
R 4	Female	Formal leader	Master's degree	2,5
R 5	Male	Formal leader	PhD	13
R 6	Male	Org member	Master's degree	2
R 7	Male	Formal leader	Master's degree	13
R 8	Female	Org member	Master's degree	2
R 9	Male	Formal leader	Royal Navy Air Force Academy	11
R 10	Male	Org member	Master's degree	27

One of the ten that took part in the research has more than 20 years' experience from one of the merged companies. More than half of the organizational members involved in the research have an average of 13 years with one of the merged companies and the other half 2, 5 years. The company which serves as primary data merged 1, 5 years ago. The educational level is high (most have a Master's degree and one with a PhD degree) which reflects the level of the education in the company and of that in the oil and gas industry.

4.2 Theme: Desired organizational culture in the company

4.2.1 Findings

One of the organizational members described desired organizational culture simply as an organization where the members "speak the same language" and have a common understanding of how we do things in the company.

R 10:

"When you run a project, everyone knows what to do. There are clear roles and responsibilities. It is rooted in the leader group. Culture is part of the risk picture. The perfect culture to me is that everyone has the same understanding of how we do things and how we behave towards each other".

Another of the respondents (R 8) said the following of how she would describe a desired organizational culture:

"The first element is good leadership from the top. Good leadership involvement and dedication. The leadership group must explain why things are important and to get everyone on board. There must be clear direction on where the company is going. The vison and the values must be well aligned with the business strategy".

Most of the respondents stressed the importance of communication and cooperation and how trust and psychological safety is vital for a company in challenging the way they work. The trust in your leaders and your fellow employees to let them know when something is not working the way it should. One of the respondents said on organizational culture and trust:

"In a good organizational culture one must dare to think differently and to share your thoughts. That is the only way that we can come up with better solutions".

Often in newly merged companies there is no common way of performing the tasks and when in doubt one will fall back to the way one used to perform the tasks in the previous organization. This will not only lead to frustration and lack of efficiency, but it will also make it impossible to contribute to a desired organizational culture as there is no will to leave the old cultures behind and to agree about a desired way of doing things. The respondents here stress the importance of a common way of doing things and a clear direction on where the company are going. They stress these factors as vital in contributing to a desired organizational culture.

4.2.2 Discussion

These descriptions confirms the claims of Delic and Nuhanovic (2010) that culture will ensure a higher level of cooperation amongst employees, simplify decision making and ensure effective and sound communication.

Different sets of conceptual framework will make it impossible for the group to communicate together as different members of the group have different understandings of various concepts and as such will not be able to function as a group. Common organizational culture provides a pattern of interaction that creates a community where you work effectively together.

For the organizational culture to be effective certain elements need to be in place. Those are; common language and conceptual framework, the group's boundaries and criteria for incorporation and exclusion, power and status, closeness, friendship and love, reward and punishment and ideology and "religion" (Delic and Nuhanovic, 2010).

The desired organizational culture leads to a free flow of energy. Everyone has a clear understanding of their tasks and no explanation is needed. When there is a common culture everyone has a common understanding of how the job is to be performed. The leader does not need to spend time to explain how the tasks are to be done. This saves both time and cost. It also enhances the working environment. As one of the respondents said the desired culture is to have a common understanding of how we do things in the company.

When recruiting new people into the group one needs to make sure that the new organizational members can identify with the organizational culture and with how the job is done.

According to Deal and Kennedy (1982, p.13) "every organization faces different realities in the marketplace depending on its products, competitors, customers, technologies, government influences, and so on". For them to be successful they will need to focus on a desired organizational culture which supports the strategy of the organization. Some organizations are aiming at growth and therefore will need an organizational culture based on values which supports the organization in growing and expanding. One of the respondents argued the importance of the values supporting the business strategy. The values chosen need to be in support of the business strategy and targets set for the company. A company vision will

ensure a common frame of mind ensuring that all the organizational members are working towards a common goal.

Hill and Jones (2001) also argue the importance of the values of an organization to be essential elements of the organizational culture and include the general criteria, standards, or guiding principles that the members of the organization refer to when determining which types of behaviours, events, situations and outcomes relating to the organization's activities are desirable or undesirable. One of the respondents said that "*Culture and values are the common sense of the company. They rest in all of us*". The desired organizational culture will guide you in how you think and how you behave.

The primary findings are in support of the secondary findings arguing that a common organizational culture is a must to work effectively together with a common understanding of who we are as a company and how we work.

4.3 Theme: Leadership commitment

4.3.1 Findings

When asked about the leadership commitment to the values and to contributing to a common organizational culture in the company based on the values, there was a unison response that this varies a lot in the company:

R8:

"*There are many leaders that actively use the values. Then there are others that do not know the values. There is also a great deal of variation as to how actively one uses the values*".

R 9:

"*If I as a formal leader choose not to focus on organizational culture and choose not to express my belief in our organizational culture, not much will happen. If my leaders do not communicate the importance and demonstrate that they believe in the organizational culture to their team, absolutely nothing will happen. I believe the*

signals you send out to the organization when you communicate is of utter importance"

and

R 1:

"At the Town Halls the leaders talk about the values. In a survey which was recently conducted in the company that focused on climate of expression and on psychological safety, the leaders are not so concerned about culture because they are afraid to go into sensitive topics, which often has to do with culture"

and

R 7:

"It is not necessarily the leaders who are going to create the culture, but I think it is very important for a leader to participate and talk about the culture and to be involved. I think the leader plays an important part. I myself feel that culture sometimes gets too little focus, because one is too concerned about own's own business. However I think a good leader is a leader that takes the time to be a big part of the culture and is a good role model"

Some departments have a strong focus on building a common culture, in other departments there is little to no focus.

One of the respondents reflected on that one thing is to use the values and talk to about them, another thing is to have the discussion on who we want to be and which culture we should have and what we should focus on.

From some there was some concern as to whether the leadership group has a common understanding as to which is the desired organizational culture for the company. They were uncertain as to how much time and energy has been spent on focusing on the company's desired organizational culture and to the leadership group's commitment to contributing to a desired culture. Does the leadership group have a common understanding of who they want

to be and which behaviour they would like to see. One of the formal leaders said that he would like everyone that comes to visit the office or to one of the offshore locations to feel or to experience that they are at our place and not at any of the other oil companies in the business. They should get a feeling of this is how it is done here and this is how they behave towards each other and towards the clients. However, the leadership group as a unit and as individual leaders do now seem to share the same aspirations.

The organization as a whole seems to have many focus areas and does not take the time to focus on one thing at a time. When there has not been enough focus on how to behave and which work processes to follow, people will when under stress fall back to the same patterns that they are used to.

Many of the respondents stressed the importance of the leaders to "walk the talk". If there is an expectation to the organization to live by the values, then the leaders need to show by example. It must not be just empty words. The values and the behaviour should be adhered to in everyday working life. The desired culture should be demonstrated in the leaders' actions and behaviours. Decision making should be based on the values of the company. The leaders need to be conscious about which signals they send out when they communicate to the organization.

4.3.2 Discussions

According to Warrick (2017) behaviours which are valued by the formal leaders shape the way people behave in the organization. When building an organizational culture the organizational members will look to which behaviours are valued. However they will also focus on which behaviours are being rewarded. If one of the company values is "team player" then naturally one should not receive individual bonuses, but rather a collective bonus which will give an indication on how well one performs as a team. For the organization to contribute to a strong organizational culture, the formal leaders need to communicate which norms and behaviours they would like to see (Warrick, 2017).

As indicated in the primary findings, the formal leaders need to walk the talk. If the formal leaders do not do as they preach, then no one else in the organization will adapt to the new behaviours and values. If there is no connection between what is stated and what is practised all credibility and respect will be lost. The respondents commented on that not all leaders pay enough attention to the values and to the desired organizational culture. It is not enough to talk about the values in Town Hall meetings or mention the values in speeches and in official documents, the values have to be demonstrated in the leaders' actions and behaviours.

When making statements about values and objectives which are important to the organization and in describing strategies in how to achieve them, the leaders are communicating their values (Yukl, 2013).

Only when the formal leaders and the board show its unconditional commitment, responsibility and its engagement, will the members of the organization follow. What is most important is what the leaders do every week and that they illustrate the behaviour they would like to see in the other organizational members. Ultimately the company can make as many plans as they please. However the leaders have to own the plans and drive the change, for it to be successful.

The reflections from the respondents support that of the secondary findings. The organizational members will adopt the behaviours which are valued and rewarded by the formal leaders and hence leadership commitment is an important part of the role of the formal leader in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture.

4.4 Theme: Leadership and Psychological Safety

4.4.1 Findings

When asked about how the culture in the organization is when it comes to psychological safety, respondent 10 answered:

> "*There is an environment of openness in the company, from colleague to leader and in informal forums. There are no guidelines on what we can talk about or not talk about. Most of the organizational members have no fear of retaliation when speaking*

their mind or voicing new ideas. There is room to voice your opinion, but not everyone feels they are being heard".

One of the formal leaders said that there is no suppression of the employees. He thought that the organizational members have a very strong voice. Others believed that the level of psychological safety varied in the organization and was related to the leadership behaviour. One commented that the level of psychological safety in the leadership group was rather low. When the CEO comes up with an idea that she wants to have executed the leaders do it without asking any critical questions. They don't have the feeling of psychological safety that is needed to oppose the level above.

When asked if and how the formal leaders can use psychological safety in his or her role to contribute to organizational culture all the respondents agreed to this element being a vital part in building organizational culture.

R 10:

«*There must be room for having differences in opinion. If there is no room differing opinions then one will not progress as a company*".

One of the respondents stressed the importance of psychological safety being a leadership task. She claimed it is the job of the leadership group to create an environment which is safe for all of the organizational members and where one is welcome to speak one's mind. The leadership group should lead by example and encourage their group to speak their mind and also to encourage the behaviour that they would like to see.

Another respondent commented on that one of the most important factors to promote psychological safety is by giving the organizational members a feeling of being seen and heard.

One of the formal leaders said that he would tell his department that he does not know everything and he would welcome to be challenged on what he does and to disagree on things.

R 7:

"It's important to speak your mind. It is important that you as a formal leader is open to critical questions and input which is not in line with how you think. You learn most from those that are most unlike yourself".

We might be different and have opposite opinions, but that is what you learn from. It is important for the formal leaders to communicate the importance of disagreeing.

Another of the formal leaders also saw Psychological safety as crucial in contributing to a desired organizational culture. If the organizational members do not feel safe they will have problems performing their job in a satisfactory manner. This will result in not looking forward to going to work, and becoming insecure about what to do and how to do it. Another aspect of lack of Psychological safety is that people will not come forward with good ideas. The ability to come up with new ideas to be innovative is a key factor in today's business. If there is not an environment that allows new ideas, then there is no possibility to develop when it comes to innovation. One of the respondents sums it up by saying:

R 5:

"If you think you can only say the things that you think are nice and you need to take special care, then you will not move".

4.4.2 Discussion

According to Schein and Bennis (1965) psychological safety is a necessity to bring about a desired organizational culture. A working environment characterized by psychological safety is a necessity for people to feel secure and thus being capable of changings ones behaviour. Changing ones behaviour into what is needed to fit with the desired organizational culture is what culture is all about.

Schein (1985) would later claim psychological safety as a feature of organizational culture. This is supported by amongst others Collins and Porras (1994) that see outspokenness and participation as central markers of an organizational culture.

West (1990) suggests that organizations with no psychological safety are less likely to have creative organizational members. The message which is being communicated to the organizational members which is lacking psychological safety is that the organization is has no interest in their ideas, their point of view and suggestions to new ways of doing things. Do as you are told and do as we have also done it. We do not welcome the idea of growing as a company. The importance of voicing ones opinion was also reflected in the comments in the primary findings. There is a need for a psychologically safe environment for a company to grow.

When wanting to build psychological safety in the organization, the formal leaders must be humble and acknowledge that other perspectives than those that they hold, can be valuable (Owens and Hekman, 2012). As shown in the primary findings the leaders are aware that to foster a psychologically safe environment the leaders must encourage the organizational members to come forward with their ideas.

Schein (1993) argues that with simple actions from the leaders these may foster psychological safety in the organization. These being legitimizing the making of mistakes and acknowledge that there are differences between team members. Encourage innovative thinking and communicate to the organization that it is safe and appreciated to challenge the way things are done.

There's a big difference between an organizational culture with no fear of speaking up and fear of being punished or humiliated – to an organization that welcomes new ideas, different perspectives and new ways of doing this. The latter thrives on the input from the organizational members and nurture a creative culture which is the very foundation needed for a company to grow. In a company with a climate that that does not encourage people to speak their mind and no one is interested in hearing your views or ideas, there is not much room to contribute to a desired organizational culture. People will then come to work do what they are told and that is that. There is no commitment to the company. If you want a company

with an organizational culture that inspires you to come up with ideas and new ways of seeing things and doing things, psychological safety is a requirement.

These findings support the secondary findings arguing that psychological safety is a necessity for the role of the formal leader when wanting to contribute to a desired organizational culture.

4.5 Theme: Leadership and trust

4.5.1 Findings

During the Corona situation there has been a focus on openness and frequent communication to the organization. The openness which has been shown and the focus given on communicating the plans for the company has been an important factor in building trust in the organization. It is yet to see whether the same level of openness and communication will be shown once everyone are back in the office.

As with psychological safety and leadership commitment, the general perception of the respondents seems to be that also leadership and trust is a factor which varies from department to department. Due to the merger some organizational members have new formal leaders. One of the respondents reflected on trust being something which is gained over time. For those with new formal leaders which may also be from the other of the two merged companies, the respondent claimed that one would have less trust in them rather had it been from a formal leader from the same former company. She claimed that it takes time to gain trust, but it does not take much to lose the trust. As a formal leader it is important to do as you say. In failing to do so, all trust will be lost.

Some respondents voiced that there is a lack of plan and strategy in the company. Others also commented on a lack of vision.

R 10:

"*People miss the more holistic plan and the overall idea of where we are going*".

As a result of lack of plans or lack of communicating possible plans, the respondent felt that this has led the organization to question if there is a plan of direction for the company. This in turn can lead to a lack of trust and the organizational members may question if the management is equipped to lead the organization in the right direction. At the same time the respondent acknowledged that there is positivity when it comes to growth in the company and that people feel safe when it comes to job security.

One of the formal leaders commented that there is a decent level of trust between the formal leaders and the other organizational members. He questioned if the leadership team were united and agreed on where the organization is going. As of now there is a lack of vision and a lack of strategy. Sometimes the leadership group will follow the direction that has been decided upon and other times they do not.

R 7:

"*I feel that we do not always pull in the same direction*"

The lack of pulling in the same direction may create some distrust in the organization. However, at the same time the respondent believed that most organizational members have a fair trust in the company. He based the lack of direction to that it takes time to build an organizational culture, the processes and the ways of doing things.

All of the respondents agreed on trust as a very important element in contributing to a desired organizational culture.

R8:

"*Trust is very important. If you do not believe in what your formal leader says, or do not have trust in that this is the right way to go, it will be very difficult to contribute to a desired organizational culture*".

4.5.2 Discussion

According to Tidd Besant (2013) the following must be present to create a good organizational climate:

- Trust and openness
- Involvement and challenge
- Support from co-workers and formal leaders
- Freedom

According to Kramer (1999) formal leaders have an important function in the organization when determining the level of trust. "Managers initiate most vertical exchanges thus, whatever level of trust or mistrust is evident in their actions may well be reciprocated", (Kramer, 1999, p. 20). It is the attitude and the behaviour of the formal leaders in the organization which will determine the level of trust expectations in the organization (Kramer, 1999). The respondents commented that the organizational members need to trust the leaders in what they say and do in order to contribute to a desired organizational culture.

It is important for the formal leaders to have the trust from the organizational members to create the engagement needed from the employees to commit to development and organizational change (Tschanen-Moran, 2001). In organizations undergoing extensive change e.g. in mergers, there is often a lack of trust in the management. This has to do with all of the uncertainty that exists. It is therefore all the more important that the formal leaders communicate the strategy to the organization and that they show to which steps the organization have to take for all to move in the same direction. The same goes for contributing to a desired organizational culture. The organization will need to trust its formal leaders and to see that they actually do as they say for the organizational members to follow course.

When building a desired organizational culture it is more likely that the organizational members will follow when there is a clear communication plan and people know in which direction the company is moving. There should be a strong focus on internal communication and frequent updates on the organization by showing which actions have been taken to move the organization in the right direction.

51

It is also important to get the organizational members engaged and involved. If the organizational members are not on board, then you do not get the trust which is needed to move in the wanted direction.

These findings are in support of the secondary findings stressing the importance of having the organizational members trust when contributing to organizational culture.

4.6 Summary

This research study have looked at the link between organizational culture and leadership and more in depth on how the formal leaders can go about using his or her role to ensure the organizational culture in the organization. This chapter has discussed the primary findings though linking it to secondary findings.

Independently of age, sex or formal leader or other organizational members, there seems to be a unison opinion in support of the theory that the formal leader is key when it comes to contributing to desired organizational culture and that certain elements need to be met that will ensure that the desired organizational culture not only will be contributed to, but also sustained.

When addressing leadership commitment to the desired organizational culture this has proven to be of the utmost importance for the respondents. Walk the talk was a phrase often used to describe how the formal leaders best can demonstrate that they are committed to the desired organizational culture and hence be a role model for the organizational members to follow.

There was a unison agreement on psychological safety being a crucial factor in contributing to a desired organizational culture. The ability to come up with new ideas to be innovative is a key factor in today's business. These ideas can only emerge, when there is a psychological climate in the organization that welcomes new ideas and challenges the status quo.

Although leadership commitment was seen as important, if the organization does not believe in what the leadership group says or does not believe in the direction that the organization is moving, it is very difficult to contribute to a desired organizational culture. Trust in your

leader and in the organization will also be important when contributing to an organizational culture.

In the next chapter conclusions and recommendations will be given based on theory and the findings from the research which has been described in this chapter.

5.0   CONCLUSIONS

The following chapter wraps up the dissertation process ensuring the research questions have been addressed as well as the research aims and objectives and the general conclusions that can be drawn from this thesis.

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the role of the formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. The following research questions have been posed to get an understanding of the role of the formal leader in this work.

- *What would be the desired organizational culture in the company and why?*
- *How can formal leaders use their role to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?*

Little empirical research has been done on organizational culture and leadership (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). Much of the interest in organizational culture has derived from the assumption that organizational culture can lead to superior organizational performance and for generating competitive advantage. There seems to be a general opinion that if a company has certain aspects which makes it stand out in a way that is difficult for other companies to copy those aspects gives you a competitive advantage. No research has been found on the relation between leadership and organizational culture contribution in the oil and gas industry in Norway. This thesis has aimed to fill this research gap.

There seems to be a lack of commitment from the formal leaders in contributing to organizational culture and hence this thesis has posed the above mentioned research questions to get a better understanding of the leadership role and the implications that leadership has in this work. In particular this thesis has looked at how formal leaders can use their role to contribute to the organizational culture required taking it from where it is today to where it wants to be in the future.

Drawing on the literature this thesis has suggested that there are three elements which are important for the role of the formal leaders when contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture. Those elements being: leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust and leadership.

A company in the oil and gas sector in Norway has served as the source of primary data in this thesis. However, the findings from the in-depth studies and the theoretical material are not specifically related to the oil and gas industry and will be transmittable to organizations in general.

The findings of this thesis show that a desired organizational culture is an organization in which all of its organizational members "speak the same language". A culture based on common procedures and behaviour, where everyone has the same understanding of how the job is supposed to be done and what the general expectations are.

A common organizational culture is cost and time efficient and will ensure a higher level of cooperation amongst employees, simplify decision making and ensure effective and sound communication.

Further the findings show that leadership commitment is vital to contribute to a desired organizational culture. It is the behaviours which are valued by the formal leaders which will shape the way people behave in the organization. Formal leaders need to "walk the talk" when contributing to and sustaining the organizational culture. When the formal leaders commit to the organization and its culture the other organizational members will follow.

Both the primary and secondary findings see psychological safety as a crucial element in the role of the formal leader when contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. Psychological safety is a necessity to bring about organizational culture and a necessity for people to feel secure and thus being capable of changings ones behaviour. Only when the organizational members feel safe in sharing their ideas and challenging the status quo will the organization develop.

The last finding from this survey argues the importance of trust when contributing to a desired organizational culture. For the organizational members to commit to the desired organizational culture, it is important for the formal leaders to have the trust from the members to create the engagement needed. The formal leaders must do as they say to gain the trust of the organizational members. The element of trust is very important if you would like the organizational members to follow course.

This Master's thesis has shown that leadership commitment, psychological safety and trust are all important elements for the role of the formal leaders when contributing to and sustaining desired organizational culture.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter specific recommendations are provided to (1) practitioners with an interest in how to contribute to and sustain desired organisational cultures contribute to and (2) another for future researchers including Executive MBA students with an interest in the field.

6.1 List of recommendations for practitioners

- Formal leaders must commit to the organization and its culture.
  See chapter 4.4.1 for further information.

- The leadership team must take ownership to the values before they introduce the values to their department and start developing them in the organization.
  See in attachment section 4 d) from the interview of IO 4 for further information.

- Formal leaders must ensure trust from the organizational members to create the engagement needed from the employees to commit to contributing to organizational culture.
  See chapter 4.4.3 for further information.

- Formal leaders must ensure psychological safety to bring about a desired organizational culture.
  See chapter 4.4.2 for further information.

6.2 List of recommendations for scholars

In this chapter a list of recommendations is given for further research.

- Conduct a research project which spans over several years to evaluate whether the three elements (leadership commitment, trust and psychological safety) have a long term effect on contributing to desired organizational culture.

- Conduct a research study in different industries to generalize the findings beyond this case study.

- Use quantitative interviews to see if the findings in this case study are also relevant to other industries.

- Explore whether there are other key elements than leadership commitment, trust and psychological safety, which are important in the role of the formal leaders when contributing to a desired organizational culture.

6.3 Summary

In this chapter several recommendations for further research has been given, as well as recommendations to practitioners on how to approach contributing to desired organizational culture.

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Appendix

In this appendix a description will be given of the organizational culture seen from the perspective of the respondents as well as the transcript of the interview with interview object no 4, referred to in the recommendations to practitioners. Enclosed, you will also find the invitation letter to the interviewees and the Interview guide.

Attachment 1

Background to the organization which serves as primary data

The respondents were asked to describe the organizational culture in the company. In the invitation to the respondents Organizational culture was defined as a complex set of values, perceptions, assumptions and symbols that determine the way a company does its business.

These are some of the comments given on the company's organizational culture:

R 9:

"The company appears to have three different cultures. People work in silos. We work in our way. This is the challenge - to get a common sense of identity"

and

R 2:

"Our organizational culture is made up by three different cultures. There are even different subgroups. Segmented. One is coloured by the culture from which you previously belonged to"

and

R 3:

«I think the culture we have today has not become completely unified. It's a bit fragmented. It varies greatly from one department to another.

Independently of where in the organization the interviews work they all have the same perception of lack of common organizational culture in the company. They find that the company consists of three main cultures that all are different to one another. One of the cultures is described as a group of individualists and the other is said to have a collaborative culture. The culture is described as incomplete and segregated. There is not a common organizational culture and not a common way of working yet.

Often there are strong debates on the type of culture which should be implemented in a merged organization. It is more challenging to create an organizational culture in an organization consisting of several different companies rather than in organizations where everyone knows everyone and has a common ground.

During a merger process and in situations with many different focus areas in the organization most organizational members will fall back to familiar patterns of «the way we do things» from the former organization, which in turn will make it difficult to contribute to a common culture in which the organizational members have common procedures and common ways of performing their tasks.

Attachment 2

Would you like to take part to a research program?

Interview objective: This interview seeks to achieve an understanding of the role of formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. For the purpose of this interview, organizational culture is defined as a complex set of values, perceptions, assumptions and symbols that determine the way a company does its business; leadership has something to do with a leader's traits and behaviours. Leadership is the action that says something about how you lead; and formal leaders are the individuals whom by virtue of their title are in control of a group, company, country, situation etc. Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes, Edmondsen (1999).

The interview will last for approximately half an hour. The answers will be used to form the basis for the analysis for the dissertation.

Introduction: My name is Nina Svalestad Johansen and as part of my Executive MBA at the University of Stavanger I am doing a dissertation in which I seek to gain a more scientific understanding of the role of the formal leaders when it comes to contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. My supervisor is Professor of Leadership, Rune Todnem By, at the University of Stavanger.

What does it mean for you to participate?

My method in this thesis will be interview. If you choose to participate, it will involve participating to an interview in April/May, 2020. It will only be you and me present. I'm going to take a sound recording of the interview. The audio recording will be deleted when the project is completed

Participation is voluntary

Participation to the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can chose to withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All information about you will then be anonymized. It will not have any negative consequences for you if you do not want to participate or later choose to withdraw.

Your privacy - how we store and use your information

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have stated in this letter. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy policy. Those who want access to the information will only be I and my supervisor Rune Todnem By. All personal data will be separate from other data and will be locked throughout the project. The collected data will not be able to be connected to the respondents or the workplace.

The research project lasts until 29.07.2020. When the project is completed, personal data and recordings will be deleted.

Your rights

As long as you can be identified in the data material you are entitled to:
• Insight into what personal information is registered about you
• obtaining personal information about you
• have personal information about you deleted
• get a copy of your personal data (data portability)
• to submit a complaint to the Privacy Ombudsman or the Data Inspectorate regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?

We process information about you based on your consent. On behalf of the UiS School of Business, the Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (NSD) has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the thesis, or wish to exercise your rights, please contact:
Handelshøgskolen at UiS Rune Todnem By, by e- mail: rune.t.by@uis.no. You can also
contact the Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (NSD) at e-mail:
personvernombudet@nsd.no or phone: 55 58 21 17.

Kind regards

Nina Svalestad Johansen

Executive MBA student at Handelshøgskolen at University of Stavanger (UiS)

Attachment 3

Interview guide

Interview objective: This interview seeks to achieve an understanding of the role of the formal leaders in contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture, from the perspective of formal leaders and from other members of the organization.

Introduction to the interview: I am doing a dissertation in which I seek to gain a more scientific understanding of the role of formal leaders in the work of contributing to and sustaining a desired organizational culture. This dissertation suggests that there are three elements which a formal leader needs to focus on when contributing to and sustaining organizational culture. Those three elements being; Psychological safety, leadership commitment and trust. This interview guide will focus on these three elements to verify whether the empirical data are in line with the literature. The interview will last for approx. half an hour. The answers will be used to form the basis for the analysis for the dissertation.

1. Introduction / clarification

    a. What is your position?

    b. How long have you been with the company?

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

    a. How would you describe the organizational culture in the company?

    b. What describes a good organizational culture and why**?**

    c. How does the company work to contribute to and sustain desired organizational culture?

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

a. How is the culture in this organization when it comes to Psychological safety?

b. How can the formal leaders use his/her role to cultivate Psychological safety?

c. To which extent do you think Psychological safety is important for the role of formal leaders in contributing to organizational culture?

3. LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

a. How is the leadership commitment today in the company towards the values and in contributing to a desired organizational culture?

b. How can the formal leaders (you) use his/her role to show commitment to contributing to a desired organizational culture?

c. To which extent do you think leadership commitment is important in contributing to organizational culture?

4. LEADERSHIP AND TRUST

a. What is the level of trust in the company? (ansatte til ledelsen, ledelsen tillit til ansatte, kollega til kollega/ på tvers opp og ned)

b. How can formal leaders use their role to build trust in the company?

c. How important is trust when building and sustaining a desired organizational culture?

d. In your opinion, are there more than these factors (leadership commitment, trust and psychological safety) that formal leaders may use to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?

Attachment 4

IO 4

1. Introduction / clarification

    c.   What is your position? VP Exploration
    d.   How long have you been with the company? 1,5 years

1. **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

a) How would you (people in the organization) describe the organizational culture in the company (today)?

The Org. culture in Comp today is very variable depending on the department that you look at. On the history, on the leaders, there are very many factors that are playing in to this equation and they all have an effect. Culture and the perception of culture is the final product of how people feel at work somehow. If they are not happy they are not happy with the culture. This can have various reasons. It is a question with how you deal with the heritage. How this heritage is managed in this change process. IF you come from one of these companies and you think that this was a better culture than the new one if VE, then your change will not happen. If you as a leader can convince your team that the past values are the past and this is the new way to go, you can implement it. But if you still believe you are basically working for another company, then you have a problem. I think problem comes when you have elements that feel suppressed. Eni feels supressed by Point etc. You have these different configurations. Salary, process. You have to manage all of these heritages and set it back to zero, before you can start to implement the new values. I think that is the most important part. If you are continuing to talk about the past, then you will not succeed.

b) What describes a good organizational culture and **why?**

Culture and values are the common sense of the company. They rest in all of us, Team work, integrity – they are in all of us. I think a successful company culture is one that works. One, which captures the soul of the company. I think it only works when it comes from the inside.

c) How does the company work to contribute to and sustain desired organizational culture?

We are asked to - you can say it, you can behave and you can operate in accordance to these values. You have to link your actions to these values and explain it in simple terms. I think that is the biggest part. You can have events where you can introduce the values. This is one thing. To show what the values are. The main part is to link them to the daily tasks and to describe them and say; you lived according to the Vår values. Did you actually realize this? Oh, yes you are right. We can tick off this and this box and it's really cool. They start to like it. I think one of the most important things also in the teams is when it fells imposed that another unit comes in and shows the team how to learn the values- then it is not as accepted as when you just try to carve it out in the individuals. You confirm them (the values) basically; you permanently confirm when they are living according to the values. That is the only thing that you do.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

How is the culture in this organization when it comes to Psychological safety?

Yes, in VE there is no suppression of the employee. I think that employees have a very very strong voice, Such a strong voice that it can have serious business effects that are then very hard to justify even in crisis like this for example. Internationally I have never seen anything comparable, but I understand also in Norway it is particular.

b) How can the formal leaders use his/her role to cultivate Psychological safety?

You can only do it if you are patient and if you do not team up against people. If you are inclusive. I think it is inclusive against exclusive, Like a family farther you discuss it and you say this is bad, but you do not form an alliance to exclude a group of people or exclude key members. Because then at the end both parties will lose. You will have less productivity, you will lose working power, you will have mistrust and rumours. A lot of things will start cooking and it will be out of control. You will like to control and you will like to see it always

positive in a way, And discuss, If it is not clear you discuss it until everyone agrees. Not only discussing it but also taking the suggestions seriously and implement ACTIONS. That is the right way. We need a constant calibration, this is not done when the values are implemented, It's like a marriage, you have constantly to discuss it and return. It is always the same problems, the same but different. It helps that you already lived through them in the past. Oh, listen, this is very similar to this situation with had then and then. It is important to have common sense. You have the laws and the common sense in how to do it even better.

c) To which extent do you think Psychological safety is important for the role of formal leaders in contributing to organizational culture?

It is key. If you don't feel safe, psychologically safe, you cannot implement anything. It is very difficult.

This is the most important part. Not only for my team but also for the Leadership team members. They must feel so safe that they can say everything they think and even when they are in heated discussions, no one takes it in a bad way. This is important for my leadership team that it is important to feel safe. This is the key part to succeed. If there is a happy family movement if you think you can only say the things that you think are nice and you take special care, then you will not move.

3. LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

a) How is the leadership commitment today in the company towards the values and in contributing to a desired organizational culture?

It is very difficult because it is not so linear. You can engage a lot and you cannot achieve the right results and you can engage less and you can have good results. It is very difficult to mark this. It not very linear and it is very much related to the personality of the leader, I would say.

b) How can the formal leaders (you) use his/her role to show commitment to contributing to a desired organizational culture?

You can, but it is not necessarily believed. You can talk ten hours about values. If people have the feeling that it is not authentic, then they will not buy it. It can be very inspiring in a speech, but if ten minutes later the same person talks we should do it like Exxon did it or the Eni way, then everything is destroyed. There are a lot that you can do, but then there are minor actions that can destroy the entire building. How you speak, the control of your voice, you are deeply convincing. You need to work out what these values really mean for you and for the individual critically. In Expo we discussed the values and talked about them to understand what they really meant to you. Grow to me means you get better as a leader that you learn more. This is just an example, but it is important to define where you can identify yourself with each of these values and make list of everything and then you discuss it. You discuss with the others. The other thing is to have a vision with the values. If you want to sell something, you need to convince the others that there is something to win from this. The win is simply that you will get the job done; you will have more fun at work; you will have fewer frictions and everything will be much easier, you will love to go to work. You don't want to go to work to misunderstand your colleagues and to have different groups and rumours and things. I think everyone understands this. Everyone understands this. Everyone wants to be in an environment where you feel safe and relax and like to work than the other way around. This is the first point. My ambition was that I would like to have the best and happiest exploration people in Norway. Obviously when people are happy they will give you more and more. That is what I have experienced myself. When you feel safe you can focus fully on your work and you don't even feel that the time passes. If you explain this to the people they will understand. Then it is a bit like a self-fulfilling prophesy. Then you just have to confirm people of what they are doing and then they going in the right direction.

c) To which extent do you think leadership commitment is important in contributing to organizational culture?

It is key. Without a leader you do not contribute to any culture. It is important to align the leadership team in the beginning.

4. LEADERSHIP AND TRUST

a) What is the level of trust in the company?

This is very heterogeneous. If people feel informed from the beginning it is much easier to convince them. If you are not informing but just implementing as leader it does not work. As a leader you need to take a step back and steer the common sense.

b) How can formal leaders use their role to build trust in the company?

Be open and communicative and people will judge you for your actions, If you are open and communicative and you act the opposite way, you will not be trusted. When you promise something, you have to take the action. If you cannot take the action, then you have to explain immediately why you could not take the action, tell why it is different. Get everyone on board then everyone will understand. Make you thinking transparent. You will need to have in your planning the best intentions, I think when you have the good intentions for the company and the employees you cannot do anything wrong. Whereas if you have a hidden agenda that's when it gets more difficult. The easiest is to contribute to the values with the team and to build it up together. Like building Lego, everyone is building and you as a leader make sure that everyone is included in this game. Then people trust you.

c) How important is trust (trust) when building and sustaining a desired organizational culture?

At the beginning you have the trust. In order to get started it is not the most important but to keep it going trust is important. It is equally important as Pschycologically safety and they are both interlinked. If you don't feel Pschycologically safe you don't have trust. It is the same, either you feel good in the team and then you trust and you feel Pschycologically safe, but if you do not trust then you do not feel Pschycologically safe. It is both related in my opinion.

d) In your opinion, are there more than these factors (leadership commitment, trust and psychological safety) that formal leaders may use to contribute to and sustain the desired organizational culture?

The timing is essential. The values should be rolled out to the leadership team first. Instead of rolling out the values to the organization first it should be rolled out first to the leadership team. It is ok to develop the values with the organization. But more important than the employees are the leaders. If the leaders don't buy it, it is very difficult to implement it. Therefore you need to have some roll out time in the leadership team, in which the values are rolled out in the leadership team and everyone is ok with these values and say now I really like them, these are my values, and then you roll it out to the organization. IF you do it all at once, there is this value thing, oh, what does it mean, this is not what you would like to achieve, You would like achieve that there are someone already at the steering wheel and knows which direction the boat has to go. But then again steering does not mean that you teach your employees what they mean, but that you develop them together with them. Also, with the option to revise your own opinion.