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- Master Thesis -

Leadership and Collective Genius

A Study Across Companies Within the Creative Industry

Master Thesis in Organizational Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether companies in the creative industry can construct a creative and innovative work environment by the use of leadership that focuses on incorporating all organizational members in the process opposed to the traditional notion of leadership where the focus is on the leader as the visionary and the goal-setter. The rationale behind this research is that what is usually known as a good leader is not necessarily the same as leading for innovation, and this research is based on the premise that one will get superior outcomes by gaining insights from multiple slices of genius and combining them into a collective genius rather than relying on “the lone inventor” that often have been the image of the leader in the past.

In order to investigate whether signs of leadership that focuses on a collective genius were found in the creative industry, the communication house Media Bergen were contacted due to their business relying heavily on their ability to provide creative and innovative outcomes. The qualitative study focused on 4 companies within the organization: NOR PR, COX, Keyteq and Oktan-Orangeriet, as well as the holding company Media Bergen. The data was collected from interviews with the CEO of Media Bergen as well as five top managers within the 4 other companies. The interviews were transcribed, thereafter analyzed by the help of codes and categorization, and then discussed through the lens of relevant literature on the field of collective genius, leadership and motivation theories.

The main finding of the study was that the leaders within Media Bergen focused on creating communities where the organizational members are encouraged to provide their opinions in an ongoing discussion of how they should solve projects. These leaders thus relaxed the notion of hierarchy usually found within companies as everyone were encouraged to participate in both leader and follower activities as they believed that a focus on collective genius was essential for innovation. The findings that emerged from the research imply that it is necessary to ease up the notions of leadership as a person, and rather think of it as a process where multiple actors are involved. By incorporating the knowledge and insights from all organizational members, companies can bring cutting-edge innovations to the table.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	3
<i>Background and relevance of topic</i>	3
<i>Problem statement</i>	4
<i>Purpose of research and research question</i>	5
<i>Scope of thesis and delimitations</i>	6
<i>Structural overview</i>	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
<i>Collective genius</i>	9
<i>Motivation</i>	11
<i>Managers vs. leaders</i>	13
<i>Leadership theories</i>	15
Transformational leadership	15
Adaptive leadership	17
<i>Summary of the literature review</i>	19
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	21
<i>Interpretivism</i>	21
<i>Company and interviewee descriptions</i>	23
<i>Methods of data collection</i>	25
<i>Empirical data</i>	27
<i>Data analysis</i>	29
<i>The issues of trustworthiness</i>	30
<i>Methods of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research</i>	31
<i>Limitations and delimitations of the research study</i>	33
ANALYSIS	35
<i>Findings</i>	35
The perceptions of the founder and CEO of Media Bergen	35
How to create a creative and innovative work environment	40
Work performance and motivation	44
<i>Summary of main findings</i>	51
DISCUSSION	54
<i>Founder and leader</i>	54
<i>Top management as leaders</i>	56
<i>How the leaders motivate</i>	59
<i>Motivating the leaders</i>	61
CONCLUSIONS	64
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67
APPENDIX 1: The personnel handbook “Alt er mulig” (everything is possible)	Feil! Bokmerke er ikke definert.
APPENDIX 2: The Interview Guide	Feil! Bokmerke er ikke definert.
APPENDIX 3: The interviews	Feil! Bokmerke er ikke definert.

INTRODUCTION

This section will introduce the rationale behind the research study and its relevance in the leadership discourse today. The introduction will start with a section explaining the background and relevance of the research question, following a section explaining the gap in knowledge within leadership discourse. The last sections will explain briefly how the research study is conducted as well as the scope of thesis and following delimitations. Lastly, the introduction will provide a structural overview of the thesis.

Background and relevance of topic

“When faced with a challenge, get smarter”

(Catmull & Wallace, 2014, p. 31)

Development in technology and knowledge, cultural diversity and lower barriers between the borders has led to a constant battle for companies to readjust and to reinvent oneself in order to survive and to sustain a competitive advantage (Elenkov & Manev, 2005). A source to a competitive advantage is innovation, which can take place in many settings; it can be a new or redesigned product, it can be a market segment not entered previously, new processes of manufacturing, new organizational structure, etc. Essential questions of how companies can become more innovative thus emerge, and this paper argues that leadership is vital for innovation as leaders can influence the environment the employees work in and thus can contribute to their motivation towards providing a better and more creative work performance (Elenkov & Manev, 2005) (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007)(Gu, Tang, & Jiang, 2013).

Later leadership theories such as adaptive leadership emphasize the importance of leaders moving away from the “lone inventor myth” where the leader is perceived as the primary source to competitive advantage by always knowing best and being responsible for coming up with new ideas, and over to recognizing that more and more of the workers in today’s business environment often have higher education and more knowledge than the leader about the complex challenges they are facing, and thus can contribute with essential insights

and expertise in order to create new and novel inventions or innovative solutions (Amabile & Khaire, 2008).

By focusing on enabling organizational members to become innovative, it is argued that leadership is necessary in order to provide support and create a fertile work environment, which encourages learning and creates a safe haven where organizational members can be creative and collaborate in order to come up with new and game-changing ideas (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004). The role of the leader is thus changing away from previous notions of leaders as the visionary with the core activity of motivating and/or supervising employees into following that vision, and instead over to viewing the leader as a social architect creating a community where members are encouraged to collaborate and together find new and creative ideas in order for the company to move forward in the rapidly changing business market (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

Problem statement

As the context of leadership have changed dramatically since leadership theories first emerged, it is reasonable to assume that there have been changes within the leadership discourse as well and that we are in need of evolving our theories of leadership into more suitable theories of this decade, and this thesis will try to uncover what leadership style companies of today which are in need of innovativeness and creativity promotes. While it is recognized in leadership discourse that without followers leaders could not exist, the main focus within the leadership discourse is concerned with how leaders can influence their followers, and not the other way around (DeRue, 2011). Current discourse on leadership is characterized by treating leadership as something that is inhibited by one person – the leader – and thus does not admit that leadership can be a process where multiple stakeholders influence it (DeRue, 2011) (Heifetz, 1994).

Recent years new types of challenges have emerged and with it new leadership theories. One of these theories is adaptive leadership theory that emphasizes that the complex challenges companies have to deal with today will not be solved if companies only make use of their leaders, but should rather incorporate all organizational members in order to overcome them

(Heifetz, 1994). Adaptive leadership theory has not been acknowledged as equally important as the more traditional leadership theories as charismatic, transactional and transformational theories, and this thesis will look further into whether this lack of acknowledgement can be explained by the theory having no roots in reality or if it can be explained due to a limited amount of research on this area.

Purpose of research and research question

The rationale behind this research study is to see whether there are signs of the emerging leadership theory about adaptive leadership in businesses today in order to see whether leadership today have changed from traditional notion of a leader as a person with clear distinctions of the leader and the follower, and over to leadership as a process where all organizational members participates and perform both leader and follower activities. As people in the 21st century are more and more educated and skilled than earlier when the traditional leadership theories emerged, the researcher believes it reasonable that companies today will profit from taking a strategy of considering leadership as a process that incorporates the insights and knowledge from all stakeholders within a company rather than let the responsibility of being innovative and creative lay on one person as the leader of the company.

In order to investigate whether or not signs of adaptive leadership are visible in businesses today the investigator chose to interview representatives within the creative industry. The organization of study selected was the holding company Media Bergen, which is one of the leading communication houses in Norway as well as Scandinavia (Media Bergen, 2015). In order to see what leadership styles that were at place at Media Bergen the investigator chose to interview the CEO of the holding company as well as interviewing the CEOs and top managers of the companies within the organization Media Bergen. By conducting these six face-to-face interviews this allowed the investigator to gain a more holistic picture of the leadership style of the CEO of Media Bergen as well as looking for patterns of leadership styles amongst the managers of the companies within the organization. Based on these six interviews as well as the observations made at their joint main location in Bergen, Norway, an analysis of their comments and actions has been done and discussed in terms of existing

literature on both traditional leadership theory as well as newer discourse as adaptive leadership theory.

Based on the earlier mention problem statement and purpose of research, the following research question was investigated in this research study:

“Can leadership help the creation of a collective genius, spurring creativity and innovativeness within organizations?”

Scope of thesis and delimitations

The research study has its scope to explore whether there are signs of adaptive leadership in companies today and whether a focus on collaboration above formal roles can influence organizational members into being more creative and innovative. In order to investigate this topic it was necessary to choose research objects within the creative industry, as it was essential that these companies regarded creativity and innovation important for their daily operations and survival of their company. The investigator chose to use qualitative methods by interviewing the research objects as well as observations at Media Bergen as this allowed the investigator to get an insight into the interviewees' lived world through interaction as well as the possibility of moving in new directions if information not considered before emerged (Kvale, 2007). By choosing qualitative methods and taking an interpretive approach where the rationale is that there are no universal truths as everyone perceives the world differently (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), the investigator recognizes that the findings done in this research study cannot be generalized, but are done in order to increase the understanding of how managers can make use of different leadership styles in order to influence and inspire to a more creative and innovative work environment.

Preferably the investigator would have chosen a wider range of organizational members at all levels for interviewees in order to get a more holistic picture of the processes behind leadership and motivation, but due to the limited time and resources the investigator chose to limit the interviewees to the top managers. By choosing to focus the research only from the manager's perspective, this limits the understanding that could be made from this research

study. Nevertheless, the investigator chose two levels of managers in order to gain insight into how the managers perceive their top management as well as how the managers regard themselves, enabling the investigator to investigate the phenomenon under study both from the perspective of leader and follower even though the primary group of “regular” employees are not represented in this research study.

Another delimitation of this research study is that the interviewees work within the same communication house, which could imply that the findings done in this research study might not be as appropriate if other organizations were studied as well. However, the purpose of this research study was to reveal what leadership styles were apparent in the creative companies of today, thus it was more useful to examine the perceptions of the top management and the CEO of one organization as it allowed the investigator to gain a more holistic picture of the leadership styles at place due to the multiple insights on the same matter were represented as well as the CEO’s perception of his own leadership style could be examined in light of how the other top managers perceived it.

Structural overview

The thesis is structured in a traditional manner with six main sections, namely introduction, literature review, research design and methods, analysis, discussion and conclusion.

The *introduction* starts with a statement of how the business market has changed recent decades and how this has influenced and challenged how companies handle their strategies. Working from a rationale that companies have to reinvent themselves and focus on creativity and innovativeness in order to sustain a competitive advantage, this thesis claims that leadership is essential. The introduction further explains that in order to cope with these market changes, there are new demands from leadership as well, introducing adaptive leadership as a response. The introduction further explains the methods used to investigate the research question as well as stating the scope of the thesis.

The *literature review* starts by explaining collective genius as a key concept for linking innovation and leadership and thereafter presents a short overview of the existing discourse

on leadership, discussing strengths and weaknesses in the theories. Following this section explains the rationale of why newer leadership theories are needed and presents adaptive leadership theory as one of the leadership theories that have emerged throughout the last couple of years. The main part of the literature review focuses on adaptive leadership theory and gives the audience a thorough insight in existing literature on this field.

The *research design and methods*-section explains the perspective the researcher works from and how the research has been conducted. This section provides the audience with the thoughts behind the researcher's decision of using interviews as the primary data collection method. Lastly, this section explains the limitations and delimitations of this research study.

The *analysis*-section starts with a brief introduction of the main findings that were found during the analysis of the interviews that were conducted, in order to provide the audience a clear conception of the main thoughts and rationale that were found throughout the analysis. In the main section of the analysis the findings are explained more thoroughly, supported with quotes and observations from the interviews.

In the *discussion*-section the main findings found in the analysis is discussed in light of the literature review. Whereas the analysis-section tried to reveal patterns and differences throughout the interviews in how the interviewees perceived their life worlds, the discussion tries to see whether the experienced realities of the interviewees can be explained in terms of existing discourse on the field.

In the last section, the *conclusion*, the insights of the research study will be presented as well as what future implications could be and suggestions to further research on the phenomenon under study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is divided in five sections; the first section explains the linkage between innovation and leadership by the use of the key concept collective genius, the second part highlights the two different motivation theories used within the leadership theories, the third section distinguishes the two key concepts manager and leader, the fourth section introduces leadership theories as transformational leadership and adaptive leadership, while the fifth section provides a summary of the literature review used in this research study.

Collective genius

While there has been a wide arrange of studies regarding innovation and leadership, there have been few studies that have researched the connection between leadership and innovation and how one can lead in order to become more innovative. A recent study shows that what is normally perceived as a good leader and the best way of leading for innovation is not necessarily the same (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014):

“Effective leadership is a key difference between firms that could innovate again and again and firms that rarely innovated at all” (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014, p. 69)

They explain that while a good leader is often perceived as the visionary of the company and/or someone who are able to mobilize the organizational members to execute his or her visions, the leaders Hill et al (2014) studied showed that leaders of truly innovative companies did not act as solo players, but instead focused on creating communities where every organizational member were willing and able to contribute with their insights and knowledge in order to create innovative outcomes. What is essential for leading innovation according to these researchers is the perception that every person within an organization contains a slice of genius, and that the leader creates a context or environment where these multiple slices can be combined and transformed into collective genius (Hill, Brandeau,

Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). It is not enough for a company to simply hire talented people in order to be innovative; they also need to create a community where these people are willing and able to participate.

In order to create a community where the organizational members are willing to participate in innovation processes by contributing with their ideas and thoughts, it is essential to encourage discussion. While leaders traditionally discourages conflicts, leaders who lead for innovation encourage it – as long as they are constructive. These leaders recognize that by discouraging opposing opinions they will stifle the possible creative outcome, as they are not able to build on each other’s ideas or have openness to other ideas outperforming their own (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). By focusing on creating a community that encourages an open discussion these leaders also eases up the hierarchical structure traditionally seen where the leader is the one in charge, while the employees are the subordinates. In addition to creating a community where discussions are encouraged, the leader must also provide the organizational members with a purpose; if they do not have a mutual purpose of creating the best possible outcome for the organization, there is little reason to believe that they will participate in these processes (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

In addition to foster willingness to participate in the innovation processes it is also necessary to build the ability to innovate, and it is argued that a company’s innovation culture is dependent on three specific abilities in order for creativity and innovation to flourish, namely creative abrasion, creative agility and creative resolution (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014):

1. Creative abrasion: The organizational members are encouraged to engage in discussions where they explain their points of view and through debate learn from each other and can draw on each other’s insights in order to keep the progress going forward. This is called creative abrasion, and refers to having a group of intellectual diverse individuals, that together can create productive ideas by assembling the different skill-sets (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

2. Creative agility: The second ability that is essential for collaboration is creative agility. It refers to encouraging the teams to have a culture where they rapidly test out new ideas by experimenting and through this process discover whether or not they are going in the right direction. If the ideas that are tested turns out to be dead ends, the team will readjust and try another idea. The teams are thus encouraged to test ideas continuously in order to learn from their mistakes and to avoid going down the wrong path for too long (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

3. Creative resolution: The third and last ability that is essential for collaboration is creative resolution. It refers to teams being able to reach an understanding of which direction they should take by having a culture where they include the opinions of all team members and through debate and respect try to build on each others ideas so they can reach a solution where all team members feel their opinion have been valued. The direction is set through collaboration, and not through one person deciding what they should do or not (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

The role of the leader is thus to be a “social architect” and a facilitator that creates a context where others can make innovation happen, and not as the primary source of innovation or the visionary as is often expected from leaders today. This research study will take a further look on whether the notion of collective genius is apparent in innovative organizations today, as well as take a further look on whether leadership theories supports the notion of collective genius.

Motivation

Creativity in organizations is essential when dealing with how one can implement new solutions, deal with constant changing environments, and to unleash new products and processes (Amabile T., 1998). However, even though most organizations find creativity a helpful tool in gaining a competitive advantage, many organizations do not know how they can help creativity to flourish in the workplace, and more than a few is actually undermining it unaware (Amabile T., 1998). To understand how one can help people become more creative in organizations, it is not enough to merely hire talented people; one has to motivate them as

well. It is their level of motivation that will decide whether or not employees will go the extra mile (Amabile T., 1998). Motivation is thus a necessary tool for creativity to flourish in organizations, but research has shown that there are two main types of motivation, which influences the creativity process differently – namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Amabile T., 1998):

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside a person, and the motivational tool can both be positively or negatively associated, in form of a reward or a punishment. Employees can be rewarded with a monetary bonus or promotion in exchange for good work performance, or they can be punished accordingly if they cannot deliver the work performance expected (Amabile T., 1998). Research on extrinsic motivation has shown that it doesn't necessarily stop people from being creative, but it doesn't help either (Amabile T., 1998).

Intrinsic motivation on the other hand is shown to be more essential in terms of creativity. Intrinsic motivation comes from within a person, and when people are intrinsically motivated they work for the challenge and enjoyment of it, not because they feel pressured to. The work itself feels rewarding for the employees, and this will lead to an increase in employees' motivation to be more creative (Amabile T., 1998).

Research has shown that leaders can increase intrinsic motivation within organizations by highlighting factors such as intellectual challenge, autonomy, and organizational support. In order to let creativity flourish it is necessary to challenge employees to think in new ways and to give employees new and exciting work assignments they haven't done before (Amabile T., 1998). Further it is important to let the employees decide themselves how they will solve problems, and by giving them the autonomy to decide what means they will use in order to reach the ends, the employees will be intrinsically motivated (Amabile T., 1998). Research has also shown that organizational support has tremendous effects on creativity and intrinsic motivation. By feeling encouraged to experiment with new ways of solving problems and embracing a culture where there is a safety net under the employees if new ideas fail, organizational support will increase creativity in the workplace. Leaders can also show organizational support by clearing the path for employees so they don't have to tackle bureaucratic processes during their creative efforts (Amabile T., 1998).

It can be concluded that motivation is essential when dealing with creativity and work performance, and that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation works in different ways. While extrinsic motivation works through carrots and sticks in exchange for work performance, intrinsic motivation focuses on making employees feeling committed to their work by assigning them with work assignments where they can use their skills and talents. In order for leaders to increase intrinsic motivation it can be concluded that providing autonomy, intellectual challenge and organizational support are important factors to spur creativity in the workplace. Leaders should thus avoid extrinsic constraints such as fear of punishments, surveillance and excessive control in order to keep their organization creative and innovative (Amabile T., 1998).

It has been argued that work with a focus on collective genius are highly intrinsically motivating as the process of leadership includes all stakeholders' opinions, and thus allows all organizational members to express their points of view and contribute to change through their knowledge, skills and insights (Randall & Coakley, 2007). When facing new challenges, companies that promote collective genius will set the stage for the different stakeholders to collaborate through brainstorming, learning and collecting different pieces of the puzzle through different skill-sets, and hopefully reach a solution that leads them forward in the ever-changing market place. By giving organizational members the autonomy and support to solve these problems on their own leads to an increase in intrinsic motivation as those involved in this process will have the possibility of actively participating in solving problems through debate and creative thinking with other organizational members, and through this participation feel ownership to the process and trust from the company in their skills and knowledge (Randall & Coakley, 2007). In order to gain a work environment where creativity flourishes, this paper will thus promote intrinsic motivation and collective genius as essential.

Managers vs. leaders

This paper will distinguish between managers and leaders, whereas managers gets their authority from a formal position within a company, opposed to leaders who gets their authority based on the support and legitimacy they receive from their followers (Tengblad &

Alvesson, 2013). This is not to say that managers cannot be leaders, but this paper will make a distinction between management and leadership whereas the focus will be on how leaders can affect followers through non-coercive means rather than management with focus on planning, organizing and controlling (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013).

Leaders use motivational tools such as inspiration and persuasion to ensure that followers collaborates, which means that leadership is a process with a voluntary side opposed to managers who use formal authority to ensure that employees deliver good work performance (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013). In the later leadership literature it has become more and more common to separate management and leadership as two different concepts, whereas management is seen as a necessary tool under stable environments, while leadership is necessary when the environments are changing. Leadership thus deals with problems without known solutions, whereas management deals with standardized and well-known solutions to common problems (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013) (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

In agreement with the distinction between leadership and management, Heifetz (1994) has proposed that managers deals with technical problems that management knows how to deal with as they have dealt with them before and thus have developed the knowledge and procedures necessary to handle these. Opposed to these technical problems with known solutions where management is sufficient, leadership is necessary when dealing with problems where there has not been developed an adequate response – these are called adaptive problems (Heifetz, 1994). Adaptive problems refers to problems where there is no clear answer to what is right or wrong, and thus requires multiple resources and perspectives to solve it. Adaptive problems thus needs a leader who can ensure a collaboration with followers to come up with new solutions opposed to a manager trying to implement standardized solutions to a problem they haven't dealt with before, which is likely not to succeed (Heifetz, 1994).

The key question to whether or not a problem is adaptive or technical is whether or not the solution to the problem *“requires changes in people’s values, attitudes, or habits of behavior”* (Heifetz, 1994, p. 87). If the problem does not, it is suitable for a manager to implement known solutions, however; if the problem requires change, leadership is necessary. The paper

will thus distinguish between managers and leaders in terms of whether their status is formally obtained or legitimized through followers, and whether they deal with technical problems which can be solved through implementing already known procedures or dealing with adaptive problems which requires collaboration and a change in values, attitudes, and/or habits of behavior of both the leader and followers (Heifetz, 1994) (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013) (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

Leadership theories

As this research study is based on the premises that the many outperforms the one, this section will present leadership theories that have a focus on leaders and followers influencing each other opposed to leadership theories that attribute leadership to one person. This section will further discuss the weaknesses and strengths within these theories and how they have evolved; leading to the basis of adaptive leadership that is the premises this research study is built on.

Transformational leadership

Theories about transformational leadership have a main focus on seeing leadership as a two-directional process where leadership is co-constructed between followers and the leader (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013). A transformational leader influences people to be followers due to personal beliefs and emotions. Transformational leaders aim to make their followers feel personally rewarded by making them feel ownership to their work tasks and to become satisfied when they achieve set goals, and are thus more concerned with intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation such as monetary rewards, etc. (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013) (Northouse, 2012).

By considering the employees as human beings with emotions, values, and knowledge, these transformational leaders are concerned with finding out how they can motivate their employees and satisfy their needs in order for them to feel empowered and satisfied with their work (Northouse, 2012). Theories about transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in order to make followers reach their fullest potential by the leader acting as a role model with a clear sense of mission, challenge the followers to think

creatively and innovative, and by providing a supportive work environment (Northouse, 2012). As the needs of others are central for transformational leadership, the process of leadership emphasizes both the follower and the leader (Northouse, 2012).

The emphasis transformational leadership theories have on inspiring and motivating their employees distinguishes transformational leadership from transactional leadership theories, which focuses on the exchanges between leaders and their followers, where the leader provides their employees with clear goals and by the employees either obtaining those goals or not, the employees will either receive a reward or punishment (Northouse, 2012) (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013). While transactional leadership have been widely critiqued for their lack of implementing followers in the process of leadership and viewing leadership equal to one's formal authority, transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of followers in the process of leadership and that leadership is based on legitimacy from their followers, not something that derives from their formal position in the company (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013) (Northouse, 2012).

Transformational leadership theory is often linked to charismatic leadership theory based on the grounds that a transformational leader attempts to influence followers to do more than is expected of them. In order to influence them, these leaders often incorporate tools such as being charismatic and visionary (Northouse, 2012). However, similar to charismatic leadership, transformational leadership have also been criticized for treating leadership as trait-based in the sense that it is not a leadership style that can be learned, but because of the influential and visionary nature of transformational leadership it is something that only a few individuals are able to do (Northouse, 2012).

Another critique of the transformational leadership is that even though transformational leaders opposes the notion of a one-directional process, - where the leaders are the only influential in the process as is known from charismatic leadership and transactional leadership - by emphasizing a two-directional process of leadership where the needs and the ideas of the leaders as well as the followers are being taken into consideration, the term "transformational" depicts that one person – the leader – is the most important factor in the process as it is the leader that is being viewed as the visionary, not the followers. It is thus

being underlined that it is the leader that transforms followers, not the other way around and the follower and the leader are not equals (Northouse, 2012).

Adaptive leadership

Based on the weaknesses and strengths in transformational leadership theory, adaptive leadership theory has emerged. Adaptive leadership is based on the premise that leadership is a process, where influence comes through legitimacy and not through formal authority, where intrinsic motivation is seen as the main driver for continuous innovation and that leaders and followers influence each other alike (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1992) (Gu, Tang, & Jiang, 2013) (DeRue, 2011).

As the companies today faces an ever-changing marketplace where they are forced to constantly renew themselves, the rationale behind adaptive leadership is that these rapid changes requires the companies to change their deeply held beliefs and values that have worked in the past, and it is argued that adaptive leadership is essential in order to solve these (Heifetz, 1994) (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997) (DeRue, 2011). As earlier mentioned, Heifetz (1994) emphasizes that there is a distinction between technical and adaptive problems. When a company encounters a technical problem, they already have the know-how and standardized routines and processes to deal with it, and are thus a task for management to solve. However, with the adaptive problems that companies' encounters more and more often these days, there is no clear solution and in order to solve these problems the whole organization needs be brought in to the process (Heifetz, 1994). Adaptive leadership claims that leadership is a process or an activity, rather than a formal position and/or personal traits, and that a leader becomes legitimized by followers, not their authority (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004). Instead of a leader leaning on his or her formal authority and telling people what to do, this type of leader asks the other stakeholders hard questions that requires a change in mindset in order to provoke new thoughts and insights (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004).

Adaptive leadership relaxes the notion of formal hierarchies in leadership and is thus suggesting that leadership can take place in all levels of the organization. In adaptive

leadership those that are traditionally viewed as subordinates and/or followers can take the role as leader (DeRue, 2011). Whereas transformational leadership emphasizes that leadership is a two-directional process, transformational leadership separates leaders and followers, while adaptive leadership allows all organizational members to engage in both leader and follower activities (DeRue, 2011). Adaptive leadership thus emphasizes that leadership is more than one individual influencing others from a position; leadership emanates from the initiatives and insights from all stakeholders involved in the process (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

As adaptive problems are complex, it often requires different perspectives and expertise in order to solve it, and thus the process requires multiple actors to collaborate. In these settings, the role of the leader is to ask hard questions that enable the actors to think in new ways. As there are multiple opinions, one of the tasks of an adaptive leader is to mediate conflicts, and to keep the discussion at a healthy level. This is not to say that there should not be discussions and conflicts, as these are necessary in order to change mindsets and keep the progress going forward, but to ensure that the different participants are keeping it work-related and are open to other opinions as well as their own (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004). Thus, some of the core tasks of an adaptive leader are to provoke debate, encourage the organizational members to think in new ways and to collaborate, and thus co-construct new social learning helping to solve the adaptive problems they are facing. Instead of imposing a solution, an adaptive leader enables the organizational members to create a solution together through collaboration (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004).

Due to the complexity of adaptive problems, it is not a linear process from the start to the finish line, and one must expect loops back and forward throughout the process. By enabling the organizational members to create a solution in collaboration, it will necessarily also lead to bumps in the road during the progress. Some ideas might be dead ends, some of the participants might not be open to other ideas than their own, etc. When this distress occurs, one of the main tasks for an adaptive leader is to regulate this tension and make sure to steer the path into a more productive one (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004) (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

In order to do adaptive work, leaders must often step away from what they have previously been taught about leadership in providing the employees with answers, and rather let them take control over the process themselves. For many leaders this can be challenging, but in order to create the best solution for adaptive problems, it is necessary to step away from believing that one person – the leader – has the answer, and rather incorporate the different slices of genius that together can create new and innovative solutions (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014) (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). An adaptive leader must get others to pay attention to the adaptive problem at hand, keep the process productive by maintaining a healthy level of stress, and to keep the participants focused on collaborating and opening up to different points of view (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004). Other recommendations for enabling adaptive work is to stay out of the field of action and rather take place in the background in order to let the process unfold naturally and to keep an eye out for potential obstacles (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

Summary of the literature review

It is argued that leaders of today faces challenges that are more complex without any known solutions than when leadership theories first emerged, and that we are thus in need of changing our notions of what leadership actually is. Recent studies shows that what have been perceived as good leadership traditionally are not necessarily the best approach when innovation is one of the main concerns of the company. The concept of collective genius have emerged as a response to what leaders can do to lead for innovation, and this concept moves away from the idea that the leader is the primary source of competitive advantage by acting as the visionary or expert, and instead recognizes that each organizational member contains a slice of genius, and that by combining and transforming each slice they can initiate a collective genius that outperforms traditional leadership in terms of creating innovative solutions (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014) (Amabile & Khair, 2008).

In order to investigate whether there are signs of collective genius and a leadership style that believes that “the many outperforms the one”, motivation and leadership theories have been introduced and evaluated. Motivation theories argue that in order to create an organization that are motivated and self-driven, a focus on intrinsic motivation is necessary. By giving

organizational members autonomy, trust and provide a feeling of empowerment by including them in the decisions and processes regarding their innovative processes, the motivation theories argue that these organizational members will work harder to provide the best possible outcome for the organization as they will feel an ownership to the projects they undertake (Amabile T., 1998) (Randall & Coakley, 2007). The leadership theories introduced argues that collaboration is essential for creativity and innovation, but is divided in what the role of the leader should be: While transformational leaders take an active role and are a part of the process where organizational members undertakes projects and one of their main activities is to keep the organizational members motivated and keep the projects on the right path (Northouse, 2012), an adaptive leader acts as a social architect that creates a community where the organizational members are encouraged to collaborate and together create innovative outcomes (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). This paper will take basis in adaptive leadership theory and focus on leadership as a process where all levels of the organization can influence others, and that in order for companies to survive in today's business environment, it is necessary to look at leadership as a process where collective genius is encouraged and to incorporate the knowledge of the entire company.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This section is split into eight sections, whereas the first section will elaborate on the interpretive perspective the investigator works from, the second will provide information about the company and interviewees investigated, the third will explain the rationale behind the data collection methods used, while the fourth will provide in-depth information about how the interviews were conducted, the fifth will explain how the empirical data were analyzed, while the sixth and seventh sections will deal with the issues of trustworthiness with qualitative data and how the investigator dealt with them. The eight and last section explains the limitations and delimitations of this research study.

Interpretivism

The underlying assumption behind interpretivism is that the reality is socially constructed – that people interpret their experience subjectively and that this evolves into multiple perceptions of reality. In order to understand these multiple realities the investigator must therefore seek understanding through listening to the research objects' perspectives and how they give meaning to their realities (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). While investigators that take a quantitative approach tries to test theories and find universal truths, investigators that take a qualitative approach believes that there are no universal truths as everyone has different perceptions of the world and thus qualitative investigators try to understand how different contexts can shape people's realities opposed to try to discover any universal realities (Willis, 2007).

It has been argued that qualitative research methods are more suited than quantitative research methods to develop a deeper understanding into a social setting or activity as *“qualitative research is a multifaceted approach that investigates culture, society and behavior through an analysis and synthesis of people's words and actions”* (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011, p. 9) while quantitative research transforms these words into numbers to make them more manageable and quantifiable in order to make them generalizable, which thus leads to a loss of the meanings hidden in the perspectives of the research objects (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Quantitative methods are thus less suitable as a research method than qualitative

methods when the purpose of the research study is to explore the rationale behind why people act the way they do (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011).

This paper takes an interpretivist perspective in that the author makes the assumption that people's behavior are influenced by the context they are in and how they perceive it. Interpretivism is based on the assumption that everyone has their subjective reality, and thus that there cannot be one universal truth (Willis, 2007). By taking an interpretivist perspective the investigator believes that the world as the research objects experience it is important in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, and it is thus more appropriate to take a qualitative approach that seeks to explain the multitude in how people perceive their world, rather than taking a quantitative approach that seeks to find a universal, generalizable truth (Willis, 2007) (Burr, 1995). In order to investigate how realities are socially constructed there is an emphasis on collecting multiple sources of perceptions so the investigator can look for similarities and differences in the data collected and from this make an analysis where relevant patterns that can shape how reality is perceived is found (Willis, 2007). By taking an interpretivist approach, the researcher acknowledges that she has a vital role in both the collection of data and the analysis, and she thus sees the knowledge gathered as co-constructed between her and the research objects (Willis, 2007).

This research study is thus not about discovering new hidden truths, but to gain insight and increase the understanding of the phenomenon of leadership as a process, rather than the traditional view of leadership as a person. By the use of qualitative research method that allows the investigator to take a deeper look into the assumptions and perceptions that lies behind the explanations provided from the research participants, the investigator will try to get a broader understanding of the phenomenon under study through co-construction of knowledge together with the research participants and the investigator's preexisting knowledge and interpretations.

Company and interviewee descriptions

This section will give some background information about the parent company Media Bergen and the sister companies within Media Bergen, as well as present the interviewees representing the different companies.

The organization of study – Media Bergen

The investigator wanted to broaden her understanding of how leaders can influence people into become more creative and innovative, and as a consequence of this it became apparent that in order to investigate how leaders can manage to do this, the interviewees must consider creativity and innovation as important factors of employees' work performance. The investigator therefore decided that the organization of study should have a focus on these two factors, and thus looked further into organizations known for their innovativeness in her local area.

Media Bergen is one of the leading communication houses in Norway and has their main office in Bergen where the investigator was based while writing the thesis. In addition to being one of the leading communication houses in Norway, Media Bergen is also a renowned Scandinavian actor with over 16 companies and 300 employees concerned with innovative and creative processes such as advertising, PR, technology, design and publishing located in Norway, Sweden and Denmark (Media Bergen, 2015).

Ove Grønnevik founded Media Bergen in 1990 as a small advertising company, which has expanded and are one of the leading communication houses both in Scandinavia and Norway today (Media Bergen, 2015). Media Bergen is the parent company of the companies that the 5 managers interviewed in this thesis represent. The last interviewee, *Ove Grønnevik*, is the CEO and owner of Media Bergen.

Oktan Orangeriet

Oktan Orangeriet was established 01.01.2015 and is a merger between Oktan and Orangeriet. Oktan Orangeriet delivers creative market communication through both advertising and design. They are a part of the Oktan-group that consists of ten bureaus located around

Scandinavia and are the third biggest commercial agency in Norway. Their main office is located in Bergen and consists of 27 employees (Oktan, 2015).

There were two interviewees representing Oktan Orangeriet:

Conny Breivik is the former CEO of Orangeriet before the merger and is now a part of the leader group in Oktan Orangeriet. She has been employed as project leader and as a constituted CEO in Orangeriet since 2004. She has previously experience as a project leader and a key account manager (Kreativt forum, 2014).

Stephan Meyer is the former CEO of Oktan Bergen and the current CEO of Oktan Orangeriet. Stephan has been CEO of Oktan / Oktan Orangeriet since 2012 and has experience working as a copywriter and creative director (Oktan, 2015).

COX

COX is a communication agency founded in 1990 and has their office in Bergen with 18 employees. They have specialized in working with a company's communication through their own media channels. They offer services to improve client's communication towards their target group through improving visual looks and content of the client's web page, magazines, brochures, etc. (COX, 2015).

The interviewee that represents COX is the CEO *Kenneth Dahling*. Dahling has worked in Media Bergen since 1991 and has been with COX since the beginning. He has a background within economics and marketing, but has worked within sale and management the last ten years (COX, 2015).

Keyteq

Four passionate founders established Keyteq in 2002. Their main office is in Bergen and they have 25 consultants and technologists employed. Keyteq consists of innovative and creative consultants operating within the field of developing digital business and delivering leading solutions and products within sales and online marketing. They collaborate with partners such as Google, Facebook and eZ Publish on several projects (Keyteq, 2015).

The interviewee representing Keyteq is the CEO *Hans-Petter Ulstein*. Ulstein has been the CEO of Keyteq since 2014 and has over 15 years of experience within digital business, project management and user experience design (Keyteq, 2015).

NOR PR

NOR PR is one of the leading communication agencies in Norway and has offices in Bergen, Oslo, Stavanger, Drammen and Tønsberg with 13 employees. They offer services such as communication consultancy, media consultancy, market research and analysis, editorial production and design. Since 2000 they have helped clients to create change and strengthen their position through developing communication strategies (NOR PR, 2015).

The interviewee representing NOR PR is the CEO *Fredrik Hannestad*. Hannestad has a background as a communication consultant specialized in crisis management and public relations for over 20 years. He is part owner of NOR PR and has been the CEO since 2007 (NOR PR, 2015).

Methods of data collection

This section will explain the methods of data collection used and the rationale behind choosing interviews as the primary method of collecting data.

Case study

The researcher chose to interview multiple companies that are connected through being a part of the communication house Media Bergen, and has thus chosen to do a multiple case study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). By choosing multiple cases to base the research study on it allows the researcher to look for patterns and underlying thoughts both within and across the cases, which enables the researcher to get a broader perspective of the context of the phenomenon under study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). By choosing multiple cases it allows the researcher to investigate whether the findings found in one case are also found in other cases, and what possible implications these similarities or differences could mean for leadership discourse. By choosing a multiple case study the researcher is thus trying to build theory rather than test theory (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Interviews

The primary method of collecting data in this research study was by interviews. This data collection method was chosen as it is known for its potential of collecting rich and vivid descriptions of how research objects experience the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The qualitative interview thus provides a unique insight into the interviewee's perceptions of the world through their own descriptions of their experiences and thoughts (Kvale, 2007).

In a research interview the role of the researcher is to get an insight into the interviewees' lived world through interaction, which provides the researcher with information that allows them to interpret the meaning of what is said and to gain a holistic picture of how the research participants are influenced by the phenomenon that is studied (Kvale, 2007). Thus, *"the research interview is an interview where knowledge is constructed in their interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee"* (Kvale, 2007, p. 3) refers to the knowledge that evolves from the interview both in terms of the interviewee reflecting on the topics talked about, and in terms of providing the interviewer with new insights.

The rationale behind choosing interviews as the primary method of data collection was that it enabled the investigator to interact with the research objects and thus be given the possibility of clarifying the meaning behind the words uttered, which allowed the researcher to capture a more holistic picture of how the research objects experienced the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). By choosing to do individual interviews with several research objects it allowed the investigator to gain a deeper insight in the multiple perceptions and experience with leadership, and to gain a more holistic view of how leadership can influence others on multiple levels (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Secondary material

In addition to the interviews there were also used secondary material such as Media Bergen's personnel handbook. The handbook named "alt er mulig" (translates to "everything is possible") explains the values and beliefs Media Bergen promotes, and has been used during the interviews to ask the interviewees whether or not they agree with the handbook and values that is written by the CEO and owner of Media Bergen, Ove Grønnevik (see appendix

1). There are also used secondary data sources as articles, books and Internet in order to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Empirical data

This section will explain the rationale behind the interviewees selected for this research study as well as explaining how the interviews were conducted.

Selection of interviewees

When planning the research interviews it became evident that it was challenging to know beforehand how many interviewees were necessary in order to collect sufficient enough information to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. It was also necessary to think about the time and resources available, which limited the number of interviews possible to conduct, transcribe, code and analyze (Kvale, 2007). The amount of interviewees in common research interviews are often around 10 (Kvale, 2007) (Lotherington, 1990) as this is usually enough in order to reach a point of saturation where additional interviews only provides marginal new insights and knowledge (Kvale, 2007). As the research question in this thesis is concerned with how leaders can motivate their employees to be more creative and increase their work effort by taking an adaptive leadership approach and focus on intrinsic motivation factors, it limited the number of candidates eligible for interviews as the interviewees in focus were leaders. Due to the researcher's location during the writing process and the focus on having face-to-face interviews as research method, it limited the available candidates further down. As there are eight companies located at the main office in Bergen, the investigator chose to ask the CEO's of these companies if they were able to participate in an interview. Out of the eight candidates asked, six of them agreed to an interview. The two remaining candidates declined the inquiry.

How the interviews were conducted

In preparation for the research interviews the investigator had decided to do a semi-structured interview that allowed the investigator to have a set of topics to go through, but that the questions asked were more suggestions of what to talk about, than a rigid set of questions that had to be covered. By having a semi-structured approach it allowed the

interviewer to ask questions that were prepared beforehand, but also to take new directions if the interviewee had information that the interviewer had not earlier considered relevant or been aware of (Kvale, 2007). By taking a semi-structured and open-end approach it allows the investigator to be sensitive of what is said as well as what is not, and to be able to read between the lines. This kind of interview thus enables the investigator to understand the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the interviewees and to be aware of their own presumptions and expectations from the interview (Kvale, 2007) (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

The investigator was also aware of that the questions that were asked should be neutral and open-ended in order to not ask leading questions, but to let the interviewee interpret the questions themselves and answer accordingly (Kvale, 2007). It was therefore made an interview guide with an overview of the themes that the investigator wanted to cover and suggested questions that were relevant. The interview guide provided a framework for the investigator to work within, but was not made to stay strictly within (Lotherington, 1990) (Kvale, 2007).

All interviews were conducted at Media Bergen's main office at Marineholmen, Bergen, Norway. Some of them were conducted in meeting rooms, while some were located in the interviewee's offices. The location of interviews ensured that the interviewees were located in familiar settings and also enabled the interviewer to observe the interactions between the interviewees and their colleagues to get an overview of the office landscape they worked in. All interviews started out with the interviewer setting the stage for the interview by clearing up the purpose of the interview and asking whether the interviewees had any questions. It was also asked whether it was okay that the interview was audio taped and explained how the interviews were stored, as well as asking the interviewees if they wanted to receive the transcribed interview in order to check if they had been understood correctly or if they wanted to add some information to the interview.

Data analysis

This section will describe how the researcher analyzed the material gathered throughout the interviews and the different phases the material went through in order to make the data manageable.

All interviews were audio taped and thereafter transcribed. Transcribing interviews can be a challenging task as it can be difficult to translate oral speech into written texts. The transcribed interviews thus had difficulties in incorporating body language and gestures (Kvale, 2007), but the researcher incorporated sounds such as laughter in the text where it was easily recognizable. After the interviews had been transcribed they were sent back to the interviewee in order to ensure that the investigator had translated the interview into a written text properly and also in order to ask the interviewees questions that became apparent when going through the material after the original interview.

After the interviews were transcribed and checked with the interviewees for approval of the content, the researcher went through all interviews and looked for similarities and differences, and then placed them into codes (i.e. "motivation", "leadership", "collective genius") in order to break down and examine the data collected (Kvale, 2007). After these codes had been created, the researcher started to examine the codes found in each interview with the others in order to see whether or not there were more examples of the codes found in one interview in multiple interviews. There was made notions of those codes that were repeated across multiple interviews as stronger codes than those that were only visible in one or two interviews, making it easier for the researcher to distinguish between apparent patterns, but also to make notion of possible differences and thoughts that might lie behind the codes who were not as visible as the "stronger" codes.

After the codes had been compared with each other and put into "labels" such as weak or strong depending on how many of the interviewees that had mentioned some data material that went into the codes, the researcher started the process of examining whether the codes could be linked to the same phenomenon. Those codes that could be argued to be linked to the same phenomenon (i.e. "autonomy" and "motivation") became linked together as code

families, which is a categorization of two or more codes that bear some “family resemblance” with other codes (Kvale, 2007) (Gibson & Brown, 2009) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

After the coding and categorizing were finished it was time to further analyze the material. The coding and categorizing helped the researcher to uncover similarities and differences in the data material, and thus made the process of analyzing the raw data material easier in terms of the researcher trying to read into the rationale and perspectives that were behind the interviewee’s statements. The findings that are presented in the “analysis”-section shows the efforts of the researcher in order to understand how the interview objects socially constructs their realities and whether or not these realities had similar patterns amongst the different candidates and what these possible patterns implied. The researcher repeated the data analysis process through several iterations in order to see whether new connections and patterns would become visible. The researcher also attempted to keep external theories and personal assumptions outside the data analysis. The “analysis”-section shows the findings based on the interviews alone, while the later section of “discussion” connects the findings made with existing literature on the subject.

The issues of trustworthiness

This section will deal with how the data that have been collected can be evaluated trustworthy and the challenges qualitative data collection methods meet when they become evaluated by standard quantitative means such as validity and reliability.

Validity and Reliability

In quantitative research investigators address issues of trustworthiness by addressing whether the findings in their research studies are valid and reliable. Validity refers to the truthfulness of findings; that the conclusions made in the research studies matches the reality (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Burr, 2003). Reliability refers to the stability of findings and that they are repeatable (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Burr, 2003).

As qualitative research is not about finding universal truths that are generalizable and replicable, the concept of reliability and validity as understood in quantitative research are

not easily transferrable when the quality of qualitative research are to be evaluated (Burr, 2003) (Willis, 2007). In order to avoid potential biases throughout the research study, and to deal with challenges such as validity and reliability, qualitative research have put forward several suggestions in order to enhance general consistency, transparency and trustworthiness (Burr, 2003) (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Flick, 2007).

Methods of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research

In order to evaluate whether or not the data collected are trustworthy, it is necessary to use different means to evaluate trustworthiness in qualitative research than in quantitative research. This section will discuss some of the methods that are used in this paper.

Triangulation

Triangulation is often used as the equivalent in qualitative research to validity and reliability in quantitative research, and refers to using multiple sources – at least two points - of verification when the investigator wants to draw assumptions (Willis, 2007) (Flick, 2007). There are many sources of triangulation when dealing with qualitative research, such as using different data sources to increase the multiplicity of explanations, using different methods within or across qualitative and quantitative research, or using different investigators to interpret the data collected and to avoid bias (Willis, 2007) (Flick, 2007).

In this research study the investigator incorporated data triangulation to increase the trustworthiness of the conclusions made by collecting data from multiple research objects across different divisions and with different ranks in the hierarchy within Media Bergen in order to increase the understanding of the phenomenon under study from several points of view (Willis, 2007) (Flick, 2007).

Credibility

To assure credibility in research means that the interpretations and conclusions conveyed from the data gathered are trustworthy and reasonable. In order to obtain this credibility, the findings must reflect the stories and explanations told by the interview subjects. The researcher must ensure that the phenomenon under study as lived through the participant's

eyes is authentically captured (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Credibility thus refers to obtaining quality in research by giving an adequate picture of how the participants experience the phenomenon under study, and to avoid researcher' bias and distortion (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

In order to ensure credibility in this research study and to make sure the findings were coherent and dependable with the original data collected the investigator checked the collected data material with the interviewees after it had been transcribed to ensure that the investigator had captured the essence of what the interviewees had said (Burr, 2003) (Flick, 2007). The investigator also ensured credibility by leaving an audit trail – a trail of the process of the research study that makes it visible to others the processes and procedures used to collect and analyze the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The audit trail thus allows others insight into the investigator's mind and to reflect over the choices and conclusions that have been made. It also allows them to check the original transcript from the interviews and see how they evolved into the presented material of the study, thus increasing the transparency of the process (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) (Burr, 2003) (Flick, 2007).

Criticality

Due to the underlying assumption that the investigator in qualitative research influences the study by their preexisting knowledge and interpretations, it is emphasized that criticality is necessary in order to enhance the quality of qualitative research. Criticality refers to the investigator being critical of their own work and to be aware of their own role when they conduct research. An investigator must therefore be aware of their own interpretations, and try to have an open mind where alternative conclusions are possible, and avoid bias that excludes data that might not fit into their original hypothesis (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

In order to increase the trustworthiness of the data gathered in the interviews, the investigator attempted to ask the interviewees questions that were neutral and open in order to let them speak freely about the topics introduced and to let the conversation flow naturally into other topics if the interviewee's thought that they were relevant. In order to avoid getting answers the participant's assumed were right, the investigator was careful of telling about

preexisting knowledge on the field and what her anticipations was from the interviews, and instead tried to have an open approach free from leading questions (Flick, 2007).

Limitations and delimitations of the research study

This research study has some important delimitations. In order to investigate whether or not there are signs of adaptive leadership in creative businesses today where leadership is a process rather than the traditional view of leadership as a person, the research topic could be rather extensive. Due to the numerous directions that would be possible to go in, the investigator chose to focus on leaders and their perceptions of their leader role. There were two levels of leaders that were chosen, the CEO of the parent company Media Bergen, and the CEOs and managers of the sister companies within Media Bergen. By having these two levels of managers it enabled the investigator to get a deeper understanding of how the managers motivated their employees and perceived their leader role as well as investigating how these managers were motivated by their CEO and how they perceived the CEO of Media Bergen's leader role opposed to or similar to their own leader role. By interviewing employees at these companies in addition to the leaders would most likely enable the investigator to increase her understanding of the phenomenon under study, but due to a lack of time and resources the scope of the thesis is limited to focus only on the managers.

Other delimitations to this research study is that the company chosen is renowned for being a creative company with values and morals that focuses on autonomy and collaboration. The same research study done within another company could provide very different findings and reflections, and this research study should thus not be considered as the norm within creative companies, but instead the reflection of the organization of study.

In terms of data collection method the thesis rests mainly on the analysis of interviews. By incorporating other data collection methods or choosing a quantitative approach would probably lead to different results than the ones provided in this thesis. As the research study is based on qualitative research methods it is not generalizable and replicable as quantitative research methods are. However, a useful method that could increase our understanding of this research study is observations. Whereas researchers using interviews can only rely on

the assumption that what the interviewee tells them is true, the use of observations can determine whether the interviewee actually “walk the talk” or if they have constructed the answers under the interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The investigator did not choose to do observations in this research study due to limited time and resources, but the investigator recognizes that observations would be helpful as a secondary research method in addition to interviews in order to gain a broader understanding and to avoid potential constructed answers. However, the investigator believe that observations would not suffice as the primary research method as it heavily relies on the researchers’ interpretations of what they see, and does not acknowledge the perspectives of those they observe (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

ANALYSIS

In this section there will be presented an analysis of the interviews conducted as well as the observations made, followed by a brief summary of the main findings.

Findings

This section is made up of three parts. The first part will discuss how the managers themselves regards the leadership style and motivational tools of the CEO of the holding company Media Bergen, while the second part will discuss what the managers of the five sister companies perceives is important for creating a creative and innovative culture as well as how they themselves lead their organizational members, while the last and third part will discuss how both the CEO of Media Bergen as well as the CEOs and managers of the sister companies motivates their employees to give a better work performance.

The perceptions of the founder and CEO of Media Bergen

This section will focus on how the CEO of Media Bergen leadership style is and how the managers of the companies within Media Bergen perceives it and whether or not this motivates them into providing a better work performance.

One of the main reasons for why Media Bergen was chosen as the organization of study was because of Ove Grønnevik and his values and beliefs of how an organization should be built up on the basis of trust, respect and autonomy. As Media Bergen is the parent company of multiple companies Grønnevik has made a point out of each company individualizing their maximum potential by letting the CEOs of each company decide their strategies themselves and be responsible for sustaining a healthy economy. There was however some mixed feelings about whether or not Grønnevik managed to stay in the background when decisions are made about ongoing projects and strategies in the different companies:

“He has a very passionate personality, sometimes that is both bad and good. I know some of the other companies have questioned his leadership style as they believe he should be less hands-on and more distanced when it comes to the details in their business... I think you have to teach

yourself to be able to not care about every message he gives, because he can just put something out there and forget it the next day... I believe that what he says can be misunderstood as they can feel what he says is an order, but in reality it is merely a suggestion”

(interview with firm A).

Grønnevik clearly stated that he wanted to act as a “support system” for the different companies and not someone that should decide which direction they should go in, but from the above mentioned quote it can be assumed that his appearance and role is not made clear enough for everyone and that some perceives him as an authority and misinterprets his suggestions as instructions instead. The other managers interviewed also described Grønnevik as a very hands-on guy that were very passionate about what was going on in the company, but they looked at Grønnevik as more a sparring partner and someone they could discuss matters with as they look at him as a very talented and experienced person, but not as someone that should have the final say due to his role as the CEO of Media Bergen:

“Here we’re not used to a hardball telling us how it should be done, here every company are let loose to find their own solutions. There is no one at the top saying this is how you should do it, case closed, and this enables the companies to act pretty freely, which is great”

(interview with firm E).

What was interesting was that when the interviewees were asked about Ove they almost immediately started to describe his personality and his passion, and it became apparent that Ove enjoys great respect from the interviewees, and they appreciate to have a sparring partner in him:

“Ove is a very very smart guy, and when he is here, he’s really here. At the same time he pulls away so we have long periods where we can develop ourselves as we want to, but he is with us and might point a direction we should go in and tells us why he thinks that would be a wise choice. He was the one who pointed the direction we went in now, but he gave us full freedom in terms of how we should develop this and how we should shape our product”

(interview with firm B).

The manager in firm B were motivated by the opportunity of shaping the products on their own, but were appreciative of having Grønnevik as someone they could discuss matters with and get his perspectives and insight on possible directions they wanted to go in, as he perceives Grønnevik as someone who has something to bring to the table and that he might have a sense of the bigger picture as he knows everything that is going on in the other companies as well. The manager in firm C also emphasized Grønnevik's personality and abilities when it came to his leadership:

"I don't relate to Ove Grønnevik as my boss. In principle he has all the power, if he says it should be like that, it will be like that... but he is first and foremost a sparring partner for me, and if I mean that this way is the right way to do things, I will do that my way, which he is totally cool with. He is very... he is the most different owner you can imagine! On earth! He is so different that someone should write a book about him!" (Interview with firm C).

The managers seemed overall satisfied with Grønnevik's strategy of letting the CEOs of each company decide their own strategies and the means to reach their goals, but there were some disagreement whether or not he was able to stay out of their daily routines as he wanted to know what was going on in the different companies. The interviewed managers did however agree that they were in charge of their companies, and that even though Grønnevik seemed to know most of what is going on, they did not feel controlled or that Grønnevik tried to steer them into new paths.

Another recurring theme that was apparent was that the managers were satisfied with Grønnevik's relaxed relationship with controlling and reporting, and that this made them feel that they were trusted and had the freedom to do what they thought were best for their company. With a minimum level of reporting it would mean that Grønnevik and the accountants receives reports stating their financial results, so the CEOs have a responsibility of keeping a healthy economy within their companies, but the means to reach those ends are entirely up to them. It can thus be argued that Grønnevik has managed to create an environment that encourages the managers to be in an ongoing conversation with him about what is going on in the companies overall and use him as a sparring partner without this feeling forced, and some of the managers believe that this is due to his informal way of being.

Some of the managers mentioned that his office is a small glass cube in the middle of the office landscape with barely room for his desk in there and that they had never even seen him suit up during all the years they had worked at Media Bergen:

“It is a great strength in Ove that he doesn’t signal how important he actually is”

(interview with firm E).

It can thus be argued that Grønnevik successfully manages to “walk the talk” about his values and beliefs about promoting a flat structure within Media Bergen, and this motivates the managers to shape their companies how they perceive it should be done at the same time they still have support and a sparring partner in Grønnevik. The companies were also very positive about the change Grønnevik – and they got to be a part of - did a couple of years back when it was decided that the companies within the Media Bergen group that were located spread around Bergen should be located at the same floor at Marineholmen in Bergen. To share the same location reflects the values Grønnevik has promoted from the beginning of Media Bergen - team players -, and each company have a section in their shared floor where their surroundings are very open due to each office having glass walls and there are no obvious borders between the different companies. The meeting rooms located around the floor is mostly shared so an employee from firm A can book a meeting room located where firm E is located. The different firms have personalized their areas with their design, but overall there is a very open atmosphere where the different companies share common areas such as kitchen, reception, toilets and canteen. The companies thus have the possibility of getting to know each other through mingling at the common areas:

“We were very positive about moving together and sitting next to each other in open landscapes, sharing coffee machines and all this... it leads to a collegial camaraderie, openness and academic discourse over lunch... and it actually have! That would not have happened if we weren’t in the same floor I think. It is remarkably easier to reach out to our colleagues in the other companies here than to call those in Stockholm we don’t know that well”

(interview with firm A)

As the manager in firm A explained that due to the decision of moving together down at Marineholmen and having an open landscape, which is characterized by collaboration and transparency, they have been able to draw on each other's competence and insights on projects that they weren't able to do before. By collaborating with the other companies they are able to land bigger projects as they can provide a bigger portfolio of expertise, and they are also able to learn from each other. Those managers that have successfully cooperated with some of the other companies are greatly motivated by this, while those managers that had not cooperated especially much with their sister companies felt a little left out when they learned that some of the other companies would have get-togethers where they discussed potential projects and that they had what they called "creative forums" – where they share projects they are proud of to each other in order to teach each other new methods and insights. The fact that Grønnevik wants to encourage collaboration between the companies, but not initiate it, as he believes he should not force them to, seems to have succeeded with some companies, while others have not. However, all interviewees were very positive of the yearly gathering they have at Solstrand where all managers and creative counselors within the organization are invited to participate:

"We have a gathering every year where we discuss our achievements since last gathering. We also have cases we go through, and we work across companies in teams over two days. It is incredibly inspiring to see what the others are doing, as for example how Saatchi & Saatchi landed VG as a client" (interview with firm B).

Grønnevik thus has some measures in place in order to enhance collaboration and the gathering apparently seems to motivate those that attend, so in order to further collaboration between the companies it may be argued that it would be helpful to initiate such meetings more often and maybe more informal in order to let the employees in the different companies get to know each other's expertise and abilities better and thus get familiar with how they potentially can collaborate on projects, without forcing them to actually work together on projects. As soon as the managers interviewed felt that Grønnevik forced something on them they responded negatively, however some of the managers felt left out per today because there was no initiatives in place and there was thus a barrier to overcome that could be challenging for some. It can thus be argued that in order to motivate his employees, Grønnevik

should be careful with forcing them to do anything, but by providing them a common meeting point where they can discuss and learn from each other this could lower the barriers of collaborating.

To sum up the findings of how they perceived Grønnevik as a leader the interviewees described him as a wise and passionate guy they used as a sparring partner opposed to someone who told them what to do. The managers were very satisfied of being able to lead their own company as they want to, and have a foundational support in Grønnevik and Media Bergen if they should hit a bump in the road. As part of Grønnevik's strategy for Media Bergen he moved all the companies located in Bergen into one floor at Marineholmen in order to encourage collaboration across the borders of the companies, which has motivated some of the managers greatly as they feel they have gained new insights and competence and also landed bigger projects and clients due to this collaboration, while others feel left out of the process as they feel the barriers of collaboration are still there for them.

How to create a creative and innovative work environment

When the managers were asked about their strategies of creating a creative environment there were several recurring themes. One of the recurring theme was that they wanted to have an open discussion where every organizational member were encouraged to provide their opinion as the managers believe that the organizational members have a wide portfolio of expertise and knowledge, and by having an open discussion where everyone can contribute, it would enable them to increase the quality of their output as they would learn from each other and build on each others competence. One of the main task of the management was thus to enable a setting where the organizational members could participate in an open discussion and amongst the efforts done with this purpose was to hire a vast set of personalities with different competence and knowledge, and to encourage them to provide their opinions, but also to be open of other people's opinions, even though they did not agree. However, the managers did experience some troubles by implementing a strategy like this:

“... it has been more than a few that has stepped into my office and complained about their co-workers.. I have responded that the only thing we could do about this is to change our attitude towards them as we cannot change another persons’ personality, but we can do something with our attitude” (interview with firm B).

In order to have a culture where they focus on discussion it is reasonable to assume that there will be some personality clashes here and there, and the abovementioned manager believe that it is important to focus on culture in order to succeed with a strategy of open discussion. Instead of reprimanding someone for unwanted behavior this manager believed in an approach where the organizational member who is not satisfied with a colleague has to accept that with so many personalities in one place there is bound to be disagreement, but instead of arguing they should focus on listening to what the other is trying to explain, and either provide their own insights of why they disagree, or to build on what the other is saying and to come up with an idea they can come to terms with. Disagreement is however not the only difficulty they meet by having a culture of open discussion, they also have experienced some organizational members who are not satisfied with their colleagues’ work performance:

“... but of course when we have a very competitive culture within the company as we do, it can become difficult.. it isn’t necessarily agreement from both sides, so we try to build a culture where we become team players.. so if your colleague is not as good as he should be, you shouldn’t accuse him of that but instead try to help him to be better” (interview with firm C).

This manager and others emphasized that not everyone is equally skilled, but this does not mean that one should point fingers at those underperforming, but instead try to focus on helping them become more skilled. There will always be someone who is better at something than others, but these managers believe that if the organizational members try to develop a culture where they focus on making each other better instead of pointing fingers if they have not performed as well as they should have, this will enhance the overall quality of their projects and increase collaboration. Some of the managers have experienced that not everyone is cut out to be a part of this culture, as they feel empowered by being a solo player and unfold themselves as they see best fit instead of having a process with multiple organizational members, and thus they often have to see these star players leave eventually,

and it can thus be argued that the strategy of collaboration and open discussion does not fit everyone, but are more appropriate for those personalities that feel empowered by working as a team and have an openness for other people's opinions and insights.

By enabling every organizational member to have an opinion it also shows that these managers are open to other opinions than their own, which can imply that these managers does not believe that their role is to be the supervisor or as someone who knows best, but that these managers recognizes that their organizational members are skilled knowledge-workers, and that by incorporating everyone's opinion in the process, this will lead to highly creative and hopefully superior results than if they merely gave orders. It was a recurring theme throughout the interviews that the managers wanted an open discussion at the work place, and thus it became apparent a pattern of flat structure opposed to having a hierarchy with a manager acting on his or her formal role by telling the organizational members what tasks they should do and how they should do it:

"These people are knowledge workers, they are people that work here because they know stuff and because they are talented. There are many people here that are extremely better at this stuff than I am and it would be wrong of me to be authoritative in this setting. I believe it would be destructive even" (interview with firm A).

The abovementioned quote reflected what the other managers told as well, they did not want to take a formal position where they told the organizational members what to do, as they believed that it would stifle their creativity and innovativeness. However, there was two different themes of how they acted on their formal role as the manager, whereas one group believed that they should stay in the background and let the organizational members decide themselves the means for how they should reach their ends, while the other group had a more active and hands-on role. The manager in firm D belonging to the latter group explained that the organizational members were encouraged to collaborate and have their own set of opinions, but she would be a part of the team both in terms of having a sense of control over the process and also to provide her inputs and feel ownership to the projects as well. She did not necessarily attempt to take a role as the decision-maker, but due to the other organizational members who perceived her as "the boss", she felt that her suggestions and

insights were observed as instructions instead. Thus, this manager wanted to be a part of the process, but did not feel that she was “one of the group” as she had a formal title as a manager, and thus felt that the organizational members were reluctant to disagree with her and instead followed her suggestions even though they might be able to have come up with better outcome if they discussed her opinions the same way as they did their peers.

While the group of managers who had a more hands-on role struggled with combining being “one of the group” and also having a formal title as manager, the former group of managers was careful of staying out of their organizational members’ business:

“... the leader role.. it sounds like the leader is someone at the top of the hierarchy, but I see my role more as a facilitator that organizes so that the king of the system, namely the one in charge of the project, can work as freely, creatively and good as possible to generate business”

(interview with firm E)

These managers stepped away from their formal role and encouraged their organizational members to step up and take responsibility for their own projects. Their role was to stay out of the way and to clear their pathways for potential obstacles, and they thus did not experience the same challenges as the other group of managers. However, it can be questioned whether they feel ownership in the same way as they will not participate in the projects themselves, but act in the background. It can thus be argued that this strategy does not fit everyone, as they will remove themselves from the actual projects that are going on in the company and might not feel the same degree of ownership.

Another recurring theme that became apparent during the interviews was that the focus on having an open discussion also led to the managers thinking out of the box and going in new and unanticipated directions, which might possibly be able to lead to dead ends. When asked about what they would do if they reached a dead end, the managers simply answered that they would pick up the pieces and try to go in another direction. If they experienced a dead end they would not reprimand or punish the initial idea-makers, rather they encouraged the organizational members to come up with new and creative ideas so they could test them out:

“... if you don't do any errors, then you won't succeed with anything either, right?”

(interview with firm B).

The rationale behind this strategy seemed to be that by testing out new ideas they enabled the teams to be creative and innovative without fearing for their jobs or some other reprimand if their ideas turned out not to be as good as initially believed, and by having this strategy the managers ensured that the organizational members would feel that they had a safety net that would catch them if they reached a standstill or dead end.

To sum up the findings in term of top management and their innovation strategy, two themes became apparent. One group of managers perceived themselves as facilitators that enabled their organizational members to work on projects in teams without interference from the manager as they believe they would achieve superior innovative results this way, while the other group of managers took a more active role in the process working alongside their organizational members because they believed that by taking a more hands-on approach they could keep the discussions at a healthy level and motivate them to do an extra effort in case of a standstill or dead end. A recurring theme amongst the managers was that they encouraged their organizational members to have a healthy discussion, where everyone was entitled to an opinion and that they should focus on being open to other's thoughts and ideas, and by combining these ideas they would gain extraordinary results they would not be able to if there was only one in charge that provided them with commands. The managers also believed that in order for the strategy of having an open discussion to work it was essential that they created a “safe haven” for their organizational members to test out their new ideas and not punish them if the ideas turned out to be dead ends, but instead encourage them to come up with another idea instead.

Work performance and motivation

The owner of the holding company, Ove Grønnevik, was a recurring theme throughout the interviews when the managers were asked about how they motivated their organizational members and what their thoughts behind it were. The managers brought up his focus on having an organizational culture based on team players and that this would lead to superior

results above focusing on solo players as then it would only be drawn on the insights from one mind. As already mentioned in the previous section, this reflects how the managers have explained their innovation strategy in terms of what culture they want at their company, and we can thus see that this is heavily inspired by Grønnevik and his values and vision for the holding company. Other contributions from Grønnevik is the minimum focus on bureaucracy and obstacles such as controlling and reporting:

“... what is so strange is that in the public sector it is lots of reporting.. they control everything you do and everything are measured.. right? You won't get a better result this way; people are not motivated by this. Would you work there? Let every move you do be controlled?”

(interview with Ove Grønnevik).

As Grønnevik emphasizes in the abovementioned quote he believes that by him trying to control everything that is going on within the company and making the organizational members report everything they do, they will be demotivated. By having a minimum focus on control and reporting, and instead focus on giving the different CEOs the autonomy and trust to develop their companies as they see best fit, he believes that this will keep them passionate and lead to outstanding work performance that he would never be able to compete with if it was up to him to decide every future direction for both Media Bergen and the companies within his organization.

However, even though Grønnevik is a firm believer of autonomy and trust, he has experienced people taking advantage of this strategy as well. By giving the different CEOs the freedom of minimum reporting and control, Grønnevik has experienced that two CEOs have abused his trust and avoided telling him about financial crises they have experienced, and in the end when Grønnevik found out it became a huge mess – both financially and culturally in these companies. But even though Grønnevik has experienced these two exploitations of his trust he will not change his beliefs as these are only two out of many CEOs throughout the years, but he has become more aware of the importance of morals and values when he hires new employees, and believes that this is the most important quality in order to successfully have a philosophy based on trust and autonomy.

The strategy of autonomy and trust Grønnevik represents is also found throughout the interviews with the other managers and they have experienced some organizational members taking advantage of this strategy as well. They have had to deal with employees taking advantage of the freedom they have been given by sneaking away from their responsibilities or to simply not participate in group-discussions. There are arguably some pitfalls in their strategy of empowering their organizational members through autonomy and trust, but the managers believe that the benefits of having this strategy outshines the few pitfalls they have experienced.

Other than giving their organizational members autonomy and trust, it became apparent that the managers in general were conscious of keeping a motivated workforce. They differed in how they motivated them; while some focused on public recognition, others focused on training and/or on creating a sense of community by spending time together outside of work. Some of the companies did all three of the mentioned motivational factors, while some focused on only one or two. Those that used money and time on sending in contributions to creative competitions were mostly companies within advertising and design, and experienced that even though it might not matter to their clients if they had won awards, the employees that had worked on that project became very proud of the recognition from their peers and that their manager believed that their achievements were worthy of sending in to competitions. They also believed that the public recognition would enhance their market position and that this would lead to the employees being more motivated by their work place if it was known as a company that delivered high quality. These managers thus believe that acknowledgement from both their managers and peers motivate their employees.

Those companies that tried to increase their employees' motivation by creating a sense of community used some money on arranging meetings outside the workplace, such as taking a hiking trip, go kayaking or travelling to another country. Some of these motivational factors were conditional; they might have to reach a financial budget, etc. in order to go, while others were done in order to get to know each other better. The managers that focused on getting the employees to know each other better and create a sense of community can thus be argued to believe that a community that have strong bonds are motivated to work better as a group as

they have positive feelings towards each other and sees each others as friends above competitors.

There were also those who concentrated on developing their employees' skills and abilities and believed that this was important in order to motivate employees. Some of the companies used quite a bit of resources on providing additional training for all their employees. Together with the employees they had identified what abilities and competence they had today, and which areas they wanted to improve, then they would receive additional training in order to get a new specialty or to become even better in their current fields. Some of the managers sent their employees on seminars all over the world, while some managers used more in-house expertise and hired other companies within Media Bergen to educate their employees in some of their knowledge areas. These managers thus believe that their employees are motivated by the opportunity of developing themselves and their abilities throughout their career. They also believed that these seminars and travels would provide the employees with new impulses that could contribute to higher creativity amongst their employees.

One of the managers also brought up that he believed it was important that the employees were motivated and passionate, but that it was also important to make sure that they did not become exhausted by their work load:

"Especially for our star players... we have to hold them back and tell them to take a vacation. Maybe you should let your wife see you this week... We have to hold them back and force them to rest because they are so passionate about what they are doing here" (interview with firm C).

This manager thus believes that making sure the employees don't take on too much work is important for the employees to be motivated. He believes that it is not necessarily the number of hours worked that increases the quality of their work performance, but instead wants employees who can use those hours they are at the office effectively. By avoiding letting employees work 60-70 hours a week, this manager believes that it will lead to a healthier and more inspired work force. The focus this manager has on his employees' health and wellbeing implies that in order to maintain a motivated staff it is necessary to take an holistic approach where you not only consider motivational factors such as giving them autonomy, trust and

acknowledgement, but also consider the wellbeing of their employees as important in order to keep them passionate about their jobs as well as being able to deliver quality work.

When the managers were asked about whether motivational tools such as monetary rewards were at place in their work environment, they responded quite differently. Most managers explained that they had some level of monetary rewards such as bonus pay for those in sales, while some of them had monetary rewards for the rest of the employees as well, but there was a huge span in how they decided who received bonus pay and why. One firm operated with a low fixed salary for all employees - including the CEO -, and the rest of their salary were determined by the revenue they individually generated for the firm (firm E), while another firm had a relatively higher fixed salary, but received bonus pay only if the whole firm had reached their financial budget that month (firm C).

The latter manager (in firm C) believes that by having individualized bonuses it can be destructive for creating an environment with team players, and has thus implemented only group bonuses. He believes that by providing teams with goals and a possible collective bonus would increase their willingness to help each other become better and also to be able to deliver better results as they would draw on each individuals insight and abilities, and thus create results that would not be possible if they all worked individually.

The manager of firm E with a high focus on provision pay had previously experienced that this focus led to “sharp elbows” at the work place as the employees would compete about landing the best clients and projects, and had to implement some measures in order to avoid this sometimes hostile work environment. They introduced an award that is announced every Monday where the winner would receive a pillow that represents the firm’s core values: professional, fearless, credible and engaged. The winner of this pillow would have demonstrated these values in a good way, and the manager of this firm believes that this award points out the wanted behavior in the firm and works as a motivation tool for the employees who receive it. In addition to this weekly award, they had also focused on their recruiting policy and now only hires people who possess team player-abilities such as an openness to other people’s opinions, a willingness to learn and people who wants to make each other good opposed to being only concerned about themselves and what they would

receive in exchange for good work performance. The experience that the manager in firm E has had with monetary rewards shows that having a policy that is only concerned with motivational tools such as monetary rewards can lead to a competitive and even hostile work environment, and that in order to balance the work environment into being more collaborative and work as team players they need to have some other motivational tools placed as well. Firm E experienced that by having a focus on team culture and showing their employees what kind of values and beliefs the firm stands for decreased the sharp elbows they experienced in the beginning.

While the manager of firm E believes that monetary rewards can lead to an increase in employees' motivation to work harder and better in order to get a "carrot" for their performance, Grønnevik believes that a higher salary is not the primary source of motivation for people:

"If you had told them what to do, we would have lost them all together. No matter what they were paid" (interview with Ove Grønnevik).

Grønnevik emphasized that he believes that no matter what pay people would receive, it would not be enough in the end if they were not able to have a sense of autonomy and the ability of delivering truly creative work, and that they thus would lose their creative workers at Media Bergen if they implemented motivational tools such as carrots and sticks for work performance. There is thus a disagreement between the managers in terms of how and if monetary rewards should be offered, but based on firm E's experience with their high focus on provision pay it is crucial to have other motivational tools at hand as well in order to build a sense of community and team players, so they could avoid a too competitive and hostile work environment.

None of the interviewees believed that by reporting everything the employees are doing would increase their motivation of being creative and thus deliver better work performance. It thus was a recurring theme amongst the managers throughout all companies that they believed that people were motivated by feeling empowered as they were given trust and autonomy from their managers, and that by having a "safe haven" where they were allowed to

be truly creative and innovative, it led to higher efforts and better work performance than if they had an environment that would reprimand those in charge for the ideas who did not succeed. One manager pointed out that they had exceptionally talented workers and that he believed that without their strategy of keeping them highly motivated they would leave the company:

“We have a handful of professional workers on a top notch national level which would never have stayed within the company if they didn’t get our trust or autonomy... and the possibility of not only working with the shoemaker on the corner, but the big clients”

(interview with firm C).

This manager thus points out that employees are inspired and motivated by being able to take on challenging projects where they can use their whole spectrum of talent and skills and end up with excellent work, and that this would not be possible if the employees were given projects with very detailed descriptions or that the employees felt that the projects they were given were below their level of expertise. This manager thus emphasizes that a focus on controlling, organizing and reporting, as well as only providing their employees with projects without being concerned about what their opinions on the matter is or whether it suits their abilities, will demotivate their employees and potentially lead to them losing them to other companies.

To sum up the findings about work performance and motivation it was a recurring theme that the managers believed that the organizational members are motivated by being given autonomy, trust and by feeling like a part of a community. The managers had different methods of motivating their employees, but the recurring themes was to provide them with additional training and let them develop themselves professionally, to give them acknowledgement for high quality work performance both informally and formally by sending their projects to creative contests, to initiate get-togethers outside the work place, and to ensure that their employees didn’t put on too much work load, but instead focused on delivering their best work performance when they were at work – at reasonable hours. It also became apparent that there was a divide in terms of monetary rewards, where at one side they believe that monetary rewards based on individual performance increases people’s

motivation; while the other side believes that monetary rewards based on individual performance leads to a more competitive and hostile work environment. What they do agree on however, is that monetary pay cannot operate on its own in order to motivate employees, but that it needs to have some other motivational factors in place as well in order to avoid a competitive work environment (i.e. a sense of community). None of the managers believed that a focus on controlling, reporting and/or punishment for bad behavior would increase their employees' motivation or work performance.

Summary of main findings

This section will provide a brief summary of the main findings and are divided in four sections, explaining the findings done about 1) the role of top management, 2) company cultures and 3) how one can spur creativity and innovativeness

Top managements influence on creativity

Overall the main findings concerning the companies' culture and innovativeness seems to rely heavily on the top management of the companies, as they have the authority and power to initiate new strategies and funds to potential strategies, as well as having the opportunity of rewarding or punishing the organizational members for their behavior. The interviewees were mostly CEOs or part of the leader group for their companies, and it became apparent two different styles of leadership amongst these. One group of managers emphasized that their formal role did not equal that they were at the top of the hierarchy and that those on the lower levels of the hierarchy should obey what they told them to do, but instead looked at their formal title as someone who should work in the background and only intervene if it was absolutely necessary. By staying in the background and removing obstacles for the organizational members and let the innovation process evolve naturally between them by having an open discussion and enabling everyone to provide their input, these managers believed that they fulfilled their role as a manager much more appropriately as it would encourage the organizational members to maximize their creative and innovative potential.

The other group of managers also encouraged every organizational member to have an opinion and achieve greater results through collaboration, but here the manager had a more

active role during the process. The manager would know what was going on at all times and point out new directions if they thought that it was necessary. Thus there was an overall focus on having an open discussion where everyone is entitled an opinion, but in the former group the manager would not act on his or her role unless absolutely necessary, while in the latter group the manager would shape the direction of the projects much more.

Company cultures

In the investigation of the company cultures there was discovered both similarities and differences in how the interviewees perceived their company culture. While all the interviewees agreed that their company culture emphasized extraordinary work performance by focusing on teams and drawing on each other's insights and knowledge, there was differences in terms of how they tried to maximize the end result of their teamwork. Two recurring themes became apparent, where one side believed that they would inspire their organizational members to deliver their best work performance by giving them full autonomy in how they should solve their projects and then stay clear of the process, while the other side believed it was better to participate in the daily operations and to motivate the organizational members along the way and to correct them if it seemed like the project got out of hands.

Overall there was a focus on team players above solo players, and the companies believed that their organizational members were motivated by being allowed to maximize their potential by trusting that they are knowledge workers that have expertise in fields that the top management does not, and thus they should draw on all organizational member's minds opposed to having a culture where the top management sets the directions and means, and the organizational members are expected to follow the path set out for them. The companies overall had cultures that enabled an open discussion at the work place where everyone were entitled to have an opinion, but differed in terms of how flat their hierarchy were. Some companies had top management taking a more active role than others, but overall all the companies had a culture infused with autonomy and collaboration.

How to spur creativity and innovativeness

When the interviewees were asked about how they could become more innovative by the help of their organizational members, there were two different themes in terms of motivation

apparent. One group emphasized that it was essential for the organizational members to feel as a part of a community where they had activities outside their work place in order to get to know each other better and that this would enable better work performances as it would motivate them to work more closely and to be open to each other's input, while the other group focused mainly on showing their values at the work place by rewarding their wanted behavior of being team players. They thus differentiated in terms of how they encouraged their organizational members to collaborate, but essential for both groups were collaboration and a culture where different opinions were welcome, as they believe having a discussion with multiple perspectives provide more innovative and creative outcomes.

There were also differences in terms of how the interviewees believed the organizational members could be motivated in order to provide a better work performance. One group believed that if the organizational members were rewarded with bonus pay if they reached a previously set goal, they would be encouraged to work harder in order to obtain this goal. However, within this group there were differences in terms of how the goal should be obtained; one side believed that it should be evaluated by individual performance, while the other side believed that it should be judged on basis of the entire company's performance. The second group believed that they shouldn't reward their organizational members with monetary rewards, but instead focus on doing something fun together as a reward, such as taking a trip to a big city or renting a cabin for the entire company a weekend.

DISCUSSION

In this section the differences and similarities found in the analysis will be discussed through the lens of the literature previously presented. This section will start with a discussion of the founder and CEO Ove Grønnevik's leadership style, followed by a discussion of the leadership style of the other managers and CEOs within the Media Bergen organization, while the third section will discuss the six interviewees' perception of how organizational members are motivated, while the last and fourth section will discuss how the five managers and CEOs themselves are motivated.

Founder and leader

None of the managers in firm A-E recognized themselves as being a charismatic leader or as the visionary in their company, but when asked about Grønnevik's leadership style the interviewees responded with many positive superlatives. It became very obvious that the interviewees had a good relationship with Grønnevik and that they regarded him as a very wise and passionate owner of Media Bergen. They explained that Grønnevik acts with his heart and his intuition, which almost always is on point. It became apparent that Grønnevik enjoys great respect from the managers of the different companies within Media Bergen and that they greatly appreciate his opinion and admire his abilities of developing such a strong brand as Media Bergen is today from what started with him over 20 years ago as a single company with only one employee – him. The great admiration and appreciation of Grønnevik that became apparent during the interviews shows that there are some elements of charismatic leadership here. To be a charismatic leader implies that Grønnevik contains some extraordinary influential powers that inspire his employees at Media Bergen to do extraordinary things (Northouse, 2012). It could be argued that the positive attitude towards Grønnevik's personality and the managers trust in him can be signs of charismatic leadership, but at the same time he does not act as a visionary or the expert giving his employees instructions. By letting the different CEOs of the different companies, – which he himself has the actual formal authority to decide what should do - decide for themselves how they want to maximize their potential, Grønnevik steps away from the traditional notion of a charismatic leader that bases their leadership on followership – people who are blindly obedient of

everything the leader says because they trust in their leader's extraordinary capabilities (Northouse, 2012).

Grønnevik is a strong advocate for having an organizational culture that promotes freedom under responsibility. The organization Media Bergen is structured in a way that enables each company within the organization to have their own strategies and visions, which Grønnevik thinks is their responsibility to shape and not his. Grønnevik's role is not to be an authority or power figure, but to be a sparring partner or someone the leaders can seek advice in. It can thus be argued that Grønnevik creates a creative community where he recognizes that each individual within the organization can contribute with their unique skill-sets and knowledge, and that the traditional hierarchy where the CEO is on the top is relaxed and instead views leadership as a process where everyone can participate and thus initiates a collective genius (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). Grønnevik's role thus also have elements of adaptive leadership within it as he doesn't act on his formal role, but instead tries to be a facilitator that removes obstacles such as unnecessary reporting and control in order to let the companies try to maximize their individual potential. His leadership style thus fits in with what Heifetz, Kania and Kramer (2004) believes are the essential tasks of adaptive leaders: to provoke the organizational members to think in new ways and to collaborate and together co-construct new social learning that helps to solve the adaptive problems they are facing.

Grønnevik's leadership style have received some mixed feelings from the rest of the organization in terms of them being unsure of what the future brings. As part of Grønnevik's strategy he has avoided to set long-term strategies on his own and instead tried to develop these strategies together with the managers in the rest of the organization. Some of the managers are inspired and motivated by this as they feel they can influence the process, while others are confused and uncertain of how they should focus on maximizing the potential of their company if they don't know what the end goals are and some are even demotivated to work on maximizing the potential of their company as they don't see the point of using much time and resources on individualizing each company if they are going to merge into one company in a couple of years later and the work would be "to no use". It can thus be discussed whether or not Grønnevik's strategy is clear for the rest of the organization and whether he should try to ask the managers hard questions now in order to figure out where they should

head in the future in collaboration. By asking these hard questions and developing a future strategy for Media Bergen in collaboration with all stakeholders and taking a more relaxed leader role during this process, it might enable the organization to create a stronger solidarity across the firm and possibly a long-term strategy that relaxes the uncertainty and confusion that some of the managers experience today (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

It is however clear that Grønnevik's strategy of incorporating all managers within Media Bergen in the planning of a future strategy for the entire organization is an obvious sign of collective genius as Grønnevik attempts to engage the members in an ongoing discussion where they make use of multiple expertise and knowledge by building on each other's ideas, thus there are signs of both creative abrasion and creative resolution within Grønnevik's leadership style as well as adaptive leadership (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014), implying that Grønnevik believes in a leadership style that focuses on creating creative communities where the participants are encouraged to provide their insight and knowledge as well as to be open to other ideas than their own, and thus they will collectively come up with how projects should be solved or which strategies they should take, and thus relaxes the traditional notion of the leader as the one in charge, but rather as a process with that initiates a community of collective genius where everyone can participate in both leader and follower activities.

Top management as leaders

During the interviews it became clear that all of the interview candidates acted as leaders to a certain degree. While they had a divide in how active their role was, none of them intentionally acted on their formal role as CEO or manager by telling their employees what they should do and how they should do it, but rather let the employees find out the means or even the ends by themselves. Some of the managers intentionally stayed in the background in order to let the employees lead themselves, but common for all managers they all experienced to a certain degree that the employees would use them as sparring partners if they hit bumps in the road or they wanted their opinion on something, thus reflecting that these managers gets their authority from the legitimacy and support from their followers, rather than from

their formal position (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013). It can thus be argued that these are signs of leadership and the managers will thus be featured as leaders here on.

There were many recurring themes throughout the interviews concerning leadership. The leaders emphasized having a flat structure where the employees were given autonomy to work on their projects in what way they thought it most feasible, and the leaders believed that the employees leading themselves this way would lead to breakthrough results that would not have been possible if they were simply instructed how they were going to solve their projects. The approach these leaders have, - by trusting their employees and giving them full responsibility - implies that they perceive their employees as knowledge workers who have competences and abilities they themselves do not, and by combining all these employees' skill-sets they are better able to solve problems than the leaders are on their own. It is also an indication of the leaders recognizing that the challenges they meet in today's business market are adaptive and without known solutions, and that they thus need to alter their previously known approaches and routines by bringing in all stakeholders in the company to create new and innovative solutions to meet their challenges and survive within the creative industry (Heifetz, 1994). (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

Similarly to Grønnevik these leaders focused on creating creative communities where they encouraged their employees to participate in ongoing discussions and having a vast set of different personalities with different expertise areas were valued in order to build on each other ideas, and thus being able to provide superior solutions to what the leaders were able to do on their own, implying that these leaders also believed that having a collective genius is essential in order to create truly innovative outcomes (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). As earlier mentioned we can see visible signs of both creative abrasion and creative resolution within these companies as having an ongoing discussion where candor is appreciated and one attempts to build on each other's ideas, these leaders also mentioned that it is essential for creativity and innovativeness that the participants felt safe enough to take radical decisions and move in directions previously unheard of in case it should go wrong. These leaders thus also display that they focus on discovery-driven learning and a focus on creative agility where they can test out ideas without fearing for their jobs or reprimands if the ideas should be dead-ends (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014).

The leadership style observed amongst the interviewees differ from traditional leadership due the focus they have on collaboration and enhancing each others level of competence and ability, as the focus in traditional leadership has mostly been on individuals maximizing their own potential and not necessarily on team work or helping each other unless they have been instructed to do so by a manager or getting some kind of reward for it (Northouse, 2012) (Tengblad & Alvesson, 2013). In traditional leadership there has often been a focus on solo players and rewarding individual work performance, and a recurring theme amongst the leaders interviewed was that those employees who came from an environment that focused on individual work performance and were used to work mostly alone had a hard time transitioning to an environment that focused on collective rewards and teamwork, and that these would often leave the company after a short period. It can thus be argued that the leadership style these leaders exhibits are not appropriate for everyone, as some personalities have a need to be rewarded for an outstanding performance and not as a part of a group, and some have difficulties being a part of a group discussion where they have to fight for their opinions. The leadership style demonstrated by these leaders can be argued to fit better with personalities that feel rewarded working as a group and feel a sense of community, as well as having an openness for other people's perspectives and participates in discussions in order to increase their knowledge and insight.

However, there were some differences in how the interviewees perceived their leader role. One group of leaders emphasized that their role was not to instruct their employees what they should do, but instead take a role as a facilitator and to provide a clear path for their employees without unnecessary bureaucracy or obstacles. The leader in firm E even refused to be called the CEO by his employees because he believed that his formal title used this way would distance him from the rest of his company and put him on top of the hierarchy as an authority instead of being someone they can confide in when they reach difficulties, brainstorm with if needed and to seek advice in. By considering how these leaders promote letting their employees work with their projects on their own and how they see best fit, it becomes apparent that these leaders moves away from more traditional leadership styles that promotes the leader as the primary source of competitive advantage with their expertise (Amabile & Khair, 2008) (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014) and eases up on the

needs of control and planning that transactional leadership have emphasized as important (Northouse, 2012).

The other group of leaders had a different approach than the former group who focused on the organizational members leading themselves. These leaders had a more hands-on approach and wanted to be a part of the process. One of the leaders explained that she encouraged the employees to collaborate within teams and to reach a solution to the challenges through discussion and negotiation, but also wanted to be included during this negotiation process. As opposed to other interviewees who emphasized that their role was to be a facilitator and be in the background, she wanted to take a more active role. It can thus be argued that this group of leaders have a more transformational leadership role as the focus here is to influence people into being creative by giving them autonomy to decide the means to reach an end, but that the leader would actively take a part of the decisions under the course of the project. It thus implies that there is a leader-employee relationship here, opposed to in the former group where everyone can take the role as the leader and the one with the actual formal title as the manager would not act on his or her authority by pointing out directions without being involved by the project team on their own initiative (Northouse, 2012) (DeRue, 2011) (Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback, 2014). It can thus be argued that the former group of leaders has a more adaptive leadership style as there is no single leader, but leadership is viewed as a process rather than as a person.

How the leaders motivate

The leaders responded very differently to the question of how they motivated their employees, but they all had elements of intrinsic motivation within their companies. Some of them had a bigger focus on intrinsic motivation than others, but all interviewees responded that they think people are empowered and motivated by being given recognition for their work and the possibility of maximizing their potential. They agreed that by providing employees with autonomy, trust and ownership to their work, this would lead the employees to provide better and more creative outputs. The leaders differed when asked about what measures they had in place considering how they motivated their employees. Many leaders responded that they focused on developing their employees and providing them with

additional training, some responded that they sent in their work to creative contests in order to win awards for their outstanding performances, while some promoted activities outside of the work place such as trips to other countries or renting a cabin for a weekend to get to know each other better. All these motivational factors can be argued to be intrinsic motivation as they focus on enhancing people's motivation from within and by providing people with the opportunity of developing themselves, getting recognition for good work performance and by having a sense of community at the work place, and it is reasonable to assume that this will lead to a more motivated work force (Amabile T., 1998).

There was a big difference when the leaders were asked how they rewarded their employees in terms of extrinsic motivation factors – such as monetary rewards. Most of the companies had some monetary rewards in place, such as bonus pay for the sales department in order to reach sale goals, but only one company believed that bonus pay increased the employees' motivation in general. In this company everyone gets measured on individual performance and paid accordingly (firm E). The leader in firm C believes that monetary rewards measured on individual performance can be destructive when they focus on having a team culture and thus they only have monetary rewards measured on collective performance. Research has shown that extrinsic motivation such as bonus pay does not necessarily kills creativity, but it doesn't encourage it either (Amabile T., 1998), and it can thus be argued that firm E's focus on bonus pay doesn't hurt their creativity – but it doesn't necessarily increase it either. It can be argued that a focus on individual performance can lead to an unhealthy environment for collaboration, as the leader in firm E had experienced earlier, but this has changed when they started to implement measures to promote what kind of behavior and values they believe in and rewarding those who have represented their core values by announcing a weekly winner of a trophy – the famous ugly pink pillow who gets passed on to a new winner each week. By emphasizing their core values and beliefs and to have a more thoroughly recruitment process with a focus on those core values when hiring new employees, they have not experienced the same sharp elbows and star players as they did before they implemented this focus on collaboration and healthy work environment.

All the interviewees agreed that bureaucracy and control should be limited to a minimum to not stifle creativity. Grønnevik multiple times emphasized during the interview that he

believed that by having a focus on reporting and controlling everything in the organization, they would kill creativity. He believed that people working at Media Bergen were so motivated and driven by their passion for delivering good work that his role were not to motivate them, but to focus on not demotivating them. He did not believe that bonus pay would encourage them to increase their work performance, but giving them the possibility of developing their own projects as they see best fit and to increase their knowledge and skill-sets through collaboration without obstacles as bureaucracy and controlling in the way would be enough to keep the workers motivated. By avoiding extrinsic motivation tools such as carrots and sticks in exchange for work performance, Grønnevik's strategy for motivating his employees are aligned with research that show that intrinsic motivation spurs creativity and motivation, while extrinsic motivation can stifle it (Amabile T., 1998) (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

It thus became clear from the interviews that the leaders believes that intrinsic motivation factors such as autonomy, trust, a focus on collaboration, feeling ownership to their work and a sense of community is important for people's ability to be creative and to give an extraordinary performance. There are differences when it comes to whether or not the leaders believe that monetary rewards can motivate employees to give a better performance, but they agree that there must be a sense of community and team players in order to avoid an unhealthy work climate where they only want to outshine each other and collaboration becomes impossible (Amabile T., 1998).

Motivating the leaders

The leaders agreed that they were motivated by the same motivational factors as they believed their employees were motivated by – autonomy, trust, ownership to their work, collaboration and being a part of the community. During the interviews it became clear that they felt that Grønnevik's leadership style emphasized the importance of these factors, but as earlier mentioned not all agreed when it comes to his strategy of not having set a clear long-term strategy of Media Bergen. Some of the leaders were motivated by the lack of no clear end goal and believed that this led to a higher intrinsic motivation as they could shape their company's future as they see best fit, while some were demotivated by the uncertainty of the

future direction of the organization and what it would mean for their company and thus if it was worth it to try to individualize their company if it was all for nothing.

It can thus be argued that the unclear long-term strategy of Media Bergen that Grønnevik believes is a process that should be solved along the way with the leaders of Media Bergen is not made sufficiently clear enough for all the leaders. It might ease up the confusion that exists today if Grønnevik made it clear that his intention is not to make the decision alone, but to work together with his team of leaders to solve future challenges, so all leaders have a clear sense of what their role is and that their opinion matter just as much as Grønnevik's for the future direction of Media Bergen. It seems that the uncertainty of what their role is in the long-term strategy of Media Bergen is the main problem that some of the leaders have today when it comes to the motivation to maximize their company's potential. It can be argued that by clearing up any confusion about what role the leaders play during this process and emphasizing that it is a decision that is to be made jointly, and not only by Grønnevik, this will increase the leader's intrinsic motivation as they will feel the sense of community, organizational support and ownership (Amabile T., 1998) that have been promoted throughout the interviews when the interviewees have been asked what they think motivates people.

Other factors of contributing to intrinsic motivation that has been done by Media Bergen is to move all companies that before were located in different locations around Bergen into one floor at Marineholmen. They moved into an open landscape with shared common areas that are made to lower the barriers of collaboration. All leaders agrees that the by moving to Marineholmen it has contributed to more collaboration as they got to know each other better and the other companies are located next door. However, there were no measures in place from Media Bergen in order to increase collaboration between the different companies, this was entirely up to the companies themselves to organize. When interviewed it became clear that in reality it was only two of the eight companies located at Marineholmen who actually collaborated on a daily basis with common projects or hiring each other to increase their competence on the other company's expertise area, while the other companies collaborated only when Media Bergen received projects that needed a bigger portfolio of expertise than one company could provide alone.

When asked the interviewees made it clear that they did not want Media Bergen to come in and tell them who they should collaborate with and how, but to initiate joint projects when they themselves wanted to. However, those leaders that became aware of the two companies that had workshops and collaborated on quite a few projects together felt left out and wanted Media Bergen to initiate some arrangements to lower the barriers of having joint projects. By Media Bergen implementing measures that would promote the companies located at Marineholmen as more collaborating and thus having a wide range of expertise they can provide for their customers, it can be argued that Media Bergen would lower the barriers of collaboration between the companies as they would have the possibility of working on bigger projects that needs expertise that are located across the company borders. By focusing on promoting a stronger brand with a wide portfolio of expertise and letting the individual leaders at the different companies decide for themselves if they want to take on a big project in collaboration with other companies at Marineholmen, this can be argued to increase their intrinsic motivation as they will be able to develop their knowledge and skills by learning from the others in the team and the process itself, while at the same time they feel ownership to their work because they get to decide for themselves if they want to take on the project or not (Amabile T., 1998).

By lowering the barriers for collaboration by offering the companies projects they can work together on and introducing them to each other's expertise, Grønnevik could contribute to the companies increasing their cooperation and also their intrinsic motivation. By simply giving them a project and order them to collaborate it is reasonable to believe that this would be experienced as a "punishment" and lead to the employees respond negatively to working together with their new colleagues. By instead providing the companies with an opportunity and giving them the option to take on the project or not, this enables all stakeholders to take part of the process and express their point of view. By Grønnevik taking this approach he will work as a facilitator and be an adaptive leader as he will provide the leaders with hard questions as he will give them a project they can work on if they choose to, and then the possibility of solving the challenge between them through a process of discussion and negotiation that hopefully will lead to increased knowledge and insight in new processes (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

Common for all the interviewees was that they attempted to construct creative and innovative environments by creating a community where everyone was encouraged to participate and provide their opinions. The leaders had a focus on creating an environment with an ongoing discussion of what they should do next and how they should solve their problems by incorporating all their employees. In these discussions the employees were encouraged to provide their opinions and insights and even to disagree, but it was crucial that the disagreements were constructive and that they had an openness to different opinions than their own, implying that these leaders believed that to be truly creative and innovative one should make use of all organizational members and relax the notion of hierarchy so everyone would be willing to participate. These findings is a clear sign that these leaders make use of the concept collective genius as a part of their innovation strategy, as they focus on creating a community where the employees are both willing and able to participate as they are encouraged to provide their opinions and build on each others insights and ideas, as well as creating a safety net for their employees when they go in new directions in case they experience dead-ends and will thus not fear reprimands or even being fired if this is the case. It is thus clear that these leaders consider a collective genius as essential for creating a creative and innovative work environment. However, even though the leaders believed that a collective genius outperforms a lone genius, it was discovered different leader approaches in these work environments.

Amongst the six interviewees there were elements of multiple leadership theories. The CEO of Media Bergen had interestingly elements of both adaptive and charismatic leadership identified, two leadership theories that are vastly different. While his employees recognized him as a very passionate personality with extraordinary abilities they had absolute trust in, he did not act as the “typical” charismatic leader and provide his employees with clear instructions of what they should do or as the visionary staking out future directions, but rather had an approach that is two-directional where everyone were entitled to participate in both leader and follower activities. The CEO thus acted as an adaptive leader, but with elements of charismatic leadership as well. These findings implies that the traditional notion of a charismatic leader as the visionary or the “lone inventor” does not apply in this particular

setting as this CEO focuses on collaboration and team players. However, the findings also show that the CEO possesses extraordinary abilities and that the trust the employees have in him is of big importance, implying that not everyone can obtain his leadership status, as they might not possess these qualities. As there is a huge divide in charismatic and adaptive leadership in terms of leadership as a person or a process, this implies that there might be a gap in the adaptive leadership discourse of the importance of personal abilities in terms of gaining legitimacy from followers.

Amongst the five other CEOs or managers there were two leadership styles identified, namely transformational and adaptive leadership. Common for all the interviewees was their focus on intrinsic motivation such as giving their employees autonomy and to give them a sense of empowerment, but they differed in terms of how active their leader role was in daily operations. The transformational leaders had a more active approach where they participated in the daily operations and made sure that their work force was motivated and on the right path, and it became visible that even though these leaders attempted to not steer the employees there was a sense of hierarchy here where the leaders' input became recognized as instructions rather than suggestions. There is definitely a two-directional process here, but everyone cannot participate in both leader and follower activities, as the formal leader will be the one who essentially will make the final decisions and they are thus not equally influential on each other.

The other group of leaders had an adaptive approach where the leaders acted as social architects and facilitators. They let the employees participate in both leader and follower activities and focused on staying in the background so the employees were in charge of their own projects. The leaders main task was to remove potential obstacles for the employees so they would have the freedom to unleash their creative potential. They would only participate in the projects if they were asked to provide their opinions or they were at an absolute standstill. In these work environments everyone could be both leaders and followers, treating leadership as a process rather than as a person. These findings imply that this communication house takes into consideration that the many outperforms the one, and that collaboration and incorporating all organizational members in the leadership process is crucial for creating truly innovative outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Multiple signs of adaptive leadership were revealed throughout this research study implying that creative businesses today have different needs from their leaders in today's business market than earlier, but there was also discovered signs of charismatic and transformational leadership as well. However, the signs of the two latter leadership styles also had elements of adaptive leadership implying that these two leadership styles are undergoing changes as well. It was discovered that the signs of a charismatic leader differed from the traditional perception, as this leader were described as someone possessing extraordinary abilities, but also as someone who shared responsibility with other stakeholders and wanted them to take a leader role as well opposed to the traditional notion of followership as subordinates. It can thus be argued that the traditional leadership theories needs to evolve, as there are signs of emerging leadership styles combining elements from the traditional leadership theories in new ways.

The findings in this research study implies that it is necessary for creative industries to ease up their notions of leadership as a person and instead think of it as a process, enabling them to draw on the insights and competence of all their organizational members, as this would enable them to deliver superior work performance opposed to what would be possible if they relied on the visions of one person. The findings done in this research study is based on a very limited sample, and it would be interesting to see whether other researchers with a broader testing sample or done in another industry would be able to see the same patterns as done here, and what this could possibly mean for the leadership discourse.

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