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Knowledge-Hoarding

KNOWLEDGE-HOARDING AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AS
DIMENSIONS OF INFORMATION WORK – A COMPARATIVE CASE

Videnshamstring og Vidensdeling – to dimensioner af informations
arbejde – en komparativ case.

Name of author:

Deniz D. Hansen

CPR:

Line of Study:

Cand.Merc.IT – Information Management

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Name of Supervisor:

Mads Bødker

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1.0 - CHAPTER 1

1.1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 - ABSTRACT

Knowledge-sharing is a theoretical hot topic in literature and has been for many years. In this case study the author seeks to draw attention away from the concept of knowledge-sharing and focus to a greater extent on its evil twin – knowledge-hoarding. Knowledge-hoarding is often considered a negative in terms of knowledge-sharing and the informational capabilities of an organization, reducing knowledge-hoarding to a disease within the information ecosystem of an organization. In this case study the author tries to investigate the concept of knowledge-hoarding through a comparative analysis on two very knowledge-dependent organizations focusing on the structural mechanisms of the organizations governing the nature of the informational environment and the impact they have on the quality and nature of information sharing. In addition the author seeks to investigate if knowledge-hoarding is per definition a pure negative or if certain positives can be derived from it. In conclusion the author finds that within the context investigated, the distribution, handling and quality of knowledge is dependent on the structures governing the environment. Furthermore the author concludes that though knowledge-hoarding is within the context in question predominantly a negative, certain positive elements can come from a very knowledge hostile environment potentially outweighing the negatives and creating new opportunities and competitive advantages for the organization.

1.1.2 - STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into 6 chapters, respectively emphasizing on key elements of the report.

- Chapter 1 provides the reader with an introduction to the master thesis, including the abstract, research questions and conceptual approach, guiding the direction of the report. In chapter 1 the reader should be able to gain relative insight to what is to come in the following chapters.
- Chapter 2 describes the theoretical approach which will be utilized to shed light on the primary subject at hand, and the theme of the master thesis – knowledge-hoarding as a concept. In chapter 2, theories are described in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the incentive for choosing the specific theoretical approach.

- Chapter 3 deals with the company description, providing the reader with a detailed overview of the companies subject to analysis in this master thesis.
- Chapter 4 contains the methodology section of the report. In this section, the reader is introduced to the method conducted by the author in attempt to answer the research question(s) respectively, while clarifying which means have been utilized to deduct the results and data that form the basis for the analysis.
- Chapter 5 is the section in which the data in conjunction with the theoretical frameworks are combined. In this chapter the author seeks to analyze the empirical evidence and findings through various theoretical lenses and frameworks in an attempt to gain understanding regarding the concept of knowledge-hoarding within an organizational context, relevant to the research question(s).
- Chapter 6 summarizes the findings, analysis and data, and concludes the master thesis major observations through an overview of what the author has learned through the report. Furthermore an overview of future relevant research on the subject of knowledge-hoarding is provided, in addition to references and appendixes.

1.1.3 - MOTIVATION

The motivation for writing this master thesis, and the research subject which it seeks to investigate, is grounded in 3 primary notions. Firstly, the author was in a position to conduct a thorough investigation of a research area in which great interest was present, due to previous engagements with the company in questions i.e. Wing Tsun Scandinavia. Second the notion of an unhealthy internal communication environment and the impact it has on the relevant organization was of great interest to the author and created a deeply rooted desire to investigate the matter thoroughly. The final motivational factor governing the incentive to investigate the topic at hand was the concept of knowledge-hoarding as a theoretical entity and its impact on organizational information sharing and handling.

Over the last 5 years, the author have written a number of research projects which can be considered related to the primary conceptual topic at hand in this master thesis – Knowledge-hoarding. The work conducted in the previous papers led to a number of conclusions and

hypothesis regarding knowledge-sharing in organizational environments, which set the course for the master thesis.

Additionally the author has worked with internal knowledge-sharing and information infrastructures in his Bachelor Project, operating within the Wing Tsun Scandinavia organization. This created an opportunity to engage the organization again, building on previously established relationship and contacts within the organization in attempt to conduct an in-depth case study focusing on the concept of knowledge-hoarding, and the impact it had on the organization.

In order to investigate the nature of the concept in a more representative manner and to try and test existing theory on the subject, the author decided to conduct a comparative analysis using one more heavily knowledge dependent company, though not branch related in any way. The choice landed on 1508 A/S, primarily due to being one of few companies willing to participate in the research study while fitting the profile. For the company to be viable as a counterpoint to WingTsun Scandinavia, and used to investigate knowledge-hoarding as a phenomenon, the company had to exhibit certain hypothesized characteristics.

The company had to be knowledge heavy, meaning its success had to be directly related to the quality of the knowledge and information sharing environment within the organization. Knowledge had to be a critical success factor in terms of the amount and quality of knowledge being directly related to the organizations competitive capabilities. Furthermore the organization had to be hypothesized as at least superficially successful in achieving the above mentioned aspects, as the author wanted to investigate both sides of knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing i.e. the potential negatives and positives.

1.1.4 - CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The research area of this master thesis is based and builds upon the conceptual notion of knowledge-hoarding. The concept of knowledge-hoarding in its entirety is perceived as the counter pole to that of knowledge-sharing investigated through a lens of social constructionism, which forms the basis for the ontology of the project. In the words of Cromby

and Nightingale, 2002, the notion of social constructionism as an ontology is related to the referentiality and objectivity of the subject at hand. The authors argues "*that constructionism can potentially elaborate the social, material and biological processes that shape our subjectivities rather than confine itself to an analysis of nothing more than the discursively available outcomes of such processes*" (Nightingale, Cromby, 2002). Following this logic, the author concurs with the notion of constructionism as a means to understanding context specific events within a closed theoretical setting, but without limiting ones understanding to the subjectivity and theoretical boundaries of the concept. In addition the author believes that any theoretically viable concept is subject to the context in which it is viewed and therefore no stable and predictable results and laws can be deducted and derived from interpretive studies, but merely an understanding regarding the subject at hand in an attempt to further knowledge of the phenomenon.

The concept in question is investigated through the argumentation in litterateur (Wolfe et al. 2008, Poortvliet et al. 2007, O'Reilly et al. 1980, R. Grant, 1996, Amin et al. 2007) that knowledge-hoarding exists as a counter pole to a healthy knowledge-sharing environment, but approached with curiosity to the validity of this claim. The notion of both advantages and disadvantages stemming from the manifestation of knowledge-hoarding in an organizational setting will be attempted clarified and investigated through the case study method in which this master thesis is based upon.

Knowledge-hoarding will conclusively form the lens in which the case study is investigated, and influence the outcome of the report as it is primarily with respect to the research question and the focal area of the study vis-à-vis Knowledge-Hoarding, the two organizations in question will be addressed.

1.1.5 - RESEARCH QUESTION

Throughout this report the following research question is asked and attempted answered through analysis of the concept of knowledge-hoarding within an organizational setting:

- How does knowledge-hoarding affect the internal informational environment within an organizational context?

Additionally, the following sub-research questions will be addressed in order to answer the primary research question:

- *What is the relationship between knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing in regards to the organizational culture?*
- *Can knowledge-hoarding be of value to an organization?*

1.1.6 - BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

The basis for the project lies with the case study method and the data collected through different degrees of depth of two independent organizations, Wing Tsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S. Wing Tsun Scandinavia has provided great access to information with little to no restrictions to the author, in contrary to 1508 A/S which was only possible to provide very limited information in comparison in the form of interviews and questionnaires. The amount of data collected naturally forms the basis of the study in its entirety and therefore must be considered in respect to the data collected and the validity and representativeness of the master thesis as a complete study.

1.1.7 - GOAL OF THE PROJECT

The goal of this project is to investigate two knowledge dependent, non-branch related organizations and observe and describe the influence of knowledge-sharing and knowledge-hoarding within the organizational context. The author seeks to gain knowledge about the nature of knowledge-hoarding both with respect to the local origins of the phenomenon, the impact on the organizational information infrastructure and the more general organizational implications it creates. Furthermore the author seeks to investigate possibilities for the dissolution of knowledge-hoarding while trying to establish if direct or indirect advantages to knowledge-hoarding can be confirmed through the case study of the two organizations. In this respect, the primary subject of investigation is WingTsun Scandinavia, examined though a comparative analysis with 1508 A/S, in order to understand the concept of knowledge-hoarding as hypothesized to exists to a large extent at WingTsun Scandinavia, and to a lesser extent at 1508 A/S.

1.1.8 - DELIMITATIONS

The work in this master thesis is limited primarily in regards to the data available and method in which it was gathered and the theoretical frameworks used to investigate the primary theoretical subject – knowledge-hoarding. In this respect, the study is conducted with respect to two primary theoretical perspectives:

Structuration Theory (Theory of Structuration) as described by Anthony Giddens (1986) is used as a tool to examine the relationship between agency and structure or actants and organizational culture vis à vis the organizational boundaries, rules and intangibles governing the environment in which people operate. The goal of using structuration theory is to shed light on the concept of knowledge-hoarding to understand how the organizational rules, norms and environment in its entirety affect the agents operating within it. The investigation of how actions are structured and the impact structures have on the informational environment in relation to the internal knowledge-sharing capabilities of the organizational members is of great importance when trying to understand knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing as existing phenomena within an organizational context. Structuration theory will be applied as a lens in which theoretical conclusions and observations can be conducted. The relationship between the actants within the organization and the organizational structures in regards to their interdependency and mutual influence, will be a key notion throughout the report as the author hypothesizes that all findings are context and environmentally dependent, and therefore must be understood in relation to each other. This notion will be investigated in-depth in chapter 6, and will govern the perspective of the analytical approach.

Furthermore the author seeks to understand the actual impact of the structures governing an organization in relationship to the dualism of agency in respect to this aspect of organizational culture building. Is the culture examined in this master thesis a result of mutual influence from agents and possible natural organizational structure related to the actants own personal background amplified by the branch in which they operate, or is culture a predetermined and continually enforced and consciously strengthened aspect of the organizational foundation? Based on the preliminary observations and previous work at WingTsun Scandinavia the author hypothesizes that culture in this context is indeed a result

of mutual influence from the relevant actants within the organizational setting and constantly negotiated and constructed, though heavily influenced by the personality and social capabilities of the top managers and leadership team.

Additionally and in respect to the above mentioned, the degree to which the organizational structure i.e. the organizational culture and informational infrastructure, is unconsciously and consciously enforced by the actants, which is hypothesized by the author to operate in an environment where knowledge-hoarding aspects are present, is an important subject of analysis.

The second major theoretical pillar governing this master thesis is that which relates to theories directly related to knowledge-sharing. Knowledge-sharing as a concept is addressed through a number of scholars and theorists knowledgeable about the subject, in order to understand how knowledge-hoarding is affecting the two organizations in question in this thesis. When addressing the notion of knowledge-sharing a wide variety of related articles and research papers will be addressed in attempt to answer the proposed research question(s) of the master thesis. Knowledge-sharing functions as a counter pole to that of knowledge-hoarding arguably defined as both ends of an extreme, in relations to the acquisition, distribution and processing of knowledge and therefore is addressed in order to understand not only the extreme ends of the scale but also the middle grounds in which knowledge-management exists in a specific context.

In relation to the theoretical foundation of the master thesis, it is important to understand that the report is built upon an ontology of social constructionism. This notion naturally creates a set of limitations to the aspect in which the empirical evidence is handled, the theoretical frameworks are used and the analysis is conducted as a whole. The notion of no objective truth and the belief that social relationships are constantly renegotiated and open to interpretation are a very important aspect to remember when reading this report, and in relationship to how structuration theory is applied. The benefits of using this perspective rest upon a belief of absolute objectivism as with the notion of conducting a case study as the research method of choice. The author believes that a case study under the ontological umbrella of constructionism creates the setting in which reality can be understood and investigated for

what it is, and not what it is believed to be. The author seeks to understand the phenomenon in questions and in that process try to derive conclusions true to this contextual setting and only this contextual setting. The author does not try to create laws or principles which can be used as a handbook for the avoidance of knowledge-hoarding or the exploitation of benefits in knowledge-hoarding intensive environments. The author instead tries to investigate the matter in question while possibly creating insight to relevant aspects of the phenomena in respect to the chosen theoretical approaches conducted in this study.

A detailed overview of the theoretical perspectives, articles and frameworks forming the basis for the analytical aspect of the master thesis is provided in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical frameworks, primary theoretical approach, underlying theories and theoretical limitations*.

1.1.9 - LITERATURE REVIEW

A great deal of literature exists relevant to the area of knowledge-sharing, focusing primarily on that specific aspect of knowledge-management. Knowledge-hoarding, operating at the opposite end of the scale, and as a proposed natural contrast point to a world of perfect knowledge-sharing and knowledge infrastructure within a given context, is often considered as the result of bad knowledge-management or an unhealthy informational environment (*Wolfe et al. 2008, Poortvliet et al. 2007, O'Reilly et al. 1980, R. Grant, 1996, Amin et al. 2007*). Knowledge-hoarding as a theoretical field respectively is by the author considered down rated as it is often treated as the disease of bad knowledge-sharing, and not a symptom of a specific condition within a communicative environment. Though the author is not arguing that knowledge-hoarding is not a heavily debated issue in discussions related to knowledge-sharing, the author does argue that knowledge-hoarding is often not the focal point of the discussion, and therefore not subject to research of the same degree as witnessed with knowledge-sharing or knowledge-management. The implications of this, is believed by the author to be a possible lack of knowledge regarding the conditions leading to knowledge-hoarding and to an even greater extent the possible advantages of knowledge-hoarding.

This thesis is based upon a desire to understand the concept of knowledge-hoarding in a small scale, context specific setting. The motivation for the study stems from previous research on

the concept through a number of research papers, which also serves as inspiration for some of the subjects covered in this thesis. The author seeks, through his study to gain deeper understanding towards the conditions and circumstances leading to an environment in which knowledge-hoarding exists.

The importance of the study does not bare direct relevance to a general picture or scientific methods developed in order to create conceptual frameworks usable for managers and organizational leaders, wishing to dissolve knowledge-hoarding or enhance knowledge-sharing. Though the study will naturally analyze and discuss conditions under which knowledge-hoarding is created, the impact on knowledge-hoarding within an organizational setting and the implications regarding knowledge-sharing in a knowledge-heavy environment, the focus is to describe and understand rather than specify and predict.

In chapter 5, as part of the actual analysis of data through relevant theories and theoretical frameworks concerning knowledge-hoarding, a more detailed overview and critique will be provided regarding existing theories on the topic of knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing when the author seeks to apply the theories to the research area of this master thesis.

2.0 - CHAPTER 2

2.1 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1.1 - PRIMARY THEORETICAL APPROACH

2.1.1.1 - ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The theoretical perspectives relevant to that of organizational culture, derived from the concepts of organizational culture identification by Schein, are predominantly inspired by three major theoretical perspectives; *Functionalism*, *Structural Functionalism* and *Structuralism*.

The notion of the *functionalistic perspective* as discussed by Schein (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*) interprets the organization culture in respect to the functions it incorporates and provides. In addition the functionalist perspective addressed the notion of organizational culture as a survival mechanism crucial to the sustainability of the

organization (Scott, 2002, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*). Simplifying the concept of functionalism in regards to the organizational culture, the perspectives primary objective is to describe how the functions of the organizational culture relate to the general survival of the organization. Within the functionalistic perspective issues such as organizational resources, internal unit interactions and interdependency, goal settings and accomplishment and the influence of cultural values and the preservation of cultural values are of the essence. As described by Schein there is two crucial and fundamental challenges an organization must face in order to insure the survival of the unit: *"Survival in and adaptation to the external environment and integration of its internal processes to ensure the capacity of to continue to survive and adapt."* (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*)

Structural functionalism as described by Parsons et al. in his Theory of action denotes that a *"social system is made up of the actions of individuals"* (Parsons, Shils, 1962, *Toward a General Theory of Action*). The theory of action or structural functionalism which the author so boldly uses in parallel emphasizes the actions of individuals and the interdependency of the organizational and societal climate in respect to the organizational culture. In addition the notion of how roles within a given societal or institutional context influence and are influenced by the environmental factors and variables are of great importance to the notion of structural functionalism in respect to organizational culture creation and identification. Structural functionalism and functionalism are two arguably closely related theoretical perspectives and should therefore only be considered with respect to the nuances they present in regards to the topic at hand – organizational culture identification.

It is important to remember that most of the critique of functionalism and structural functionalism from an anthropological perspective is disregarded to a large extent in this master's thesis. The primary incentive for this lies with the notion of not addressing functionalism as a specific method, or anthropological perspective by definition, but rather as a lens of viewing a context dependent matter, and in attempt to create a broader understanding of a specific phenomenon.

Structuralism as described and interpreted by Giddens in his work on *The Theory of Structuration* (Giddens, 1986, *Constitution of society: Outline of the theory of Structuration*) denotes how the

action of actants are subject to the context in which they are performed in, and interdependent with the social and structural norms, rules and laws governing the context in which they exist. Furthermore the environments in which actants operate are also subject to constant negotiation and created by the structures and contexts relevant to the actants. Giddens theory of Structuration additionally put great stress on the notion of structures governing the context, renegotiable by actants, but greatly influencing the actions available to the members of the social system.

The importance of understanding the three perspectives described above lies with the notion of theoretical and practical contribution to the master thesis. *Functionalism* in conjunction with *structural functionalism* creates the basis for the analysis of the organizational culture in the following section. The *three levels of culture* and *10 focal areas of investigation of organizational culture* as proposed by Schein are conducted in respect to the theoretical perspectives under which they are created – *functionalism*. In this respect, it is important to understand the underlying assumptions of the theoretical approach before commencing the analysis. *Functionalism* in this specific context focuses predominantly on the functions of the organizations in respect to the sustainability of the unit. In this respect the author seeks to establish what is believed to be the essence of the two cultures in question, based on the available empirical evidence. It is important to understand that the following section as a result is not an attempt to provide an in-depth analysis of Schein's *Three Levels of Culture*, but rather provide the basis for the following analysis of the informational environment in which the author shall go further into depths with the significance of structures and organizational functions as described in the preceding section.

2.1.1.2 - THE INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In the following section; *the informational environment*, the focus is shifted from a more general perspective on the cultural mechanisms governing and influencing the informational culture at the organizations in question, to a theoretical discussion based on the empirical evidence in conjunction with an analysis of the informational infrastructure. In this section the author seeks to understand how knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing is present within the organizational settings and to which degree it influences the informational

resources and processes. In addition the author seeks to understand the rational and motivational factors behind the current knowledge-management processes. In this effort a range of theoretical frameworks and perspectives is applied to the case material in order to understand and possibly answer the research questions of the study.

Analyzing the information environment is first conducted by an overview of the previous research conducted by the author in the form of references and findings from his bachelor project of 2009 (*Bachelor project on WingTsun Scandinavia, 2009, D. Hansen*). In this section the nature of information i.e. how it is handled and treated as a concept in addition to the administrative culture of the organization and the organizational structure is addressed through the work of Nonaka, 1994, Maceviute & Wilson, 2005 and Heckscher & Donnellon, 1994. In this section the author attempts to understand how the structures of the organization i.e. bureaucratic, post-bureaucratic etc. influence the organizational environment and its communicative capacities.

Following the findings from the above mentioned authors, the degree of knowledge-sharing and the motivational factors both organizational and individual influencing it, is addressed through the work of Riege, 2005, de Vries, van der Hoof and Ridder, 2006 and O'Reilly and Pondy, 1980. In this section the author seeks to understand why knowledge is hoarded or shared within the organizational context and which factors are predominantly influencing the actions of actants. The notion of motivation is supplemented by a model concerning the incentives to share knowledge by Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000, which addresses the theory of external and internal factors relevant to knowledge-sharing and hoarding. This theoretical perspective is then further addresses through the related work by Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen and Van de Vliert, 2007.

In attempt to understand the incentives for knowledge-hoarding, Garfield, 2006 notes the 10 most common reasons for knowledge-hoarding which the author seeks to apply to the cases in question. In this attempt the author additionally seeks to deduct potential organizational and individual benefits as a direct or indirect result of a knowledge-hoarding intensive organizational environment, and in this process discuss the actual negatives and positives from the phenomenon from an organizationally holistic perspective.

2.1.3 - THEORETICAL LIMITATIONS

The author has chosen theories and the work of selected scholars based on the perspectives and areas of primary interest to the study. As evidenced the study is rather limited in scope and primarily focuses on the organizational culture, organizational structure, motivational factors and the impact on knowledge-hoarding in a context specific setting. Following this logic, there is a great deal of theoretical ground which has not been addressed and could have been addressed to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Unfortunately formal limitations to the length of the master thesis is present and therefore the author chose to focus on the areas which was believed to provide the most interesting and valid analytical and knowledge-enhancing perspectives in respect to the research question(s) of the master thesis.

3.0 - CHAPTER 3

3.1 - COMPANY DESCRIPTION:

3.1.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

The Danish WingTsun federations headquarters, located in Vesterbro, downtown Copenhagen was founded in 1992 by Allan Jensen and Henning Daverne as a privately held entrepreneurial company selling Chinese martial arts courses and traditional Chinese culture courses. In addition to its private business operations the company functions as the headquarters for the Scandinavian WingTsun federation, hosting seminars, summer workshops, instructor courses and many other events for its Scandinavian members.

Externally the company consists of a range of independent units spread across Scandinavia and the Danish market. The local business units all operate on an individual and self-dependent level paying only a small license to operate under the WingTsun brand. The independent units share no financial means and only few rules, regulations and specific requirements as a result of them being licensed under the brand name. On the international level the units are primarily connected through special seminars and courses held for its instructors in the WingTsun center headquarters.

The internal structure of the company is divided into 4 main categories. The current owner of the company, Allan Jensen and the top management team made up by Eskill Shilling manager of the organization responsible for campaigns, communications, internal coordination, supplies and ad-hoc assignments, Kenneth Kyhe chief of staff and coordinator of the various department managers and an accountant, Camilla Beer present on an on-demand-basis. Olivia Runequist and Jesper Vinther functions as the daily managers responsible for day-to-day operations such as maintaining supplies, coordination between the instructors and management team, daily maintenance and ad-hoc assignments. The instructor team which currently holds between 15-20 instructors is divided into a number of courses in which they are responsible for. Courses range from children's teams, women's team, fitness, aerobics, fight classes, instructor classes, beginners team, mental health etc. The courses are categorized into a number of categories which all have a 1-5 instructors connected. Finally there is the actual staff of the organization responsible for various assignments ranging between working at the bar, maintenance, daily management and cleaning while at the same time functioning as a communications channel between the top management department and the instructor team. The staff holds 8 regular employees with approximately 5 additional employees hired on an on-demand basis.

In regards to the internal environment a number of communicative challenges exist. Coordination from top management is arranged on a very informal basis, with few scheduled team meetings or arrangements where coordination of the internal work processes is sorted. The various managers in the organization have little to no vertical interaction on a regular basis, making coordination between departments very limited. Furthermore, the headquarters has almost no coordination or information exchange with its sub departments located around the country resulting in very limited sharing of information around the organization.

An internal communication system is also not present. There are no ICT systems for internal communication, or other means of controlling information relevant to the organization except that found in a file cabinet, which is not maintained by anyone. IT systems are present to keep

track of customers, but the integration of it has been slow and the learning curve for the staff very steep and is at present times still not functioning as full capacity

Furthermore the organizational culture has a significant impact on the communicative environment in part due to its unique nature. The organization is in the market of selling old Chinese martial art knowledge. In other words it is a gym and martial arts school, though the biggest in the Danish market. The company's product has a strong influence on the organizational culture due to its strong influence from old Chinese culture. Though the organization is by definition a business organisation the organizational members including the customers regard the company as more of a second family and home away from home, than a company and service they frequently purchase.

Every aspect of the organization is influenced by the traditional Chinese culture which is a large part of the product they sell and therefore arguably a necessity for the organization to sell its product. This does have implications for the business operations nevertheless. Everyone from the owner of the company and the top management team to the instructors and the customers are ranked in accordance with the Chinese martial arts system they teach. This means that the amount of power one can exercise over another individual is to a very large degree based on this ranking system before ones actual organizational position.

Furthermore the organizational culture fosters internal communication implications because he who is ranked highest is traditionally synonymous to being he who knows the most and therefore is best suited as a teacher. The instructor team is almost exclusively paid by private lessons from the customers who wish to get the best education from the cheapest source available. This phenomenon combined with the organizational culture has now created an environment where the majority of the instructors do not communicate internally at all, since it is believed that sharing knowledge results in a more even distribution of knowledge within the instructor team which then leads to a possible disadvantage over the other instructors in regards to selling private lessons.

The interest in WingTsun Scandinavia in respect to the concept of knowledge-hoarding springs from the preliminary observations concluding that knowledge-hoarding is indeed

present at the organization and furthermore to a relatively large extent. The informational infrastructure and the impact of the organizational culture on the knowledge-sharing activities is of great interest when an attempt is made to understand the circumstances under which knowledge-hoarding exists and is fostered and which measures can and must be taken in order to dissolve the phenomenon in question.

3.1.2 - 1508 A/S

1508 A/S was founded august 15, 2000 by Line Rix, Mikkel Jespersen and Morten Pedersen. 1508 A/S is a design enterprise offering solutions ranging from visual identities, integrated online solutions and digital services. 1508 A/S is not amongst the cheapest enterprises on the market, but according to a UX designer from 1508 A/S, they are amongst the best in the game. 1508 A/S' mission is to help enterprises achieve their digital potential, through strong and conceptually well-founded solutions. 1508 A/S is an organization which prides itself of high professionalism, high end products and high quality services in all end of the spectrum.

The company currently employs 45 people divided between a number of departments with a management team of 7 individuals. Co-founder Line Rix is the administrating director and partner, Mikkel Jespersen is the Chief Security Officer and partner and Morten Pedersen are in charge of the Cloudfice A/S endeavour as well as being a partner. Furthermore the management team persists of René Christoffer; Chief of Design, Klaus Bundvig; Chief of strategy, Rasmus Rudolf Christiansen; Project Manager and Claus Brøndum; Finance Director. 1508 A/S has in the past primarily served public clients which due to public budgeting have created financial advantages in light of the economic crisis, and a smaller decrease in returns compared to competitors focusing more on private clients. Now, as part of a strategically move 1508 A/S is trying to shift its focus to a great extent towards private clients. This is recognized as an attempt to try and change its current business profile and stay ahead of the competition, while maintaining its current competitive advantages. Furthermore it is currently in the process of optimizing its internal processes and capabilities including new hardware and software in order for it to be ready for the next step of its evolution. The company focuses on aggressively expanding its operations and therefore prioritize internal capabilities very highly.

1508 A/S is characterized by being a company operating in a fast moving and highly competitive environment where innovation, stability and competences are of the most importance to survive. The company has experienced a large change in personal over the last 5 years but now consider it to be in a stabile state with a positive and productive internal work environment. The at times hectic and fast moving environment means 1508 A/S has to coordinate its workload effectively which means internal communication is of the at most importance in order to guaranty effective processing of assignments.

The organization is divided into a number of departments all located in the same building but on separate physical levels. The office is divided into two major areas, one area hosting the UX designers, strategic managers, copyrighters, project managers, HR managers and the executive office. The second area holds the technicians, IT supporters, developers and internal IT supports. The areas are furthermore divided into groups of 3-8 people, operating within its respective field of interest. The work teams are allocated within a few meters of each other so possibilities for strong internal communication are supported by the physical environment. Internal knowledge-sharing within work teams functions relatively appropriately, but cross-departmental communication is recognized as sup-optimal at best. The organization do however emphasize that everyone knows who to approach if they require certain expert knowledge on a specific matter, thus fostering knowledge-sharing within the organization and across departments. In conclusion, the notion of actively promoting and facilitating internal communication patterns, procedures and try to encourage employees to actively share knowledge provides the company with a strong foundation for reaping the collective knowledge output while maximizing their competitive capabilities in terms of staying innovative.

An interesting notion about internal knowledge-sharing is the fact that the management team want people to share knowledge internally and make full use of the organizations knowledge base despite only a few direct knowledge-sharing tools and procedures being implemented to support this objective. The notion that knowledge-sharing is functioning in a positive manner can be concluded to be primarily based on initiative by the employees and their need for

being able to deduct information and knowledge across the organization in order to do their jobs optimally.

The interest in 1508 A/S and the reason the company is subject to analysis in this thesis, is a result of the way information and knowledge is handled internally. The organization strives to be at the very top of its market, providing customers with top end products of the highest quality. Even though the informational environment is concluded to be relatively positive in terms of knowledge-sharing at 1508 A/S it appears that there is still certain aspect of the knowledge-sharing processes functioning at a sup-optimal level. Cross-departmental communication as well as some aspects of internal communication within work teams could potentially foster the conditions knowledge-hoarding emerges from, and is therefore subject to investigation in this thesis.

Throughout the analysis of 1508 A/S matters concerning internal communication patterns, positive as well as less constructive in nature will be addressed in order to understand the knowledge-sharing environment that exists within the organization. Through this analysis it will hopefully be possible to draw conclusions regarding the pitfalls and opportunities that lie within the knowledge-sharing infrastructure of the organizations in question in respect to the threat, rise and dissolution of the phenomenon.

4.0 - CHAPTER 4

4.1 - METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 - THESIS OBJECTIVE

The offset for this thesis lies with the conceptual framework of knowledge-hoarding. The concept, which entails the dissolution of knowledge-sharing in, a specific context, is the primary subject to analysis in this thesis and will be addressed in an attempt to gain insight into the processes, which leads to knowledge-hoarding, while trying to contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon directed at the dissolution of the environmental circumstances which fosters the conceptual condition of knowledge-hoarding. The author strives to understand which conditions that creates an environment in which knowledge-

hoarding emerges, while trying to disintegrate the conceptual circumstances leading to an organizational culture being subject to the phenomenon.

As knowledge-hoarding is hypothesized by the author, in this specific context, as a condition derived from an unhealthy internal knowledge-sharing environment, the author attempts to shed light on possible actions which can be taken to insure a healthy internal knowledge-sharing environment and which actions can be initiated preemptively or subsequently to the phenomenon has been discovered in an organizational setting.

Finally, the author seeks to understand the actual impact of knowledge-hoarding in an organizational setting, and the degree to which it influences knowledge-sharing and the processes regarding internal communication and information sharing which is affected by the phenomenon.

The specific subjects of the report includes the instructor team, staff members and management department at Wing Tsun Scandinavia with a primary focus directed towards knowledge-sharing between the instructor team and respective team leaders. At 1508 A/S, as a result of the availability of data, the focus is directed primarily towards the strategy department including the designers, interns, project managers and office managers, but not limited to these departments exclusively.

4.1.2 - RESEARCH SETUP

The research takes on an interpretivistic approach to the phenomenon in question in order to gain insight on the phenomenon in a natural setting. The interpretivistic approach allows the author to study events as they occur, while letting the research subject run its natural course without any direct influence from the author. The author seeks to understand the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding in its natural setting, by studying one environment in which knowledge-hoarding is present and one where the phenomenon is not present, at least not to a substantial degree.

The offset for the study of the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding is through empirical data collection in two knowledge-heavy and knowledge-dependent organizations. One in which the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding is present at current times, and has been over a period of 4 years, increasing in form and shape continuously. The other organization serves as a counterpart to the phenomenon in the first organization, due to knowledge-hoarding not being present in the same extent. Both organizations show signs of present or possible knowledge-sharing implications at risk of occurring, but the degree to which the threat is handled and manifests itself is very different.

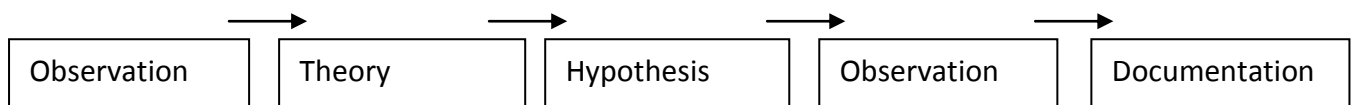
The research, through its interpretivistic nature seeks to describe, understand and if possible contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon through observation in its natural setting and by interaction with organizational members to gain insight to the phenomenon from a firsthand perspective while documenting events as they occur through synthetic rather than analytical logic.

The author takes on the perspective of a third person observer when interacting with organizational member in the data collection phase, in order to have minimum impact on the events as they occur. The reasoning behind this logic is the notion of wanting to have as pure data on the phenomenon in question as possible in order to understand the circumstances fostering the concept of knowledge-hoarding without influencing the environment.

4.1.3 - RESEARCH DESIGN

In accordance with the key factors governing an interpretivistic study, and a case based research method, inductive reasoning sets the primary but not exclusive point of departure for the study. Inductive reasoning, as described by Esterberg, 2002 allows the researcher to exam the world and events relevant to the subject in question followed by an induction of theory. The inductive reasoning perspective can be seen in relationship to that of deductive reasoning, where the researcher seeks to develop a hypothesis regarding a specific research area, based on a specific theory and confirm or falsify the hypothesis by observation.

In respect to this thesis, the author takes on a similar but not exclusively inductive reasoning method as the offset for the study. The study is motivated and engaged on the basis of observation, regarding the internal information sharing environment at Wing Tsun Scandinavia. The observations which was a side effect of another, partially related to but not identical study, lead to the decision to initiate the research study. Following the observations, a theory was chosen as the author hypothesized that it was suitable to describe the phenomenon witnessed, namely that of knowledge-hoarding. The theory was based in part, but not exclusively on the a hypothesis by the author regarding the effects of knowledge-hoarding in an organizational setting, fostered by observations at Wing Tsun Scandinavia in light of its development in competitive capabilities over a 4 year period. Following the hypothesis, the author began the study and collected data which was to not to falsify nor validate the initial hypothesis but to understand the events, factors and circumstances governing an environment hypothesized to being subject to knowledge-hoarding factors. In accordance with Gadamer, 2004, the notion of fully utilizing a deductive or inductive research method is not the focal point of the analysis since *"Truth is never final, but always becoming"*, and therefore the contribution to an understanding of a phenomenon is where the focus of the author lays.



4.2 - RESEARCH METHOD

4.2.1 - ONTOLOGY

The basis for the study of this thesis lies within the social constructionist philosophy of science interpreted through the interpretivistic field of research in an attempt to understand rather than predict the behavior of actants and constructions of reality within the context specific area. The author argues that truth as a concept is context dependent and therefore not subject to formal predefined rules in relation to the research area. In relation to a predominantly constructionist approach, the author seeks to understand how truth and reality is continuously produced and reproduced through the social interaction of actants

within a specific context, and how this reality is created as a combination of shared and individual realities based on assumptions, meanings, experience and unclassified factors.

The author acknowledges that meaning and sensemaking is continuously subject to change and will be renegotiated and created as the relevant actants within a social context change as a result of their cognitive processes, the environment in which they exist and external factors. The social reality of the research area is in conclusion defined as an entity in constant flux, and therefore the results of the research will by definition always be subject to change, influencing the generalisability of the research results.

4.2.2 - EPISTEMOLOGY

The nature of this thesis takes on an interpretivistic approach to research methods. The goal of the thesis is to understand the realities in which the participants who exist in the context being studied operate in. The interpretivistic approach allows for an in-depth description of events as they occur in their natural setting, with minimal influence from the researcher. The notion of describing, analyzing and gaining understanding on a specific phenomenon without influencing the factors relevant for its existence is therefore of the at most importance for this thesis throughout the data collection phase of the project. As the project moves along, and data has been collected, the notion of having minimal impact on the focus area is hypothesized as of less relevance and achievability due to the time spent within the organizational setting, the data deducted from the organizational members and the presumed natural impact any research study will have on the focus area. The notion of strict separation from the research subjects is therefore declining gradually as the thesis takes shape and the data collection process is ending.

The notion of a socially constructed reality within the focal research area and the organizational environment is also categorized by this research method and the approach deployed by the author. It is hypothesized that the organizational members subject to analysis in accordance with the conceptual framework of knowledge-hoarding is constructing the reality in which they operate in on a regular basis, and as a result any influence from outside parties, such as the researcher, might influence the outcome and validity of the data collected.

It is therefore attempted to gain insight into the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding through empirical data gatherings conducted in the least intrusive manner, though it is recognized to not be possible in full effect through the means of data collection available in this research.

Limitations regarding the validity of data collected by an outside observer are nevertheless present in this thesis. The objective of trying to minimize impact on the organizations in questions is limited when dealing with one of the two organizations studied. WingTsun Scandinavia has previously been subject to research by the author who is therefore familiar with a number of the organizational members also subject to analysis in this thesis. Furthermore the study of the organization has been ongoing for a period of 2 years through personal contact with the organization. In light of previous research and the amount of personal contact, the author recognizes that a strict outside observer perspective is not possible in its entirety. In conclusion the notion of the third person's perspective is only possible through limitations regarding this specific analysis and therefore limited to the data collection and interactions with organizational members relevant for this thesis. The second organization studied, 1508 A/S is contrary to that of the first organization in question completely on an outsider's basis. The author had no former interaction with the organization and the data collected is limited to that which can be deduced from third person interactions with the organization on a limited time basis. The amount of data collected from 1508 A/S is therefore also limited to what has been made accessible to the author in the timeframe of the data collection process.

Furthermore, the author does not seek to explain events based predominantly on predefined hypothesis on the conceptual subjects in question, but rather uncover certain specifics regarding the nature of the subject i.e. knowledge-hoarding in an organizational setting, in an attempt to gain an understanding of the concept in its entirety.

In conclusion, the overall approach to analytical work conducted in this thesis is that of an interpretivistic character, with the conceptual goal of creating a broader understanding of the concept within a context specific setting.

4.2.3 - CASE STUDY APPROACH

The phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding as a conceptual entity is analyzed through the case study research method. The method is chosen in accordance with the research problem statement and the objectives for the thesis in attempt to study the phenomenon in its natural setting and observe events relevant for the conceptual frameworks as they occur within an organizational context. The case study approach allows the author to conduct an intense investigation of the phenomenon by investigating a specific set of units, Wing Tsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S respectively, while examining multiple facets and actors relevant for the concept.

The case study approach is regarded as best suited for the study as the research seeks to understand why and how events and conditions relevant to knowledge-hoarding impact the sharing and creation of knowledge within the focus area. The author acknowledges that there is little to no control of the events in this research and therefore seeks to further understanding on the subjective through the collection of empirical evidence and analysis.

The concluding objective of the thesis is to gain insight to the behavior and perspectives of the relevant parties within the organizational setting studied and attempt to clarify the impact of knowledge-hoarding in its entirety. The case study approach aid in testing the theoretical hypothesis for validity in an attempt to create new hypothesis or validate existing hypothesis on the subject. In this thesis a combination of longitudinal and time restrained observations will be conducted as a result of the data available to the author within the time frame of the research study. In addition, the author seeks to conduct a qualitative study focusing on a specific and context dependent research area in contrast to a quantitative generalized image of the phenomenon as a general concept.

In the words of Straits, Bruce, Singleton and Royce, 2004, the *subject* of the case study is in conclusion the two organizations in question, WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S, while the *object* falls upon the theoretical lens of the study – knowledge-hoarding.

4.2.4 - CASE SELECTION

The two organizations subject to analysis in this thesis is chosen based on a number of factors. Wing Tsun Scandinavia was available for intensive, longitudinal research by the author as a result of previous research on the company, in part, relevant for knowledge-hoarding and internal communication. Wing Tsun Scandinavia provided the author with the opportunity to study the concept of knowledge-hoarding within an organizational setting previously concluded to have internal communication problems hypothesized to be relevant to the concept of knowledge-hoarding. The author's previous research on the company provided an offset for the analysis and a basis for the investigation of units as a result of the degree of information already available to the author. The opportunity to utilize previous research of a qualitative nature, conducted over a period of 2 years additionally provided the author with a chance of gaining in-depth knowledge regarding the focus group within the organization, and therefore was believed to support a more thorough data collection process in respect to the time frame available for this thesis.

1508 A/S was chosen initially as a contrast point to Wing Tsun Scandinavia as it was hypothesized by the author that; Knowledge-intense firms operating in a very dynamic, competitive and innovative environment, predominantly occupied by highly educated employees would suffer less from the concept of knowledge-hoarding due to their high degree of dependency on internal knowledge and information sharing capabilities.

The author believed that Wing Tsun Scandinavia, based on previous research could function as the counter pole to 1508 A/S internal knowledge-sharing environment and vice versa. The company 1508 A/S was chosen in part as a result of its organizational image and reputation as an e-commerce enterprise, which led to the initial conclusion regarding its organizational environment and as a result of availability. Several companies selected from the same criteria as 1508 A/S was contacted and interviewed, but as the amount of information available for the author was scarce in the majority of cases, 1508 A/S was concluded to provide the best offset for analysis through the amount of information accessible to the author. The selection of 1508 A/S did not provide any negative influence on the study, as it met the criteria necessary for the thesis, and was considered to be the best option from the available sources for a

comparative analysis of two companies based on the research area, problem statement and accessibility of data.

4.3 - DATA COLLECTION

4.3.1 - METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collected for the research is based upon a combination of theoretical sampling (*Glaser, Strauss, 1967*) and convenience sampling (*Boxill, Ian; Chambers, Claudia; Wint, Eleanor, 1997*). The notion of using convenience sampling in an analytical paper creates a degree of limitations in regards to the generalisability, applicability and representativeness of the research material. Convenience sampling is present in this research study in the form of the organizations chosen for the study; Wing Tsun Scandinavia was based in part due to a previous commitment with the organization, while 1508 A/S chosen as a result of availability of companies meeting the criteria of the research context. Furthermore the data collection methods at 1508 A/S is also predominantly a result of what the author had available through the degree of interactions and research time available at 1508 A/S in conjunction with the data the organization wished to disclose. In comparison, data collection at Wing Tsun Scandinavia was almost 100% accessible and available for the author, which results in a much more representative sampling, respectful to the specific context and research area in question.

Theoretical sampling is based on the attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding within a specific context. The use of theoretical sampling allows the author to utilize existing research and hypothesis on the conceptual subject in an attempt to further understanding and knowledge concerning the underlying principles relevant to the creation of a hypothesized unhealthy knowledge-sharing environment, as witnessed in the organizational contexts identified by the author. The objectives regarding the use of theoretical sampling is to sample independent documents and data collections on the matter, cross analyze and test the theories and hypothesis to the degree possible for the author, and provide a critical perspective to what can be deducted from the theories in relationship to the context in which the author is conducting research.

The empirical evidence, which serves as the basis for the thesis, is collected through use of interviews, observations, surveys and theoretical documents. The degree to which each type of data collection method is utilized is partly based on convenience, availability and perceived quality of outcome. The notion of using different types of data collection methods is furthermore complimentary to the author's effort of triangulating the data collected, as the data collected for the study is not necessarily representative by nature as a result of the availability of empirical evidence.

The data collected from the two organizations is not conducted in the same precise manner, and is also subject to that of availability and convenience.

4.3.1.1 - INTERVIEWS

At Wing Tsun Scandinavia, interviews were used as the second method of data collection, following longitudinal observations. Interviews were conducted in private sessions solely including the interviewer and the subject. The subject was guaranteed discretion to the degree possible, and furthermore an agreement was made to not include names in the final report available for organization upon completion. The reasoning behind this was believed to be subject to fear of consequences for disclosing negative statements regarding the internal environment at the organization. Though these concerns were not a matter for all the interviews parties, the author believed it to be more beneficial to simply state it as terms for the participation, decided exclusively by the author. In the case of Wing Tsun Scandinavia, interviews were considered primary data complimenting observations.

At 1508 A/S, interviews was the primary source of data collected as a result of availability. Interviews with a Junior User Experience Designer at 1508 A/S formed the basis for the informational input regarding the organization. Additionally a second interview with follow-up questions was conducted involving the same UX designer, resulting in a very comprehensive, yet not necessarily representative set of data. The interviews was, as a result of the scarcity of the resource, conducted over 1.5 hours, in a relaxed and informal environment where the goal was to try and get the subject to stay as long as possible, and therefore disclose as much information as possible. The author acknowledges the risk of

personal bias when the basis of a report stems predominantly from one person, but the availability of the data made this a necessity. In conclusion, the author does support the fact that one evening together discussing one specific matter with an employee of an organization does foster the opportunity to deduct what is indeed personal bias, and what can be categorized as a more general image. In addition, interviews allowed a large amount of flexibility regarding the data collecting process, enabling the subject to say what he wanted to say in addition to the predetermined questions

4.3.1.2 - OBSERVATIONS

At Wing Tsun Scandinavia the primary data collected came in the form of interviews and observations, in contrast to 1508 A/S where observations were not available to the author. The incentive for this was almost exclusively a result of the author being able to actually conduct in-depth observations at the organization over a longer period of time, enabling a richer and more thorough understanding of the patterns and circumstances governing its internal informational environment. Collecting data through longitudinal observations at Wing Tsun Scandinavia were made possible for the author as a result of previous engagements with the organization, resulting in a relationship of trust. The nature of the organization in terms of its business branch also enabled the author to spend a large amount of time in the organization collecting data through observation without inconveniencing the employees to a larger extent. The opportunity to experience the environment in which the subjects operated while studying the behavioral patterns and practices of the organizational members is believed to provide a more representative set of data, respectful to the specific context.

At 1508 A/S, observations were not possible to be conducted by the author. The organization did not wish to provide other information than that available through interviews with a specific employee, the UX designer, and through online questionnaires.

4.3.1.3 - SURVEYS

At 1508 A/S online questionnaires were conducted in an attempt to achieve a more representative image of the organization in question, and to support the notion of data

triangulation. Using this type of data collection method was predominantly a way for the author to test if any major inconsistencies existed between what was revealed during the interviews and the opinion of a larger part of the organizational members through means of quantitative data collections. The author recognizes that there is little to no control regarding the survey data, and as of such, it is not very representative on a more general level due to the number of subjects returning the questionnaire and the possible validity of the input. The author does recognize the strength of this sort of data collection as a result of the anonymity provided for the participants and therefore found the method very valuable in terms of achieving a more general image of the companies.

4.3.1.4 - DOCUMENTS

Available to the author were a number of documents concerning the informational environment at Wing Tsun Scandinavia. Team meetings, strategy plans, office notes, and archived documents relevant for the thesis was made available to a limited degree, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the efforts and commitment of the organization regarding its knowledge-sharing and informational environment both on an internal and external level.

At 1508 A/S no explicit documents were made available to the author except official press releases and what can be conducted from news archives and websites.

4.3.2 - RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This thesis is based on a constructionistic ontological perspective, with a predominantly social constructionistic approach. Social constructionism as a theoretical field, attempts to understand the world by focusing on how sensemaking can be achieved through interactions between actants in a social setting in attempt to create shared social meaning. Here one distinguishes between *social constructionism*, which focuses on the creation of social reality through the interactions of individuals, and *social constructivism*, which primarily directs attention towards the individual cognitive process (Bodner, Klobuchar, & Geelan, 2001).

Though one can arguably claim that the two fields of constructionism is both intertwined and mutually exclusive, in this analysis a less rigid distinction between the two concepts will be

utilized in attempt to provide a more digestible approach to the theoretical concept in question – knowledge-hoarding. The notion of using a specific ontological perspective influences the generalisability of the thesis and to a certain extent the representativeness of the research findings.

The availability of the data collected also creates limitations in regards to the generalisability of the thesis. As a result of limited data available to the author during the time of the study, the author acknowledges that the thesis might not be suitable to create a broader understanding of the impact of knowledge-hoarding in an organizational setting, and therefore approaches the theoretical aim of the study as an attempt to understand the conceptual impact on a small scale, context specific bases.

The nature of the two organizational settings studied also creates limitations regarding the generalisability of the research. Arguably the study would have been more generally applicable in future research have the subjects been closer related in business areas, but the availability of companies willing to participate in the research made this impossible.

4.3.3 – CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPRETIVISTIC RESEARCH

An interpretive study, as conducted in this thesis is also subject to potential critique regarding its validity and contribution to the establishment of scientific theory. Through an interpretivistic approach to research the author seeks to understand a specific predefined phenomenon within a specific contextual setting. The author seeks to describe rather than predict, understand rather than specify conditions under which the conceptual object exists as witnessed within a positivistic research study. The lack of generalisability and the arguably ignorant view on the concepts on a larger scale, is therefore acknowledged as a limitation to the interpretivistic research method. In conclusion one might argue that a study such as this; of an interpretivistic nature does not lead to a full understanding of a given phenomenon and therefore cannot be justified as an exact science. Nevertheless the author feels that the importance of a study such as this, is still of great value, as the decimation of events and circumstances, conditions and factors influencing the manifestation of knowledge-hoarding, is

evenly important to fully understand the phenomenon as a conceptual entity through the analysis of context specific and small scale settings.

4.3.4 - VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The collection and processing of data conducted in this research is believed by the author to be completely valid in respect to the context, limitations, scope and theoretical approach. The research conducted set out to further understanding and knowledge in regards to knowledge-hoarding within a small scale organizational setting, limited by a large number of factors previously discussed in this chapter. As deprived of generalisability as this research may be, the author believes that the conceptual entity of knowledge-hoarding in relations to knowledge-sharing in organizational environments, deeply dependent on its internal communicative capabilities has been enhanced through this research and can, with all respect and notion to the limitations, help facilitate understanding regarding the concept.

In respect to reliability the author acknowledges that a number of limitations are present. As it was not possible to conduct interviews and deduct data from every relevant party within the subject organizations, the data collected is subject to personal bias, limited sampling, undisclosed or withheld information and insufficient amounts of data. The author therefore argues that the study, as valid as it may be, must be read with respect to the present limitations regarding the data collected.

4.3.5 - REFLECTIONS

Reflections concerning the methodological section of this thesis primarily involve the availability of companies willing to commit to a research such as this. At the start of the research the author believed it to be relatively easy to find a counter part to the internal communicative environment present at Wing Tsun Scandinavia, but was very quickly schooled in this regard. The author contacted 17 Danish companies all suitable for the research before finding one single organization that was willing to participate. And even at this point, the level of participation from this organization, 1508 A/S respectively was very limited. The availability of information from the company aimed to serve as a perfect counter-part to Wing Tsun Scandinavia affected the research study to a great extent and as a result the

research question, theoretical approach, problem statement and methodology had to be adjusted. Regardless of the hurdles arising at the birth of the research study, the author is content with the outcome, though wished a more representative and in-depth descriptive analysis would have been possible.

5.0 - CHAPTER 5

5.1 - ANALYSIS

5.1.1 - THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The first section of the analysis focuses on the organizational culture within WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S. It is in the author's belief that the organizational culture serves as the foundation for understanding the actions of actants operating within the organizational context and therefore must be contextualized before any other aspects of the analysis can be understood in respect to the research questions of this research paper. Furthermore the author hypothesizes that the organizational culture is of such great relevance to the believed emergence of knowledge-hoarding within the organizations that it constitutes one of the fundamental elements in the establishment of a knowledge-hoarding afflicted informational environment.

The first area subject to investigation falls upon culture as a concept. To provide the basis for this concept, the definition and categorization provided by Schein, 2010 in his 4th edition of *"Organizational Culture and Leadership"* will be employed. Schein provided many definitions of organizational culture, but his formal definition of culture is the one, which will be used as a point of departure:

"A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*)

Schein argued that in order to create an in-depth understanding of culture as a concept a number of key observable events and underlying forces should be considered. In an attempt to facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon, Schein proposed 10 focal areas of investigation (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*):

- **Observed behavioral regularities in interactions (language, rituals):** *The language they use, the customs and traditions that evolve, and the rituals they employ in a wide variety of situations.*
- **Group norms:** *The implicit standards and values that evolve in working groups such as the particular norm of “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay” that evolved among workers in the Bank Wiring Room in Hawthorne studies.*
- **Espoused values:** *The articulated publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve, such as “products quality” or “price leadership”.*
- **Formal philosophy:** *The broad policies and ideological principles that guide a group’s actions towards stockholders, employees, customers, and other stakeholders such as the highly publicized “HP Way” of the Hewlett-Packard Co.*
- **Rules of the game:** *The implicit, unwritten rules for getting along in the organization, “the ropes” that a newcomer must learn to become an accepted member, “the way we do things around here”.*
- **Climate:** *The feeling that is conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which the members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders.*
- **Embedded skills:** *The special competencies displayed by the group of members in accomplishing certain tasks, the ability to make certain things that get passed on from generation to generation without necessarily being articulated in writing.*
- **Habits of thinking, mental models and/or linguistic paradigms:** *The shared cognitive frames that guide the perceptions, thought, and language used by the members of a group and are taught to new members in the early socialization process.*
- **Shared meanings:** *The emergent understandings that are created by group members as they interact with each other.*

- ***“Root metaphors” or integrating symbols:*** *The ways that groups evolve to characterize themselves, which may or may not be appreciated.”*

In addition, Schein proposes three *levels* or degrees of which culture is visible to the observer and therefore can be studied and understood. *The Three Levels of Culture* as presented in his work of *Organizational culture and leadership* 1-4th edition respectively (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*):

- **Artifacts**
 - Visible and felleable structures and processes
 - Observed behavior
 - Difficult to decipher
- **Espoused values**
 - Ideals, goals, values, aspirations
 - Ideologies
 - Rationalizations
 - May or may not be congruent with and other artifacts
- **Basic underlying assumptions**
 - Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values
 - Determine behavior, perception, though, and feeling

Directing attention back at the case study and the organizational context, the notion of both the three levels of culture and the 10 major concepts create a point of departure for the understanding of the organizational culture at WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S in respect to the empirical evidence deducted.

When trying to establish the nature of the organizational culture(s) at WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S, it is important to understand the premises for the study. The author is not trying to establish if one single and dominating culture exists or if many cultures exist within the same organization. Neither is the author trying to provide an in-depth analysis to the company culture as the organizational culture could easily be the primary topic of any master thesis, occupying the majority of the space available for research leading to a full fledge in-

depth analysis of the topic. The objective of this section is therefore to provide the necessary depth of analysis of the organizational culture preceding an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding in relation to the proposed research questions of the study. As a result, not all elements of Schein' three levels of culture or major theoretical concepts will be addressed or addressed to the same level of thoroughness as the analysis primarily serves to establish a basic understanding of the cultures existing within the organizations in question and their relationship to the informational and knowledge-sharing environment.

5.1.1.1 - CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

5.1.1.1.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

Artifacts, as defined by Schein, constitute the first layer visible for analysis, as it deals with the visible and fella structures of the culture in questions. It also includes first degree *behavioral patterns* which one is able to observe without further analysis on cognitive processes. In this section, the first impressions regarding the *organizational climate* and the *embedded skills* of the organizational members are slowly getting visible. From the empirical evidence gathered through observations at WingTsun Scandinavia, a large number of artifacts can be analyzed. The organizational architecture resembles a theme build workout gym inspired by Chinese culture. Walls are covered with large images of the grandmasters of the self-defense system they teach, pillars resembling a Chinese Shaolin temple is occupying the main entrance near the reception and various posters and images of Kung-Fu masters are covering the walls. Additionally the building has a very outdated and old look and feel to it, it is clear that the studio was built in the early 1990's and has not undergone any major renovation since. With the exception of painting the walls, no other means has taken to remain visibly modern. The studio is composed of four gym halls where various self-defense lessons are trained throughout the day in addition to a small hidden away office in the back of the studio following a bar near the reception.

At the entrance the organization has recently purchased a new check-in computer system to deal with customers, but it seems like the general opinion between the employees is that the system was purchased due to the old PBS system being outdated and incompatible with their

old system and as a result they were forced to find a new and cheap solution. In the words of daily manager, Jesper Vinther:

"Our old system didn't work and we had to get a new one fast"

"The new system might not be working perfectly now but I'm sure we will get there"

An interesting notion, which the daily manager noticed after, only a few night of the new system being implemented, was how it affected customer relationships. Before the new IT system was implemented people had to check in by going to the reception, handing over their membership card in exchange of a key to a locker. It was custom to have a small chat with the reception personal, get updated with the news stand located next to the reception desk and small talk about whatever people felt for at the time. This was custom for normal customers as well as the instructors checking in before a class.

An important side note here is the importance of the organizational climate, which will be addressed in greater detail in a following section. Nevertheless it is very important to understand that the primary reason people who did not train self-defense but only used the fitness gym, chose what can be considered an outdated gym, with bad facilities, poor ventilation, higher prices than the competition was because of the very friendly and family like atmosphere at the studio. It was believed by many instructors and regular personal that the primary competitive advantage WingTsun Scandinavia had in regards to its fitness section primarily, but also to a large extent as a self-defense academy, was the atmosphere present. The organization might have been strict in relations to power structure, but everyone on the same level of power, had a great relationship. As stated by instructor Carsten Bak Mesiner:

"It's like a second family here, everyone knows everyone, and everyone gets along"

"Sure you don't want to mess with the boss, but when one makes a living of kicking peoples behind, well what do you expect"

The importance of the organizational climate in respect to the check-in system is related to the impact the system had on the climate. With the new check-in system, there was no need for the customers to approach the reception, virtually leaving them in a situation where, if

nobody bought anything from the bar, there could technically be no interactions between customers and reception personal during a day. In addition to not being kept up to date with various seminars and events, all being a significant part of the organizations earnings, the lack of personal contact very quickly created an atmosphere very different to what was custom at the organization. In the words of daily manager Jesper Vinther:

"I for one sure don't have as much contact with the customers anymore, and I must admit I often find myself staring at a person wondering if I have ever seen him before, even if I can tell from the computer he has been here for a month"

If one is to relate this, in nature relatively simple issue of implementing a new IT system, based on need and not opportunity, one could argue that something as simple as the check-in system has an actual impact on the knowledge-sharing capabilities of the organization. To be reasonable the instructors still hang out at the bar a lot during the day, so the decrease in interaction between management and instructors as a direct result of the check-in system is not significant, but it is still present. A decrease in interaction and communication is a decrease regardless of the degree.

Where this really hurts the organization is the decrease in information exchanged between customers and the organization. An organization competing on its organizational climate is in a position where customer feedback and interaction is very important. Since customers decreasingly is providing the reception personal with information regarding their feelings about the organization, what they like and dislike, the reception personal is not able to pass this information on to the instructors which can adjust their sessions accordingly in regards to the desires and preferences of the majority of their customers. As stated by receptionist and former daily manager, Olivia Runequist:

"The only real interaction we as the management team have with our customers are from the reception. The rest is a matter of what we hear from our instructors, from their classes"

The underlying point with the focus on the check-in system is the impact one can witness on this organization in regards to knowledge-sharing and internal communication capabilities.

One might argue that it is a mood point and might not affect the overall communicative dynamics of an organization on a general level, but at WingTsun Scandinavia, an organization which competitive capabilities to a large extent is directly related to the environment they offer, the impact of the IT system is important.

5.1.1.1.2 - 1508 A/S

Addressing 1508 A/S the empirical evidence available in this research are far more limited than that of WingTsun Scandinavia. The author did not have the same access to directly observing the organization visually as with WingTsun Scandinavia. In that respect the thoroughness of artifacts observed and hence analyzed is much less substantial.

1508 A/S resembles what one might expect of a company operating in their specific business branch. There is a high level of IT implementations crucial to the successful completion of the daily work assignments. Every organizational member uses technology to a very large degree in order to stay competitive. Furthermore technology is implemented in depth throughout the organization and constantly kept up to date with recent innovations. The organizational architecture consists of a number of close proximity departments holding 45 employees in total. Organizational members are grouped in small groups within the respective departments depending on their job assignments. Visible artifacts at the organization include standard office supplies, heavy IT, draw-boards and some personal touch to the employees work stations. Some effort has also been put into decorating the offices, but one might argue that there is no specific theme present except for that of a serious IT working environment.

Deducting behavioral patterns, even on a superficial level is relatively limited based on the empirical evidence. Though one might conclude that superficially the business seeks to attract a specific personality type of employees to make sure they will fit in with the team, professionalism is rated higher and is the primary factor in employment. Nevertheless, personality of employees is still a factor the management at 1508 A/S are aware of when hiring people. As junior user experience designer Mark Jensen says:

“As soon as we know if a person is professionally qualified to the job, it’s all about his personality. Will he fit in with the group is a big factor, just not the biggest factor”

What the author was also able to observe was the atmosphere at the organization, given it is based on a one time observation and an interview with one employee hence not necessarily being representative to the general climate. The atmosphere at 1508 A/S in the words of junior user experience designer, Mark Jensen:

“Some time ago, before my time, the atmosphere here was very harsh with a lot of stress and tension every day, for everyone. That was before my time though, and I don’t see any of this today. People have fun, enjoy their work, and trust in their colleagues”.

“Regardless of how it was before, for me, this is a very great place to work. Sure there is competition between departments and stuff we need to improve, but overall this is a great place now.

Based on these statements and the authors own observations visiting 1508 A/S, the conclusion rests with 1508 A/S being a very serious work place, but where people make sure to enjoy themselves and have a great deal of fun as well. Furthermore it seems that the management department has learned from previous difficulties with people leaving the organization in groups, and is now actively trying to get people more socially involved. This can be concluded by their desire to create of-work events such as a lounge area where people can socialize, parties and picnics.

Raising the question of how the organizational artifacts influence the knowledge-sharing capabilities of 1508 A/S directs us back towards the IT implementations. As argued with WingTsun Scandinavia, Information technology can have great impact on information sharing and affect the internal climate. At 1508 A/S, the author argues that as with WingTsun Scandinavia, IT implementations influence how internal communications and information sharing are conducted to a relatively large extent. Visible to the naked eye are monitors, draw-boards and other information sharing tools, used to share information between parties. 1508 A/S additionally utilize an internal information system, notifying employees about anything from relevant task related information, to the daily special at the café and the weather. The

information sharing tools available at 1508 A/S is an integrated part of the everyday life at the offices, and as so, are part of the knowledge-sharing machine, facilitating smooth operations and knowledge-sharing between employees, management and departments.

The argument in relation to knowledge-hoarding and the emergence of this phenomenon in regards to the organizational artifacts lies with the notion of 1508 A/S having artifacts established supporting knowledge-sharing and having them as an integrated part of its daily routines. As opposed to WingTsun Scandinavia, where the author argued that the recent IT implementation created boundaries and limitations in regards to internal communication and knowledge-sharing, the author argues the exact opposite at 1508 A/S, at least when solely focusing on the organizational artifacts and their influence on the matter. The artifacts discussed facilitates knowledge-sharing and creates opportunities to enhance knowledge-sharing both in respect to new information being shared if available as well as the possible implementation of new IT innovations as a result of the already established foundation of using IT as a knowledge-sharing tool across the organization.

In comparison with WingTsun Scandinavia, the employees of the two organizations are of a very different nature. At 1508 A/S we witness people who are fond of technology, very focused on their work, but perhaps driven by salary more than personal satisfaction. They are up to date with the general IT development and take their jobs very serious. According to junior user experience designer, Mark Jensen:

"Salary is definitely a factor for people, though this isn't the place where people get paid top dollar, i'm pretty sure nobody would be here if they got less then what they found reasonable"

At WingTsun Scandinavia people are very relaxed in regards to their work. The majority of the staff consists of the instructor team which forms the foundation for the organization and all are working non-profit. The instructors often sit around the studio and discuss their work, trying to improve their professional capabilities to an almost manic state, integrating their work with their lives rigorously. As stated by Carsten Bak Meisner:

“When you’re a WingTsun instructor, you do not really care about money. Obviously it would be nice to make a living of it, but it’s the passion about the martial arts system that drives us all, or most at least.”

The importance of the influence of artifacts on the topic at hand lies with the notion of support and barriers. At WingTsun Scandinavia the author argues that information technology is actually creating barriers for the informational capabilities of the organization, and at 1508 A/S IT supports knowledge-sharing and fosters better use of informational resources.

The arguable difference and relationship to work discussed between the organizational members of 1508 A/S and WingTsun Scandinavia is believed by the author to also have influence on the informational capabilities and communication infrastructure of the organizations. Where one might argue that there is a higher level of professionalism emphasizing technological capabilities at 1508 A/S and more of a hobby-like state at WingTsun Scandinavia, the author raises the question if one can actually differentiated the two in a knowledge-management perspective. The two organizational climates are arguable very different, but the employees relationship to their work can again, arguably, be related to the personal involvement with their work. The big question then is how does this affect the concept and emergence of Knowledge-Hoarding which the author hypothesized existed to a large extent at WingTsun Scandinavia and at least to a much lesser extent at 1508 A/S. In attempt to answer this question, further analysis of the organizational culture is needed, through the investigation of the next two levels of organizational culture (*Schein, 2010, Organizational Culture and Leadership*).

5.1.1.2 - ESPOUSED VALUES

The *espoused values* of an organization, consisting of but not limited to the ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies and rationalizations of the organizational members is a level that requires a deeper degree of analysis and data than that of the organizational artifacts described in the previous section. In this section the author seeks to understand why the organizational members acts as they do, in order to gain further understanding regarding the

two organizational cultures in question. In this layer of analysis, the *formal philosophy* and first degree *group norms* are possible to investigate.

5.1.1.2.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

WingTsun Scandinavia is an organization with a very specific and arguably rather unconventional set of espoused values in comparison to what one might usually find in an organizational context. The organizational members, enforced by the management team and organizational leaders obey an almost military resembling codex within the organization, and this codex governs everyone's actions to a varying degree. As previously mentioned the organization is built upon a skeleton of traditional Chinese culture, as a necessary step in creating an environment where Chinese martial arts could be taught under relatively authentic circumstances. The founders of the organization believed that the appertaining culture was an integrated and essential part of the self defense system and therefore would not defuse the two to any extent possible. As a result the organization is very hierarchically divided in terms of power structure, a very large degree of bureaucracy is present and the overall culture can be defined as *polychronic* in relations to time and the advancement of ideas and daily tasks (*Mente, Boye De, (2000)*).

The overall organizational culture as described by chief instructor and personal manager Kenneth Kyhe:

"The organization is like a family, there are the leaders who call the shots and those who obey. We are all here to have a good time, and do what we like to do the most, namely self-defense"

As deducted from the statement above, the organizational culture and those who define it put great stress on the company being centered on a relaxing and enjoyable cultural platform where people consider it a place away from home where everyone comes to discuss, evolve and enjoy their common interest in unison. Though the organizational leaders primarily focus on the positive aspects of the company culture and the underlying ideals and values, not all of the organizational members see it through rose-colored glasses. In the words of instructor Carsten Bak Meisner:

"There is no doubt that we all love to be here, but one has to admit that everything is not always perfect. It's hard to get things through and discussing anything with the boss or even finding someone to discuss important matters with from the management team is almost always a complete waste of effort. Also, it's not like we all get a long, there is issues here like elsewhere"

One might argue that there are some inconsistencies about the desired organizational climate and the actual outcome at WingTsun Scandinavia, and accordant to some of the instructors and staff members it has a lot to do with the management team and organizational leaders. In regards to the espoused values, one might further argue that there is a somewhat existing degree of inconsistency between the ideology and values of the organization from a top-down perspective and the actual implementation and manifestation of the culture as a concept.

In respect to the espoused values of the organizational members, it is important to understand that none of these are formally formulated or written down. There are few hard printed rules which must be obeyed to study and work at the organization. There is however a number of informal tacit rules which must be followed to avoid being frozen out by the core members of the organization. The author witnessed on several occasions how, if people showed up for training in the wrong colored shirts, addressed the instructor the wrong way or generally acted in a way the instructor did not find appropriate, was penalized through various actions by the instructor. And the penalty did not always end at the door. At more than one occasion the author witnessed certain instructors refusing to talk to organizational member's weeks after they had (subjectively perceived) offended him. The interesting notion is that when the offending member was addressed regarding his relationship to the instructor he responded:

"I don't know, I guess he just doesn't like me"

The important of this example lies with the underlying values and tacit rules governing the internal environment at the organization. The example above was far from a unique

observation. Similar events happened with different outcomes relatively often at the organization and was perceived as normal or even part of the organizational culture.

Relating the notion of espoused values to the research topic at hand, the initial argument presented by the author proposed a strong link between the organizational culture and the phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding. Addressing the espoused values of WingTsun Scandinavia especially those related to the cultural agenda set by the management team, further strengthens this belief. The organizational climate enforced by the strictly upheld top-down power structure and the very bureaucratic nature, in conjunction with the traditional Chinese / Taoistic cultural fundament of the organizational environment, is arguable an important factor in how knowledge is handled within the organization. The organizational members have little to no two-way interactions with the top management division, and ideas of improvement are often met with a stonewall shield. Organizational members often express that they are unable to engage people higher ranked than them without facing ridicule or simply not being taken serious. Additionally the notion of the internal ranking system, based on the Chinese martial arts system, leads to a division of power on the ground level based solely on martial arts level, instead of actual organizational positioning. This creates possible implications for knowledge-sharing as it appears that people of the same rank are able to share and exchange knowledge on an even level, where one of a lower rank is taken less seriously, and therefore his input not always as appreciated.

An important notion about the ranking system is that it is not an absolute law at WingTsun Scandinavia. The phenomenon of odd power distribution as described above is often the case of social interactions, but not a rule which must be obeyed. Most organizational members subscribe to this rule, but some do not. As a result, it is argued by the author to indeed be a communicative hurdle and creating implications, but not to a substantial degree for it to require a major section of this analysis.

5.1.1.2.2 - 1508 A/S

Turning perspective towards 1508 A/S and the espoused values of the organization, once again the thesis suffers from a lack of information in comparison with WingTsun Scandinavia.

The information used to establish the espoused values of the organization is solely based on the interview with junior user experience designer Mark Jensen and the online questionnaires answered by multiple organizational members at 1508 A/S. As a result of this, the espoused values in this section are more formally decided and less interpreted by the author as witnessed with WingTsun Scandinavia.

At 1508 A/S values such as high professionalism, punctuality, dedication and efficiency is prioritized. These values are close in line with the organizations formal mission stating: (<http://www.1508.dk/om1508/mission.aspx>)”

“Our goal is to help companies actualize their digital potential”

Aspirations for success, being at the high end of their branch and maintaining high profit margins while being technological innovative and providing its customers with second-to-none solutions is what drives the organization forward. Its human resource capacities are manifested through its willingness to make sure the team is overall socially compatible and professionally complimentary. As stated by junior user experience designer Mark Jensen:

“It’s important to make sure people are compatible to avoid stress and insure a good working environment, I know that is something management pays attention to when hiring employees.”

Furthermore the notion of efficiency and accountability is an important factor of the espoused values set by the management team at 1508 A/S. Everyone is very aware of the fact that they need to produce results in order to be there. Even though there is not constant stress factor of “perform or be off” surrounding the daily environment, commitment to getting the job done is still a large factor, and one emphasized by the management team. Internal competition is a factor also appreciated and encouraged to an extent by the organizational leader. As stated by junior user experience designer Mark Jensen:

“They want us to compete, not to the degree where it’s unhealthy, by to enhance output”

Interestingly enough, the online survey results does not necessarily back this up. Only 55% believe that internal competition was *“a factor to a lesser extent”* while 22% stated *“not in any particular degree”* or *“no”*. The notion of wanting to have employees actively involved in creating a healthy working environment is also a value important to the organization and one actively enforced by the organization. When comparing the objective of the organization to the survey results, 66% *“agreed to a high extent”* while the remaining 33% found it to be *“ok”*. Operating in a very innovative environment where information sharing is a very important factor and an overall internal goal for the organization, 44% did *“not believe that people hoarded knowledge for personal gains”*, 44% had *“no knowledge of the phenomenon”* and only 11% believed it *“might be occurring”*. (Appendix #2).

Relating this to the notion of Knowledge-Hoarding as proposed by the research questions of this thesis, the notion of high professionalism enforces this point to a certain extent. By creating a professionally homogenous environment in regards to educational level, the author hypothesizes that some of the issues present at WingTsun Scandinavia can be avoided. As stated by Yaghi et al. 2011, *“Education level is a demographic factor which can affect the knowledge-sharing attitude of a person”*. Though the author does not feel comfortable believing this is a primary factor in the knowledge-sharing/hoarding factors present at the two organizations in question, the notion of professionalism and the realization of the importance of knowledge-sharing relevant to that of an educational level might be a factor. As stated by Yaghi et al. 2011:

“Although, a research conducted on software development teams suggested that there is an insignificant relationship between an employee’s education level and the knowledge-sharing behavior it can be argued that in an education setup a person with high education can be more inclined to share his knowledge because he can be perceived to have more knowledge (Aamir et al., 2009)”

5.1.1.3 - BASIC ASSUMPTION

5.1.1.3.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

The *basic assumptions* of the organizational cultures of WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S, constitutes the last level of analysis for this section. The level can be considered the most difficult aspect to deduct factual evidence from, since the *basic assumptions* of organizational members often exists on an unconscious level, maybe contrasting the *espoused values* of the company (Schein, 2010, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*). In short, the objective for this part of the analysis is to understand if any inconsistencies between the *espoused values* and *basic assumptions* exist, possibly why they exist and how it affects the organizations. In this layer of the analysis, it is possible to investigate the *rules of the game*, *mental models* of organizational actants, the *shared meaning* in respect to the collective sensemaking of the actants and the *root metaphors* governing organization.

At WingTsun Scandinavia the espoused values of the organization are clear to certain extents and very vague and ill-defined at other. As addressed in the previous section, not a lot of written down or formally defined rules exists within the organization, and if one were to address actual espoused values the list would not be very long. They may include notions such as high standards, being the best in the branch, having a community where everyone contributes and enjoys being and having a good external image, manifested through the behavior and actions of martial arts systems practitioners. Going a bit deeper into the organization, the espoused values also entails a high degree of behavioral regulations and power structures which are as close to formally defined as they can, without actual being so. This is described in greater detail in the preceding section. So, if one is to deduct the basic assumptions of the organization as a unit or the organizational members based on the empirical evidence available for this thesis, interesting notions appear.

At WingTsun Scandinavia it appears that there is a certain level of basic assumptions concerning how information is treated and individuals relate to each other. Addressing the nature of information management, information seems to be an espoused value through its function as the business's core product i.e. the organization sells traditional Chinese culture and martial arts, but it also appears to be part of the basic assumptions for a lot of the

organizational members in a contradicting manner. Information is viewed not only as a commodity aimed and maintaining profitability and competitiveness for the organization as a unit, but also as a means of guaranteeing or enhancing personal success at the organization. This is directly related to the notion of power structure, the ranking system and personal economic gains available by selling private lessons to students. But why is this?

The basic assumptions of the more prominent instructors and employees at WingTsun Scandinavia seems to evolve around the notion that information, though important to share, is even more important to hoard i.e. the most knowledgeable person reaps certain benefits. As stated by instructor Carsten Bak Meisner:

"Information for me, the stuff I know and teach is what gives me any sort of salary here" if I don't know anything, or just know a lot less than the rest, why would people come to me for private lessons?"

The above statement is one of the very key elements in the informational culture at WingTsun Scandinavia and the point is further established by instructor Jacob Herning:

"It's pretty obvious that those who buy private lessons want to get the most for their money, but it's also a matter of power. He who knows the most about self-defense, is the most respected"

In relations to the notion of contrasting espoused values and basic assumptions, the author argues that the actual manifestation of information management and the desired manifestation are unfortunately two very different things at WingTsun Scandinavia. The basic assumptions i.e. the taken for granted beliefs of the organization from the managers perspective is that the organizational members share, discuss and evolve the knowledge they have, and cumulatively add value to the organization. In the words of chief instructor and personal manager Kenneth Kyhe:

"Everyone contributes and makes sure we are doing a good job keeping customers and staying strong competitively. We sell martial arts, obviously it's crucial that the information we sell are top notch"

To dispute this claim, the author dares not, but one might raise the question of how everyone contributes and to what extent it correlates with the management department's ambitions and strategy.

In relation to the research question and the notion of knowledge-hoarding the conflict between information related espoused values and basic assumptions are clear, at least to the point of establishing the presence of a conflict. A number of the organizational members perceive information as a commodity and a personal asset which they most treasure and safe-keep in order to maintain personal competitiveness, while the management team sees information as one of the primary means to success for the corporation as a whole. How the notion of contradicting informational aspirations and practices affect the overall internal information environment will be addressed in greater detail throughout the following sections.

5.1.1.3.2 - 1508 A/S

Addressing 1508 A/S the author encountered the first major empirical problem. As a result of observations being so scarce at 1508 A/S, the author feels that a valid analysis concerning the basic assumptions and third level of analysis according to Schein would be scanty at best. An analysis of basic assumptions in the eyes of the espoused values leaves one with nothing more than speculations regarding events, actions and possible taken for granted beliefs of the organizational members, which the author simply does not feel comfortable doing. In order to try to maintain validity and representativeness of the master thesis as a whole, the author strives to keep speculation and unsubstantiated hypothesis to a minimum and as a result, this part of the section cannot be conducted.

5.1.1.4 – CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SCHEIN'S THREE LEVELS OF CULTURE

One of the main issues when trying to identify the organizational culture using the three levels of culture proposed by Schein is the notion of a single culture existing within a single organizational setting. Schein who one might argue to have upheld a very functionalist perspective, arguably used the three levels of culture as a framework to identify the

dominating culture inside an organization, and in that respect predominantly focused upon a single culture within an organization. The classic functionalist perspective may not have been one Schein subscribed to in its full extend, but nevertheless his theory of organizational culture was to be considered within the functionalist field of sociology (*Schultz, 1994*). In this respect, and as described in previous chapters, the functionalist perspective is applied to the preceding section as it provided the foundation for the following analysis. The importance of this stems from the notion of the interpretivistic approach to research applied by this study. The interpretivistic perspective moves the focus of the organizational culture identification from the functions and survival of the organization as a key element in the existence of an organizational culture to the notion of “*verstehen*” (*Weber, 1949*), and how sensemaking is achieved through social interactions, cultural boundaries and individual cognitive actions.

In this respect the use of a predominantly inspired functionalist theoretical framework in a heavily interpretivistic research study must be comprehended in terms of the understanding provided by use of the method in respect to the research questions of the thesis, and not simply in light of the sociological foundation on which the theory is based.

5.1.1.5 - RECAPITULATION

In this section the author has addressed the organizational culture of the two organizations in question from a predominantly functionalistic approach in an attempt to create the foundation and preliminary analysis for the answering of the research question of the master thesis. The goal has been to provide enough evidence to create an understanding concerning the organizational cultures in questions, without creating theoretical and analytical inconsistencies for the following sections, which will be less general and more directly related to the research questions and the theoretical theme of the study – knowledge-hoarding.

Throughout the preceding section the author has been concerned primarily with the three levels of culture by E. Schein in relations to the 10 focal points of investigation proposed by Schein (*Schein, 2010, Organizational Culture and Leadership*). The author has tried to establish the nature of the influence of artifacts on the information environment, the impact of

espoused values on the organizational climate and the contracting elements and influence of the basic assumption of the organizational from a holistic and individual perspective.

What has been discovered in this section is the importance of the organizational culture in respect to the degree of information sharing and impact of the organizational climate on the organization. By investigating the organizational culture the author has learned that there is a great degree of differences between the organizations in question, which serves to create different limitations and capabilities for the organizations respectively. Where one might argue that both companies can be categorized under the umbrella of the *Knowledge based view* (Grant, 1996, *Toward a Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm*) focusing predominantly on the intellectual resources as the key element in the archival of organizational goals, there are idiosyncratic properties governing both organizations respectively. WingTsun Scandinavia bares the mark of an organization which has yet to define its own organizational culture, both in respect to its internal knowledge-management capabilities and functions, in contrast to that of 1508 A/S which has a set of communicative goals directly implemented in the organizational culture. Even though one might argue that there are also differences between the goal and actual implementation of communicative values at 1508 A/S, the author believes that 1508 A/S in any case has formal structures governing the informational environment to a much larger extent than witnessed as WingTsun Scandinavia. A key notion here is the benefits these structures brings. Would WingTsun Scandinavia be able to reap the benefits of structuring its internal environment in resemblance to that of 1508 A/S, or are the two organizational cultures simply two different in nature for this to provide substantial value?

In the following section, the informational environment will be the focal point of discussion and in this section, many of the cultural elements briefly discussed in the preceding section is addressed in greater detail.

5.1.2 - THE INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1.2.1 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

5.1.2.1.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

Based on the conducted analysis of the companies in question one might feel safe to argue that their primary resources for gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage is knowledge and information. Both companies respectively use information and knowledge as a means of creating their products, and their products is in return a result of the accumulated knowledge produced, distributed and fostered within the organizational setting. In the preceding report for this research paper (*Bachelor project on WingTsun Scandinavia, 2009, D. Hansen*) the author addressed the notion of *information as a resource* (Nonaka, 1994) and the implications this notion substantiated. In summary, the author noted that:

“Open organizations in open environments are characterized with a great level of internal knowledge-sharing. The organization should base its decisions and acquisition of knowledge through internal knowledge-sharing in attempt to gain insight into individual and personnel knowledge from the organizational members”

In conclusion the author noted that the organization in question, WingTsun Scandinavia was trying to promote this behavior, though experiencing difficulties in the process. The reason for this, the author noted:

“In attempt to identify the exact nature of the informational environment at Wing Tsun Scandinavia we have to consider the relatively bureaucratic nature of the top management. Even though the organization as a whole resembles a very post-bureaucratic organization, the structure of information and the strong hierarchy existing within the organization also entails, as described earlier, a rational bureaucratic organization. In relations to the informational environment, this leads us to conclude that we are dealing with an Administrative information culture (Introducing information management, Maceviute, Wilson, 2005) where the division of power and responsibility is conducted on a very traditional and bureaucratic basis. Even though we have previously argued that the rational-bureaucratic tendencies of the organization serve

as a barrier for the future development and expansion of the organization, we also recognize the strengths in regard to the division of power and responsibility when utilizing this method.”

The importance of this lies with the administrative and bureaucratic nature of the organization and how this influences the informational environment *vis à vis* internal knowledge-sharing. Furthermore the notion of potential benefits regarding the bureaucratic nature of the organization is of relevance and will be addressed further along in this chapter. In conjunction with the author's recent research of WingTsun Scandinavia, it is possible to argue that the bureaucratic nature of the organization serves as an important factor when considering the notion of Knowledge-Hoarding. As addressed in the previous chapter, the cultural climate of the organization, in relation to the traditional Taoistic / Chinese organizational format entitles the emphasis of rigid and vertical power relations accompanied by an arguably limited degree of vertical communication. Organizational members report difficulties in communicating with the top management division and trying to implement innovations are often met with hostility and organizational obstacles. As noted by the daily manager, Jesper Vinther:

“Whenever one tries to actually optimize something around here, and I mean stuff based on actually observations through the daily routines, we normally get met by a brick wall of obstacles. After some time, one loses the motivation to even try”

The organizational obstacles, also referred to as hierarchical limitations, are often a matter of disagreements with the top management division and the daily management team, arguable based on the notion of different day to day observations and focal areas of interest in regards to the organizational climate. In respect to this, the author argues that the inconsistencies between what the two departments find important when optimizing the organizational climate is subject to limitations regarding the organizational culture. Based on observations the author believe that it is very difficult for anyone on the ground level to have any influence on organizational decisions regarding the overall management of the company, unless their ideas are 100% flawless and based on undeniable logic. In relation to the observation that the daily managers are the only people who are directly involved in customer interactions on a daily basis, the foundation for the discrepancies is born. The management teams, on a vertical

level, simply do not trust the decision making capabilities of each other. Daily managers' report that the top management division does not know what is going on in the organization, and the top management division arguable does not trust the competences of the daily management team. In the words of Top manager, Eskill Shilling:

"We make the decisions because we are the most capable of doing so"

This brief overview of the organizational model serves as the basis for understanding the power relations ongoing at WingTsun Scandinavia. The author has previously argued that a combination of *post-bureaucratic* and *rational bureaucratic* organizational models (Heckscher, C. Donnellon, A. 1994) is dominating the climate, and this is again established through current observation. The division of power and the vertical communication processes are very strongly related to the bureaucratic model in relation to the rigid and arduous manner communicative processes are manifested. The collectivist or post-bureaucratic elements of the organization are on the contrary found when observing the interactions between customers/organizational members and the instructor team/employees. On this level a post-bureaucratic format applies to an arguably greater extent than a strictly bureaucratic model, with the very distinct notion of this being on a level-specific basis only. Across divisions/levels/groups the bureaucratic power and communication structure is still withheld, but within groups, the notion of collectivism is dominant to a much larger extent.

Relating the notion of the organizational structure to the research question, the importance lies with the implications the organizational structure creates for the internal knowledge-sharing environment. In this respect, three primary areas of interest appear; from instructors and employees to the top managers, instructors in-between and from instructors to customers. The communicative challengers between the instructors and top managers were addressed in the previous section, while the communicative implications between employees and instructors were addressed in the case description. Regardless, an elaboration on the instructor – customer relationship is in order, since it is relevant to the difficulties governing the internal communicative problems relevant to the instructor team. As argued in this section the organization has strict vertical communication patterns in relation to the power structure and cultural foundation; traditional Chinese. These power relations, as argued to be

constantly reestablished by the top management division appear to be a dominating factor across the entire organization. Though the author has previously established that the instructors and regular employees often complain and wish for a more horizontally oriented power structure, their own actions do not necessarily support this desire. When observing how instructors communicate and interact with the customers and organizational members, it is clear that they are very vigilant in regards to the power-distance between themselves and people of a lower rank (in reference to the martial arts ranking system and seniority). They require that they are addressed by rank and not name, and that the conversations must be conducted with a degree of humility towards higher ranking individuals. This notion of power is relevant to the same extent in-between instructors. Here it is clear to observe that their relationships, may they be personal or professional, are based to a large extent on the ranking system and the titles, interaction format and power this entitles. As argued previously, inconsistencies between what people actually want in terms of organizational structure are therefore hard to deduct, since they are often contrary to actual actions of organizational members.

The interactions of individuals can in respect to the previous points, and the organizational structure be concluded to be interdependent to a rather large extent with the organizational culture. The organizational culture is argued to create limitations regarding the communicative possibilities since every interaction and exchange of information and knowledge, is always to some extent governed or limited by the power system of the organization.

5.1.2.1.2 - 1508 A/S

The organizational structure at 1508 A/S is based on the empirical evidence very different from what can be witnessed as WingTsun Scandinavia. Were WingTsun Scandinavia has built its organizational culture upon the foundation of traditional Chinese martial arts and the culture relevant to this, 1508 A/S has built its company culture on professionalism, rationalism and structure. At 1508 A/S the dominant characteristics concerning the organizational structure includes rule-bound behavior, the ability to directly influence the outcome of personal projects, cross-divisional communication; though limited at best, open

office work spaces and decreasingly rigid vertical communications and power structures. In respect to the power structure, a feel of horizontal decision making processes govern the environment to a lesser extent, though it is still clear to the organizational members that organizational decisions always comes from the management team and organizational overheads. To a relatively large extent the organization can be defined as a post-bureaucratic organization, as described by Heckscher, 1994 (*Heckscher, C. Donnellon, A. 1994*) as the informational and organizational environment is governed by the desire to emphasize dialogue as a primary source of decision making, and to foster the feeling of an internal organic network with a holistic approach to task management in contrary to that of a strictly enforced hierarchically divided organization.

On the ground level of the organization, organizational members are required to make important decisions regarding their respective job assignment without constantly consulting the top managers. In the words of Junior UX designer, Mark Jensen:

"People generally trust each other to a large extent, and the daily environment is clearly filled with professionalism. People are good at what they do, and everyone knows it"

The notion of trust, both in respect to the hierarchical ladder and in-between organizational floor workers, is an important and emphasized part of the organizational environment and one which people seem to agree on. In reference to the survey results at 1508 A/S, 11% of the participants stated they would be happier with more internal trust between colleagues where 44% was very content with the current state of trust and 33% was pleased to a very high degree. Following the notion of interrelational trust, 61% of the participating members felt that they had a good relationship to their colleagues, and 39% felt they had a very good relationship. Another interesting finding from the survey result is also related to the interrelational collegial activities. 44% believed they were actively involved to a high degree in the creation of a healthy and productive working environment, and 39% where simply content with their contribution. The notion of organizational members being actively involved in facilitating a healthy internal environment is important, when addressing the influence of the organizational structures, specifically in respect to how it influences the organizational culture. At WingTsun Scandinavia, no such survey was conducted as a result of the author's

desire to base his data on direct observations wherever possible, though based on observations the author believes that the desire to actively participate and contribute to a productive internal environment is suppressed as a result of hostility towards the top managers. On numerous accounts, the author witnessed sharp critique of the managers and organizational leaders when the instructors and floor workers was tasked with new assignments, and the common denominator was almost exclusively that they (the instructors and floor workers) did not want to put in any extra effort, since the managers *“did not know what they were doing anyway, and was slowly ruining the businesses”*.

The notion of trust is important in regards to the organizational structure in this respect specifically when addressing how the organizational structure influences the informational and interpersonal environment. As witnessed with WingTsun Scandinavia, a large portion of its communicative problems are so far hypothesized to be directly related to the degree of internal trust, both in relations to floor workers in-between but to an even higher extent in regards to the top management division. Though variables certainly exist when trying to draw conclusions regarding the organizational structure and the extent of which successful and constructive informational and knowledge-sharing is an integrated part of the daily routines, in this case study there does seem to be certain aspects worth mentioning. The predominantly bureaucratic nature of WingTsun Scandinavia is manifested primarily in regards to vertical communication and decision making processes. It is a general assumption amongst organizational members, backed up by the authors own observation that people do not have a high degree of trust in regards to who makes what decisions, and on what grounds. In addition, the problematic very hierarchically divided vertical communication patterns create implications for the resolution of this problem, as a result of the power distance between hierarchical layers.

5.1.2.1.3 - DISCUSSION

With notice, but in disregard of the existence of non-addressed variables such as educational level, demographics, and culture, there is arguable a direct link between the organizational structure and the extent and quality of knowledge and information sharing at the organization. This notion is further exemplified when taking into account the findings at 1508 A/S, which in respect to the focal point of this section respectively, almost serves as a

complete contrast point to what can be observed at WingTsun Scandinavia. At 1508 A/S, the organizational structure is dominated by the desire to facilitate internal communication and maximize the utilization of knowledge resources through a predominantly post-bureaucratic organizational structure. The dissolution of the rigid and strictly hierarchically divided power relations in correlation with the prevailing dialogical decision making processes is argued to be an important corner stone in the informational and knowledge-sharing differences existing between the two organizations respectively.

The notion of the organizational structure is believed, based on the empirical evidence to have a significant influence on the internal communication processes governing the organization, and in this respect the degree to which knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing exists and is fostered. The author argues that the organizational structure in this case study lays the foundation for the communicative premises in which vertical communication and knowledge-sharing is conducted, and therefore serves as both a barrier and facilitator of productive and rigid communication respectively.

Having concluded that the organizational structure is an important factor in communicative capabilities of the organizations, the next focal point of interest is related to the cognitive processes of the knowledge holders. The incentives and motivational factors relevant to the sharing or hoarding of knowledge and the rationale governing them will therefore be the focal area of the following section.

5.1.2.2 - MOTIVATION AND RATIONALIZATION

In the previous sections of the thesis, areas concerning the organizational culture and the organizational structure have been addressed in an attempt to create a thorough understanding of the two units of analysis. In the following section the rationale and motivational factors governing the behavior of the organizational members at WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S respectively will be subject to analysis, in effort of creating an understanding regarding the reasons why knowledge-hoarding as a collective and individual phenomenon, supervenes and additionally why and how it is continually braced.

Riege, 2005 identified important factors relevant to the degree of knowledge-sharing which he divided into three main factorial categories; *Individual factors*, *organizational factors* and *technological factors* (Riege, 2005).

- *Individual factors:*
 - *Lack of trust*
 - *Fear of loss of power*
 - *Lack of social network*
- *Organizational factors:*
 - *Lack of leadership*
 - *Lack of appropriate reward system*
 - *Lack of sharing opportunities*
- *Technological factors:*
 - *Inappropriate information technology systems*
 - *Lack of training*

Furthermore the author identified that the “*nature of the knowledge*” i.e. how easy it is to share, greatly influenced the extent to which it was shared. Following the notion of motivational factors for knowledge-sharing, de Vries, van der Hoof and Ridder, 2006 argued that organizational members needed to see the value of knowledge-sharing as either worthwhile in the attempt of achieving an individual goal, or substantiating a collective organizational goal. Supporting the claim of individual gains as a prerequisite for knowledge-sharing is O'Reilly and Pondy, 1980, arguing that one of the primary motivational factors for individuals is subject to the achievement of personal goals.

5.1.2.2.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

Following the arguments proposed by Riege 2005, de Vries, van der Hoof and Ridder, 2006 and O'Reilly and Pondy, 1980 the notion of individual gains subject to the motivation of achieving collective goals can be deducted as a collectively agreed upon factor dominating the extent of knowledge-sharing. The notion that individual actants must have personal motivational factors subject to their own individual success is to a relatively large extent also

substantiated by the author's own empirical evidence in this thesis. However the author does not argue that variables such as personal commitment and relation to ones work, demographic factors, educational level and social factors are not greatly influencing this hypothesis, as in part proposed by Riege, 2005. Variables must always be taking into consideration, but for now these variables will be excluded.

At WingTsun Scandinavia, the observations conducted greatly underpin the notion of personal motivational factors influencing the actions and willingness of actants to achieve organizational goals while acting in the organizational best interest. Organizational knowledge workers, the instructors who arguably serve as the foundation for the competitive capabilities of the organization, are hoarding knowledge in-between each other in what the author recognizes as a pursuit of personal gains and competitive advantage over the other knowledge workers / instructors.

As described in the introductory chapter of the thesis, instructors are not paid for their efforts at the WingTsun Academy, and therefore rely on two factors as rewards; private lessons sold to organizational members, and private lessons given to them from the chief instructors of the organization, further enhancing their professional capabilities. In summary the reward system consists of the chief instructors paying the regular instructors with knowledge and information regarding the martial arts system, which the instructors then use to sell to customers. The focal point of all intra-organizational payment is therefore the notion of knowledge as a commodity used to pay employees and gain monetary rewards in return.

Relating this observation to Riege's individual factors of knowledge-sharing, the notion of a *fear of loss of power* becomes relevant. Instructors are gaining monetary rewards from customers based on the amount of customers they have. The number of customers they have are subject to intra-organizational competition amongst the instructor team, since customers are a scarce resource currently. As a result, significant competition between the instructors exists leading to a situation where knowledge is not something to be shared in the collective good of the organization, but rather something to be hoarded in attempt to gain the most personal customers by being the most competitive i.e. knowledgeable instructor on the market *vis à vis* the best investment for customers seeking to purchase private lessons.

Relating this to the organizational factors identified by Riege, 2005, the notion of a *Lack of appropriate reward system* comes into account. As a result of the current rewards system being a matter of gaining knowledge and selling knowledge, the behavior described above can be argued to be inevitable if one assumes that organizational members wishes to gain more than just a broader understanding of the martial arts system through the private lessons they receive from the chief instructors in return for their efforts.

This notion then leads to the question of the motivational factors of the knowledge workers. Why is it not enough to be rewarded with extraordinary knowledge regarding the martial arts system in return for their efforts in teaching classes, when the common motivational factors of employees seems to be related to a personal engagement and passion for their hobby.

The author argues that one of the primary factors of this observation is directly related to the organizational climate and leadership of the organization. As Riege proposes, *Lack of Leadership* can be directly related to the degree to which knowledge-sharing exists in an organizational setting, and the author finds this study to support that claim. As described in the previous section, a general discontent with the top management division of the organization exists, in part as a result of rigid and hierarchically divided vertical communication, sharp powers structures and a lack of trust between organizational levels. As stated by daily manager Jesper Vinther:

"The top managers and the rest of us do not really communicate. We (the daily managers and employees) just get orders, disagree with them, and do them anyway"

The lack of leadership from a visible, trustworthy and generally competent leaders of the organization is argued to have created a situation where there is little to no governance with what is really occurring at the floor level specifically between knowledge workers, in conjunction with a lack of guidelines and general consensus regarding acting in the best interest of the organization and not the individual. As a result one might argue that the collective knowledge of the organization is actually less than the sum of the individual knowledge of organizational members. As stated by instructor Carsten Bak Meisner:

"Why should I share knowledge, there is absolutely no benefits for me in doing so"

The harsh reality of the above statement clearly indicates the troublesome situation at WingTsun Scandinavia in regards to the internal communicative capabilities of the organizational members. The primary reason for this behavior the author argues is the lack of incentive and motivation to share emphasized by the organizational structure and culture. Following the argument by de Vries, van der Hoof and Ridder, 2006 organizational members need to see the value of knowledge-sharing as either worthwhile in the attempt of achieving an individual goal, or substantiating a collective organizational goal.

5.1.2.2.2 - 1508 A/S

Applying the same theoretical perspectives on 1508 A/S reveals a few interesting observations in comparative to WingTsun Scandinavia. Following the three categories proposed by Riege, the author observes that the two factors identified as important for the degree of knowledge-sharing at WingTsun Scandinavia, *lack of leadership* and *Lack of appropriate reward system*, arguably also influences the success of knowledge-sharing at 1508 A/S. The main difference being that they work to support knowledge-sharing contrary to limiting it as witnessed at WingTsun Scandinavia. As deduced from the interview with junior UX designer Mark Jensen, the organizational leaders directly tries to encourage knowledge-sharing at 1508 A/S, and supports any individual attempt to optimize the informational infrastructure. As stated by Mark Jensen:

"Management knows how important information sharing is, and encourages and supports it, at least to an extent"

The notion of a management team that actively supports the enhancement of knowledge-sharing and recognizes it as an important part in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage, is believed by the author to have significant influences on the internal knowledge-sharing environment, based on the observations at WingTsun Scandinavia were the opposite situation is present. Addressing issues the author hypothesized as consequential to the lack of leadership at WingTsun Scandinavia e.g. increased internal competition, knowledge-

hoarding, and structural implications such as problematical social relations etc. the author finds them present to a much smaller degree at 1508 A/S, arguably in part as a result of a stronger and more present management and leadership division. The emergence of the above mentioned problems at WingTsun Scandinavia was previously argued to be directly related to the lack of presence and guidance from the organizational leaders. At 1508 A/S, the survey results and interview conducted both support the claim that the contrary is the case and furthermore the empirical findings support the notion that the presence of support from the organizational leaders is an important factor in state of their internal communicative and informational sharing capabilities.

In regards to critical success factor number 2, identified at WingTsun Scandinavia; a *Lack of appropriate reward system*, the author observes how this knowledge-sharing factor arguably influences knowledge-sharing in a predominantly positive way at 1508 A/S. As described with WingTsun Scandinavia, the lack of a reward system fostered internal competition to a very lack extent, as there was no default monetary compensation for the work committed by knowledge workers / instructors at the organization. At 1508 A/S, as a result of the very different and more economically driven nature of the organization, a standard salary system is in place, limiting the need for internal competition. Furthermore the organizational focus of being the best at what they do, seem to create a drive regarding the accomplishment of tasks which removes the notion of only conducting work as a result of a paycheck, but arguably also as a matter of personal satisfaction. As stated by Junior UX designer Mark Jensen:

"Though obviously people would not work if they were not paid for it, I do believe that people here generally feel passionate about their work, and take pride in it. It's not like people are paid top dollar to work here anyways, so I guess it is a combination of both"

The notion of a reward system in place to minimize internal competition, ensuring that work is being conducted in combination with creating an environment that encourages passion regarding ones work can be argued as a critical success factor to the arguably more fruitful situation at 1508 A/S contrary to that of WingTsun Scandinavia.

The third factor discussed in the last section deals with the notion of a *fear of loss of power*. In the situation of WingTsun Scandinavia, this notion was relevant as a result of the internal competition amongst knowledge workers and related to the notion of a *lack of appropriate reward system*. As an appropriate reward system is present at 1508 A/S, supported by the less rigid and hierarchically divided nature of the organization both with respect to the ranking system and vertical communication, power as a personal trait is less of relevance to the accomplishment of daily tasks and personal relations. The author argues that power is primarily a factor when it serves to maintain a position which in some way is beneficial to the power holder. In the case of WingTsun Scandinavia this is related to the acquisition of monetary rewards and ones status in the ranking system, which is an integrated part of the organization. At 1508 A/S, no such ranking system exists, and its monetary rewards are based on performance and job position, which are arguably two interdependent factors.

5.1.2.2.3 - DISCUSSION

The factors relevant to knowledge-sharing discussed in this section are important to both organizations respectively and serve equally important functions. The difference lies with how they influence the organizations and to what extent they can be considered destructive or constructive when addressing the accomplishment of organizational goals. It has been argued that there is a great difference in the actions conducted by organizational members at the two organizations, and the rationale behind these actions, so it seems only logical to address the motivation behind these actions as the next step of analysis, in attempt to understand the actions of the involved actants.

5.1.2.3 - SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000, proposed a model of knowledge-sharing concerned with the motivational factors influencing human behavior. The model describes two levels of motivation, *autonomous motivation* and *controlled motivation* (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000).

- *Autonomous motivation*: means engaging in an activity volitionally—for example, pursuing an activity out of interest and because it is enjoyable (*intrinsic motivation*), and pursuing it because it is personally meaningful and fits one's value system (*identified regulation*)

- *Controlled motivation*: means engaging in an activity out of pressure that can come from outside sources, such as promised rewards and threats of punishment (*external regulation*), or inside sources, such as when one's self-esteem is contingent upon successfully completing a task (*introjected regulation*). (Marylène Gagne, 2009)

Following the logic of Deci and Ryan, a categorization and identification of the two identified motivational factors and to which degree they are of relevance to the actions of organizational members will be investigated in the following section.

5.1.2.3.1 - WINGTSUN SCANDINAVIA

As previously described, organizational members at WingTsun Scandinavia are primarily driven by two interdependent factors in relevance to their functions at the organization; the acquisition of superior knowledge of the martial arts system, and financial gains through intra-organizational transactions of service. These motivational factors can conclusively be identified as a matter of *controlled motivation*, as they are argued to be subject to a fear of losing power and a resulting decrease in self-esteem, since knowledge equals power which equals position (rank), which potentially can result in a loss of income. Interestingly, an important aspect here is the notion of autonomous motivation and the organizational members' initial source of motivation, which the author identifies to potentially be different then what it has become in present day. The notion of what the author terms *Primal motivation*, the initial motivational factors subject to the decision of engaging in specific activities, is of interest as the empirical evidence suggests that the majority of the organizational members, originally started teaching at the WingTsun academy, strictly as a result of passion about the system. There was no concern regarding the acquisition of financial benefits as a result of their participation at the academy, and their actions were solely subject to *autonomous motivation*. The question then remains, what changed this behavior? As daily manager, Jesper Vinther states:

"A few years back we had a change of management. The academy was originally owned by two people, which due to a dispute chose to part ways. The problem was that the part that left, was

for many people the very spirit of the organization, the force that kept people motivated and passionate”

As recognized by the daily manager, a change in the organizational culture, mainly revolving around a loss of a great motivational character in the organization stimulated a change in the internal environment. Conclusively the author therefore argues that what was perceived as a major organizational change occurring at the academy, possibly fostered a slow growing change of atmosphere which resulted in part in the very different organizational culture witnessed today. What fostered this change, is conversely not of crucial relevance to this study, but rather the acknowledgement that a change in the organizational culture has occurred, and is perceived by some of the organizational members as a catalyst in the transition from one culture to another.

5.1.2.3.2 - 1508 A/S

Utilizing the concepts of autonomous and controlled motivation at 1508 A/S, the collected data supports the claim that the organizational members are driven primarily by controlled motivation. Though it has previously been argued that the organizational members enjoyed their work to a great extent, and found personal satisfaction in the accomplishment of tasks, one must also take into account that everyone at 1508 A/S are hired salary dependent employees, who do not have a second job, as witnessed with many of the organizational members at WingTsun Scandinavia. Therefore the presence of a reward system, their salary, is of great relevance when determining what the *primary motivational* factor for doing ones job is. Addressing the notion of knowledge-sharing at 1508 A/S the pattern seems to remain the same. Everyone is well aware that they are operating in a fast moving and very competitive environment, where performance and the ability to remain competitive are crucial if one wishes to avoid financial difficulties. As a result, the notion of controlled motivation, based on a predetermined and standardized reward system arguably works for the organization, as the empirical evidence supports the claim of a functioning internal knowledge-sharing culture (*Interview with junior UX designer, Mark Jensen*).

An interesting take on the notion of motivational factors and its impact on knowledge-sharing stems from a study by Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen and Van de Vliert (*Poortvliet, P. M.,*

Janssen, O., Van Yperen, N. W., & Van de Vliert, E. (2007). In their study they argue that people who are motivated by controlled motivation are subject to a decrease in knowledge-sharing, and more prone to knowledge-hoarding, then those working under autonomous motivational factors. This identification of the impact of motivational factors is in-line with what the author has described in this study in reference to WingTsun Scandinavia, but not at 1508 A/S. The reason for this inconsistency can be argued as a matter of a variety of factors. As the author does not have access to the details concerning the original study, the representativeness and validity of it cannot be determined. If the study is valid inconsistencies can be subject to that of inaccurate data by the author as a result of the limited amount of information available concerning 1508 A/S. A third option rests upon the notion of coincidence. As with all studies, there exists no 100% accurate rule of thumb, or generalizable theory which will never be met with anomalies contrasting the theory.

Disregarding the inconsistencies, the evidence does support the notion of controlled motivation and its connection with knowledge-hoarding as described by Poortvliet et al. to a very large extent at WingTsun Scandinavia, considering what has been discussed in the previous section.

5.1.2.3.3 - DISCUSSION

An interesting perspective on the motivation to share knowledge is discussed by Wolfe and Loraas, 2008 regarding a study on the incentives of individuals to share knowledge in organizations (*Wolfe, Loraas, 2008*). In their study they identified that monetary and nonmonetary means of compensation was not a key factor in determining the degree of knowledge-sharing present in a specific environment. Furthermore the study acknowledged that incentives to share knowledge were strengthened if the organizational goals were team-oriented and the individuals could clearly visualize the achievement of organizational goals and its relevance to knowledge-sharing. The study suggested that it is important to manage knowledge-sharing as an activity that must be catered to and developed as an important individual skill by organizational members. An interesting point of the study revealed that team members (organizational members) were sharing knowledge at a decreasing rate if they felt that their contribution to the “knowledge-database” of the organization was not being repaid by the contribution of the remaining organizational members. This notion indicated

that in organizations where individualism contrary to collectivism dominates the organizational culture; knowledge-hoarding rather than knowledge-sharing facilitating patterns emerge at a growing rate.

Following the logic of the study in question, the author's observations and empirical evidence at WingTsun Scandinavia and 1508 A/S supports the findings. The clearly dominating individualistic atmosphere in conjunction with the strong internal competitive elements governing the culture at WingTsun Scandinavia has resulted in the emergence of knowledge-hoarding patterns. The notion of a lack of incentive or motivation as discussed in the previous section as a catalyst for this phenomenon supports the claims of Wolfe and Loraas, while remaining vigilant to one important factor. Wolfe and Loraas's study was conducted using the participation of 165 MBA students with practical experience in the field of their professions. At WingTsun Scandinavia contrary to that of 1508 A/S, the organization is populated almost entirely by people with no academic education and who has been schooled in the field of practical business science. As discussed in previous section of the thesis, educational level is recognized to have impact on the degree of knowledge-sharing subject to an organization (*Yaghi, Barakat, Alfawaer, Shkokani, Nassuoram, 2011*). Following the argument of Yaghi et al. in the light of the findings from Wolfe and Loraas and applying it to the subject of this thesis, it is possible to argue that the notion of an enhancement of collectivistic knowledge-sharing patterns substantiated by a team-oriented approach to the achievement of organizational goals is not the best suited option in the decimation of knowledge-hoarding at WingTsun Scandinavia, although the theoretical perspectives and findings presented by Wolfe and Loraas, does seem to fit the scenario at WingTsun Scandinavia. The importance of this critical perspective is found when addressing the overall organizational goals concerning the decimation of knowledge-hoarding, and to do that, one must address the organizational benefits, if any, of knowledge-hoarding in the specific context of WingTsun Scandinavia.

In the previous sections the discussions have been relevant to the *implications* created by knowledge-hoarding in a specific organizational context, while addressed from theoretical perspectives predominantly relevant to the general picture regarding knowledge-hoarding vs. knowledge-sharing. In the following section, the notion of organizational benefits for WingTsun Scandinavia subject to the present phenomenon of knowledge-hoarding will be

discussed. The section will not discuss the relevance of this notion to 1508 A/S, as it is determined that knowledge-hoarding is not a great matter at the organization in comparison to that of WingTsun Scandinavia.

5.1.2.3.3 – CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Discussing the incentives and motivational factors governing the decisions to share or hoard knowledge through the use of self-determination theory leaves out an important perspective in regards to the social dynamics of the organizational members. *Trust* is argued by the author to be a very important element when trying to determine why organizational members chose to share or hoard knowledge, and the limited focus of this perspective within the theoretical framework of motivational factors in accordance to self-determination theory, creates possible implications for the understanding of social factors in respect to the motivation of actants. In this respect, the author argues that trust is an important element to consider when investigating why organizational actants chose to interact as described in the two cases, and should be considered when applying self-determination theory as an analytical tool.

5.1.2.4 - KNOWLEDGE-HOARDING VS. KNOWLEDGE-SHARING.

There are many reasons why people chose to not share information and knowledge. Some of them have been addressed in respect to the empirical data collected for this study, and applied to the two cases in question. The common denominator when addressing the lack of knowledge-sharing, or knowledge-hoarding as it is the key term of the thesis, is that it is almost exclusively considered a negative. Garfield, 2006 identified the ten alleged most common reasons why individuals don't share knowledge:

1. *They don't know why they should do it:*
2. *They don't know how to do it:*
3. *They don't know what they are supposed to do:*
4. *They think the recommended way will not work:*
5. *They think their way is better:*
6. *They think something else is more important:*
7. *There is no positive consequence to them for doing it:*

8. *They think they are doing it:*
9. *They are rewarded for not doing it:*
10. *They are punished for doing it:*

(Garfield, 2006)

The reasons identified by Garfield are in part consistent with the findings of this study. A strong tendency to hoarding-knowledge as a result of an attempted preservation or augmentation of power, no positive consequences or rewards for doing it, and a believed punishment in regards to personal benefits by sharing knowledge. In the case of WingTsun Scandinavia where knowledge-hoarding has become an integrate part of the daily routine, the preliminary research results indicates that when only considering personal gains, there is indeed a substantiated incentive for not sharing knowledge. This leaves one important question unanswered; is there any organizational benefits to be considered by the knowledge-hoarding actions of individuals and the knowledge-hoarding supporting culture that exists at WingTsun Scandinavia, or is it strictly a negative. To answer this question, the impact of knowledge-hoarding on the organizational level must be considered in relation to how the actions of individuals affect the achievement of organizational goals. Previously it has been discussed that the organization was suffering from financial loses and a loss of competitiveness which was in part believed to be a result of internal communicative limitations. The question then remains if there, considering the context, are any benefits of knowledge-hoarding that outweigh the negative consequences of a culture dominated by knowledge-hoarding? As a point of departure, the notion of internal competition in regards to the acquisition of private students will be addressed.

It has previously been argued that the notion of no sufficient reward system in term of monetary gains for the instructors of the organization fostered a situation where the acquisition of private students became vital for many of the instructors. This notion was further emphasized by the decrease of knowledge-sharing it induced as a result of an increase in competition amongst the instructors and the attempt for every instructor to remain as competitive as possible. Relating this to the overall organizational setting, an interesting

perspective can be drawn in light of the troublesome competitive advantages of the organization as a whole.

The notion of an increase in internal competition spurred an environment where every instructor wanted to be known as the most knowledgeable and respective of the organization. This further entailed a level of self-promotion, where every instructor wanted to have a certain niche or area of expertise that made them stand out from the crowd. As a result, the instructors started to promote themselves rather rapidly on the internet, on blogs, forums, social media, making videos showing what they could offer people. This created a situation where some of the instructors managed to create a “name” for them which has become widely known in the martial arts community. The result of this was that some of the instructors acquired a lot of private students, due to their “fame” while the rest of the instructors could try and also establish a name for them, or try to capture students from the more prominent instructors.

Relating this to the organizational level, it is clear that this degree of internal competition is arguably a problem for an organization that relies on the collective knowledge of the staff and their ability to promote it on their respective classes. The question then remains, would the organization have been able to acquire more members/customers if the organizational culture supported collectivism in contrast to individualism, or have the self-promotion of certain instructors and the students they have attracted, which still pay the regular membership fee to the organization, counteracted and surpassed the benefits of a collective effort? As stated by daily manager Jesper Vinther:

“There is no doubt that some of the more prominent instructors attract customers, both people who had stopped and came back, but also from other academies”

Another potential benefit from the emergent knowledge-hoarding culture at WingTsun Scandinavia is relevant to the notion of organizational image. As described in the previous section, the self-promotion of instructors fueled a large distribution of self-made videos which was made publicly available on websites such as youtube.com and facebook.com. In addition a number of the instructors have made personal websites offering their services for a fee. An

example of this could be <http://www.offertilkriger.dk/>, a site managed and owned by one of the most highly ranked instructors at the organization. The site offers personal and company lessons in both self-defense and conflict management. The impact of the phenomena described on the organization is relevant to the references present on websites, blogs, videos etc. Almost perennially present on the material are references to WingTsun Scandinavia and/or wingtsun.dk, which serve as advertisements for the organization.

Deductible from this observation is the acknowledgement that an increase in personal exaltation indirectly leads to an increase in organizational gains in reference to publicity, public availability and arguably an increase in revenue.

A third potential benefit rests with the intellectual recourses of the organization. As the organization and the martial arts system in question has experienced a high increase in competition over the last 10 years, as a result of emergent new martial art systems on the Danish market, the ability to stay innovative and continuously provide the customers with something new and exciting is crucial for the company' competitive capabilities. The relevance to knowledge-hoarding is again subject to the matter of self-promotion. As knowledge is being hoarded contrary to shared in the organization, and the majority of the knowledge workers/instructors chose to enhance their own capabilities in contrast to the overall knowledge base of the organization, a situation has emerged were everyone takes controversial measures in being the most knowledgeable instructor. As example of this would be the high frequency of international meetings and seminars attended by some of the instructors in places such as Hong Kong, Germany, Greece, Italy and Turkey, in attempt to acquire knowledge not available to others at the organization and their competitive external environment. As stated by senior instructor Kenneth Kyhe:

"Some people chose to take international trips to gain information not available here. Sometimes they come home with something interesting, sometimes they don't, but they often come home with something new"

The problems with this phenomenon lies with the matter of not sharing this knowledge once acquired with the remaining instructors, but rather use it to gain a competitive advantage.

Regardless the knowledge is still acquired and added to the knowledge database of the organization, though simply not distributed to all relevant parties. Following this logic, one might argue that the competitive capabilities of the organization are still enhanced from this behavior and as follows the intellectual resources of the company are increased. The notion that the recourses are not distributed to all relevant parties does not counteract the argument that the knowledge may not have been gathered in the first place, if an internal competitive environment was not present to the degree witnessed at WingTsun Scandinavia.

5.1.2.4.1 - DISCUSSION

Acknowledging that there are potential benefits to knowledge-hoarding is an important step in understanding the influence the phenomenon has on the context in which it exists. Though one can easily argue that knowledge-hoarding serves as the contrast point to knowledge-sharing, and provides obstacles for the optimal use of resources within an organizational setting, one must also consider the context which is studied and the specific mechanisms governing the context. In the previous section a number of potential benefits of knowledge-hoarding have been discussed and though they might seem theoretical at first, it is the author's belief that they may very well be correct, though it is not possible to substantiate at this time due to further research being needed.

That knowledge-hoarding can be fruitful for an organization raises an interesting question; when does knowledge-hoarding in a specific context outweigh the benefits of knowledge-sharing and which circumstances and environmental factors underpin this phenomenon?

In the case of WingTsun Scandinavia, the author hypothesizes that knowledge-hoarding became beneficial to the organization at the breaking point where people stopped considering what was best for the organization and started to primarily pursue their own interests. This resulted in a situation where the degree of internal competition became so important that it spurred an environment fostering a quest for fame by individuals, which arguably led to benefits for the organization as a unit.

5.1.2.5 - RECAPITULATION

In this section issues such as the organizational structure and its impact on the informational environment, the motivation and rationalization of actants in respect to knowledge-sharing and the direct and indirect benefits and negative implications of knowledge-hoarding has been investigated. The organizational structure, in light of the organizational culture section preceding the section, established a strong relationship between how the organization managed knowledge and the leadership and organizational climate governing it. The conclusion rested upon a belief that the structure of WingTsun Scandinavia was greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese / Taoistic format from which the martial arts system originated and the degree to which this structure was implemented into the organization. This notion further established that there existed contradictory ways of conducting communication in terms of vertical and horizontal chains of communication and the extent to which these influenced the communicative environment across organizational layers.

Difficulties were found in respect to vertical communication and the source was determined to primarily being a matter of how the leaders of the organization conducted and managed power across divisions in conjunction with the organizational culture. The notion of inconsistencies in regards to the organizational structure being deemed as a post-bureaucratic or rational bureaucratic organizational model depending on which parts of the organization one focused on also created implications for the distribution and sharing of knowledge as well as the degree to which knowledge was utilized in the best interest of the company. At 1508 A/S, the empirical evidence supported the claim the contrary to WingTsun Scandinavia the organizational structure was built upon theoretically founded theories of best practice and rationality in terms of using the internal knowledge recourses optimally and to gain competitive advantage. A common denominator for the organization was concluded to be the notion of an organization build around cross-divisional communication, optimization of resources, horizontal communication and rule-bound routines and practices. An emphasis on trusts was also established in addition to a degree of interdependency between organizational members in regards to the sharing of knowledge in order to fulfill their respective job functions. At 1508 A/S, management and the organizational leaders supported the sharing of knowledge between workers and took steps to enhance and insure that knowledge was distributed to those who needed it, and supported by the top management team.

In the following section, the notion of motivation and rationalization of organizational members was subject to analysis. In this section factors influencing the degree to which knowledge was shared was addressed in addition to which factors was the primary source of limitations and opportunities to share knowledge. It was concluded that the personal or individual factors influencing knowledge-sharing was the primary reason behind the lack of knowledge-sharing at WingTsun Scandinavia in conjunction with organizational factors including a troublesome leadership and a lack of an appropriate reward system. Following this notion, the author argued that an incentive to share knowledge was not incorporated into the organizational structure and as such the organizational members did not feel any direct individual benefits by sharing knowledge. At 1508 A/S, the author once again established that the direct opposite of what had been witnessed at WingTsun Scandinavia was the case. 1508 A/S supported motivation by providing an appropriate reward system enhancing the incentive to share knowledge in terms of personal satisfaction and monetary rewards. Furthermore there existed no empirically evidence supporting the notion that a fear of loss of power existed as the organization fully supported knowledge-sharing across divisions and between organization members, in addition to no real benefits existing from hoarding knowledge as they did at WingTsun Scandinavia.

The following section shed light on Self-Determination-Theory which aimed to establish the motivation of organizational members and focused on which factors was the primary source of motivation to share knowledge. In this section the notion of monetary vs. nonmonetary rewards as incentives to share knowledge was addressed, and it was argued that the incentive to share knowledge was enhanced if the organizational members could see the direct benefits of sharing knowledge and if they felt that knowledge-sharing was an activity evenly conducted across the organization i.e. people did not want to give, if they did not receive.

The final part of the section evolved around the notion of benefits from an organization where knowledge-hoarding existed to a large extent. A number of potential benefits was found when addressing WingTsun Scandinavia, and was argue to be an important factor when discussing the overall contribution to the competitive capabilities of the organization by the organizational members. The author noted that the presence of strong internal competition possibly provided benefits for the organization that would not be possible to achieve if

knowledge-hoarding did not influence the organizational infrastructure to the degree visible at WingTsun Scandinavia.

6.0 - CHAPTER 6

6.1 - CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the concept of knowledge-hoarding as a conceptual entity, approached from a tangible perspective through the case study method. The aim of the study was to answer two interdependent research question, created in an attempt to further understanding regarding the topic at hand and contribute to the overall field of research concerned with knowledge-management. The research questions:

- *How does knowledge-hoarding affect the internal informational environment within an organizational context?*

with the additional sup research questions:

- *What is the relationship between knowledge-hoarding and knowledge-sharing in regards to the organizational culture?*
- *Can knowledge-hoarding be of value to an organization?*

provided the foundation to approach the concept of knowledge-hoarding in a small scale environment by conducting a comparative analysis between two organizations, each contributing to a holistic understanding of the conceptual focal points within the contextual boundaries of the study.

Based on the empirical evidence collected and within the theoretical limitations provided for the analysis, a number of conclusions can be drawn subject to the context in which it must be comprehended. The first area of analysis concerned the organizational culture and the influence it had on the level of information and knowledge-sharing within the organizations. In this section the author was able to conclude that not only did the organizational culture

have a strong influence on the degree to which knowledge and information was handled, it also provided the foundation for how the internal climate directed business processes on a more general level, and the extent to which social relations affected information sharing both on a professional and personal level. In this section it became evident that the organizational culture provided one of the main foundational pillars and as a result the following analytical sections would be conducted in respect to the findings in this section. The findings in regards to the organizational culture showed a clear relationship between the foundation on which the organizations was build e.g. at the traditional Chinese culture at WingTsun Scandinavia and the degree to which knowledge was handled and perceived. At both 1508 A/S and WingTsun Scandinavia, the organizational culture worked as either a facilitator or an obstacle for the utilization of knowledge. At 1508 A/S culture served as a means of facilitating knowledge-sharing and insuring that knowledge was treated as an important resource, which must be nurtured, in order to remain competitive. At WingTsun Scandinavia the organizational culture created great limitations to the exploitation of knowledge while contributing to the development of an environment so infested with internal competition that knowledge-sharing to a certain extent had been replaced with knowledge-hoarding as the common denominator for knowledge-management. In light of these findings the conclusion rested upon a belief that the organizational culture was an aspect of utter importance when trying to determine the degree to which knowledge-management was conducted in a beneficial or detrimental manner within a specific context.

Trying to establish how knowledge-hoarding affects the internal informational environment within an organizational context inevitably leaves one with a need to investigate the influence of the internal environment on knowledge-management. In this respect the organizational culture was found to be a strong factor in conjunction with the organizational structure. The structure of the organization created operational boundaries facilitating certain communicative procedures while limiting others. At WingTsun Scandinavia it was clear that the organizational structure embodied in an arguably strongly bureaucratic organization which predominantly was subject to rigid vertical communication and information channels had suffered from a problematic knowledge-sharing environment as a result of the organizational culture and structure. At 1508 A/S, the organizational culture, predominantly deemed as post-bureaucratic focusing on open-office structural boundaries, horizontal

communication and interdependency between units, created an environment where communication and knowledge could flow and be shared freely without unsupported variables influencing the very nature of knowledge-sharing at the organization.

The notion of motivational factors influencing the degree of knowledge-sharing at the organizations subject to analysis was similarly found to be subject to the organizational boundaries including the structure and culture respectively. The data supported the claim that an important element and motivational factor in enhancing knowledge-sharing is the creation of shared goals and visions for the organization and its members, in addition to a reward system which supports the effort to contribute to the competitive capabilities of the organization. It was found that members additionally did not want to contribute to the same extent to the overall knowledge base of an organization if they felt their fellow peers did not contribute evenly. At WingTsun Scandinavia this notion came into effect as a loop effect where knowledge-hoarding supported more knowledge-hoarding. If a member of the organization felt other members would not share their knowledge, he would cease to share knowledge as well, creating a situation where other members would do the same, hence supporting the notion of knowledge-hoarding as a continuously reinforced element of the informational structure.

An interesting element found in the analysis was the notion of organizational and individual benefits of knowledge-hoarding. Where one might argue that short term individual benefits are easily deductible from hoarding knowledge both in terms of power, social and monetary rewards as discussed in previous chapters, organizational benefits, from what has been argued to be a very unhealthy informational environment, can also exist. The excessive self-promotion of personal competencies for the instructors at WingTsun Scandinavia due to the strong degree of internal competition created a variety of elements which arguably indirectly affected the organization in a positive way, potentially outweighing the negative consequences of knowledge-hoarding as a generalized conceptual entity governing the organizational climate. This notion does nevertheless require further analysis before one can deem the overall effects of knowledge-hoarding at WingTsun Scandinavia as a positive or negative phenomenon, but the notion of certain organizational benefits are undisputable if

one does not take into account the organizational implications created by an environment with a very competitive and troublesome informational nature.

6.2 - FURTHER RESEARCH

In light of the issues discussed and findings of this study the author believes that further research is needed in order to fully understand some of the phenomenon's witnessed. As the author did not set out to conduct a representative and generalizable analysis aimed to create intellectual laws for best practice or the ramification of knowledge-hoarding within an organizational environment, further research is not concerned with aspects relevant to these notions. Instead the author suggests further research to be concerned with the benefits of knowledge-hoarding in respect to the negative consequences it implies. Investigating the phenomena witnessed as WingTsun Scandinavia to greater detail might reveal certain characteristics subject to generalisability concerning knowledge-hoarding related organizational benefits, which can be used when trying to determine if one should take measures to dissolve knowledge-hoarding or not. Though the author hypothesizes that it would not be beneficial to an environment such as with WingTsun Scandinavia to continue its course due to variables affecting both the social and external competitive environment, the beneficial elements of strong internal competition and the relationship to knowledge-hoarding is interesting and should be addressed in a future research study. In addition the notion of trust between organizational members is an important part of the incentives and motivational factors governing knowledge-sharing within the organizational context. The impact of trust was briefly covered in the preceding section, but would be an obvious subject for investigation when trying to determine, not why trust issues was present at WingTsun Scandinavia, or how it affected the organization, since that had been addressed in the previous section but rather if a lack of trust was an issue on every level of the organization, personally and professionally between actants, or only in certain contexts, and if so, why this was the case.

6.3 - REFERENCES

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6.4 - APPENDIXES

6.4.1 - APPENDIX #1

Schein – Organizational Culture and Leadership. *Three Levels of Culture.*

Exhibit 2.1. The Three Levels of Culture.

1. Artifacts

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

2. Espoused Beliefs and Values

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

3. Basic Underlying Assumptions

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

6.4.2 - APPENDIX #2



6.4.3 - APPENDIX #3

4. Finder du dig primært motiveret af økonomiske årsager eller pga. et personligt engagement til dit arbejde? Opret diagram Download			
		Svarprocent	Svarantal
Økonomiske årsager er den primære faktor		22,2%	4
Et personligt engagement i mit arbejde		44,4%	8
En kombination af begge		33,3%	6
spørgsmål, der blev besvaret			18
spørgsmål, der blev sprunget over			0

5. Hvordan vil du beskrive din organisations vidensdelings niveau? Opret diagram Download			
		Svarprocent	Svarantal
Meget godt		23,5%	4
Udmærket		23,5%	4
Tilfredsstillende, men jeg kunne godt savne lidt mere.		29,4%	5
Ikke særligt godt		23,5%	4
spørgsmål, der blev besvaret			17
spørgsmål, der blev sprunget over			1

6. Synes du der bliver gjort nok for at fremme vidensdeling internt fra ledelsens side? Opret diagram Download			
		Svarprocent	Svarantal
I høj grad		11,1%	2
Tilpas		50,0%	9
Ved ikke		16,7%	3
Nej		22,2%	4
spørgsmål, der blev besvaret			18
spørgsmål, der blev sprunget over			0

7. Føler du dig aktivt involveret i at skabe en god arbejds kultur? Opret diagram Download			
		Svarprocent	Svarantal
I høj grad		44,4%	8
Tilpas		38,9%	7
Kunne gøre mere		11,1%	2
Nej		5,6%	1
spørgsmål, der blev besvaret			18

6.4.4 - APPENDIX #4



6.4.5 - APPENDIX #5

Interviews (included CD-interviews)