



Psychological Safety for Organizational Culture Change

An exploratory study in a Swedish multinational
chemical engineering company

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Abstract

Implementing cultural change is a huge project for any company. Not only is it time consuming, there are also many factors that determine the success of a cultural change. This study aims to explore a number of these success factors from a social perspective of sustainability, in particular the employees' perspective. The employee's psychological perspective is more difficult to expose compared to the economic and environmental perspectives, because it has a qualitative nature and cannot be easily captured in quantitative models. However, this does not make the employees' psychological perspective less important. Recent studies show that psychological safety supports the individual learning process and creates an openness and motivation for change. Results of this study show that a stronger sense of psychological safety can be created by a positive atmosphere among colleagues, a high level of trust, supportive leader behaviors, and systems that facilitate efficient information and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the study contributes to the field of organizational theory by investigating the role, effect and perception of psychological safety within one multinational company.

Keywords: psychological safety, sustainability, employee wellbeing, cultural change, organizational culture, trust, leader behavior

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Today's organizations face constantly changing and uncertain settings which require them to accomplish work in a collaborative way by sharing information and ideas, and integrating different perspectives. This situation nowadays acts as a force for companies to adapt more efficiently than before. Additionally, the complexity of today's organizational goals demand that people work together across disciplinary boundaries. In order to achieve these, teams need individuals to work together interdependently, which is not always an easy task. It is therefore important to understand the factors that enable team learning and change processes, and that support people to contribute to collaborative tasks and projects.

Research has already shown that successful teamwork and learning in organizations is highly dependent on the interpersonal climate and level of trust in work teams (e.g. Edmondson 1999; 2002; Edmondson et al., 2004). As a result, companies in recent years have started to put more effort into creating conditions for successful teamwork and team learning (e.g. Andersson et al., 2020; Page et al., 2019). Leaders are also encouraged to cultivate their leadership skills to contribute to greater creativity and innovation both for themselves and other employees, which enhances internal social sustainability and promotes more participation and empowerment from leaders in the company (e.g. Fasth & Sjöberg, 2019; Edmondson & Modelof, 2006). However, contribution from teams comes from individual's effort, therefore, supporting the well-being of individuals becomes vital as well.

Psychological safety is a well researched topic in organizations theory (e.g. Kahn, 1990; Edmondson, 1999; Carmeli et al., 2009) and describes how people perceive consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context, such as a workplace (Edmondson, 1999). This makes it an important factor in understanding how people in organizations collaborate to achieve a shared outcome (Edmondson et al., 2004).

An organization that creates conditions for psychological safety in teams enables a higher state of the employee's well-being and interpersonal trust within teams (Edmondson et al., 2004). This, in turn implies better team learning (Carmeli et al., 2009) at work and greater organizational outcome (Collins & Smith, 2006). However, the emphasis on the individual well-being and creation of conditions for successful team learning is not yet broadly put into practice in today's organizations.

1.2. Purpose and research questions

The main purpose of this research project is to explore the topic of how psychological safety in work teams can stimulate cultural change in the whole organization. In order to explore the topic in theory and practice, the thesis highlights relevant theories in academia and conducts interviews with employees within Perstorp. This Swedish multinational company aims at supporting its members' well-being and learning to follow its cultural change journey. The thesis aims to explore the role of psychological safety for culture change processes in multinational organizations. Therefore, the research question is:

What are the enabling and hindering factors for strengthening psychological safety in organizations?

The following sub questions will help narrow down the scope and act as supporting questions to answer the main research question.

1. How does trust play a role from employees' perspective?
2. How does leader behavior influence psychological safety?
3. How can organizations strengthen psychological safety in a feasible construct?

This study hopes to contribute to more understanding in how psychological safety can support organizations through culture change. Organizations can therefore acknowledge psychological safety's vital role for higher efficiency to change and be more aware of its significance. Finally, bring it to practice and impulse successful change.

1.3. Layout of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis has offered an overview of the thesis, which helps readers to understand what the thesis is focussing on, its purpose and the questions to be answered. The second chapter will give the theoretical background to support the thesis' line of thoughts, which involves organizational culture, psychological safety at a team level, and organizational cultural change for sustainability, which later on will be mentioned in different chapters. The third chapter will discuss the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Limitations, validity and reliability of the methodology will also be explained to outline the potential weakness of the study. The fourth chapter of the study will present the company that was chosen as a case study. The company's background story and the focus of the study on them is explained in this chapter. The fifth chapter will analyze the findings from the data collected from interviews and be divided into different subchapters for a clearer overview. The sixth chapter discusses the main results and implications from the analysis and answers the research question from the first chapter. Finally, the last chapter will come to a conclusion of the study and provide suggestions for theory and practice.

2. Theoretical background

This section will provide literature and articles in the field of organizational culture, psychological safety on a team and organizational level, and change leadership which are hypothesized to be relevant to each other in the process of culture change in organizations. The first two chapters give an overview of organizational culture and psychological safety to explore the connection between employees' feelings about psychological safety in their workplace and a company's organizational culture. The introduction of Edmondson's framework shows in a more tangible way different organizational conditions that enable psychological safety in an organizational context. Finally, the third chapter explains the process of organizational culture change and sets it into relation to psychological safety and sustainability.

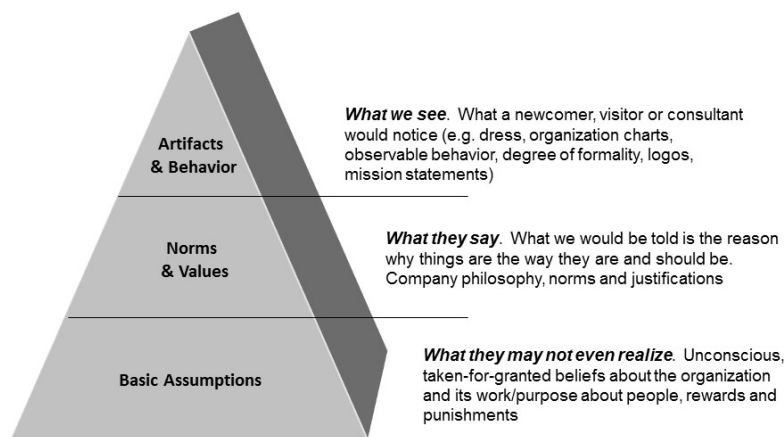
2.1. Organizational culture

Before we talk about what organizational culture means, it is vital to understand how “culture” as a term is defined to better understand what organizational culture really characterizes. Culture is a core concept in anthropological disciplines (Macionis et al., 2011). It describes how people behave based upon the rules and belief they follow after the value they believe in, the language they speak, the knowledge set shared from a common history background, as well as the moral system believed to be accurate (Triandis, 1995; Markus et al., 1996). In short, culture has a vital impact on the way people choose to behave and interact with others. Since it is a fairly intangible concept, it is often left open to debate what elements there are to shape a certain culture, yet regardless of the differences between culture sets, people will choose to be in a certain way because their culture influences their behavior (Cronk, 2016).

Combining culture with an organizational context, organizational culture means how the culture of an organization shapes its employees to behave and believe in. It also indicates the shared assumptions underlying how employees perceive, think about, and feel about things (Schein, 2010). From an economic perspective, it is shown that companies dynamically leading their culture have increased their stock price, income and revenue (Cui & Hu, 2012). Moreover, they conduct better culture and innovation strategies than those who do not prioritize culture as necessary in companies (Grant & Shamonda, 2013). From a psychological and sustainability perspective, a well-established organizational culture helps systematically spread the values and expectations efficiently through the whole company. When a company's culture can be utilized and followed as a guideline, it will be easier to align company's decisions and practices. In addition, it will also be easier for them to find talents that suit them best to avoid bringing in people possessing an extremely different mindset, which might result in miscommunication and differences in individual targets and purposes (Yu, 2018).

The composition of a company's culture is, according to Schein (1985), divided into three levels, starting from visible on the surface to least visible at the deepest level (see figure 1).

- **Artifacts & behaviors:** visible and tangible results, such as uniforms, logos, certain activities the company does as a tradition, etc. They can also be understood as elements allowing people to quickly recognize and notice the company. This enables the company to be differentiated from other companies, but it only stays at a level that helps manifest the existence of a culture. (Schein, 1985).
- **Norms & values:** are clear messages from the company in form of values, social principles and goals about how they expect their employees to behave based on their standards, and what kind of philosophy and spirit the company aspires to hold. These contribute to a more formal guideline, which provides employees to correctly behave and follow (Schein, 1985).
- **Basic assumptions:** are basic beliefs about reality and human nature that show in unconscious behaviors and thoughts showing up at work (Schein, 1985).



Source: Modified from Edgar Schein, "Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture"

Figure 1: Patrick Trottier's modification of Edgar Schein's "Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture" from A Living Culture (2017).

2.2. Psychological safety as an enhancement of organizational culture

According to Schein (1985), a company's organizational culture represents an important resource that lets companies adapt to changing environments (Constanza et al., 2016). Research has shown that an organizational climate with high degrees of psychological safety is likely to enable individuals to question and revise existing practices, voice new ideas, and develop new products, services, and 'ways of doing things' (Andersson et al., 2020). Therefore, an enhancement of work culture requires organizational commitment to increase employee well-being.

The construct of *psychological safety* goes back to early research on organizational culture and change by Schein and Bennis (1965) with the aim to support people to deal with significant changes. By referring to the phenomena of *learning anxiety* in organizations, they argue that psychological safety helps people overcome defensiveness and learning anxiety, which appears when people are presented with information that disconfirm their expectations or hopes. Amy Edmondson builds on this premise by elaborating why fear is not an effective motivator for learning and growth. She explains that individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment need to be taken seriously in order to enable higher levels of employee or customer safety (Edmondson et al., 2004). A high level of psychological safety affects individuals' willingness to "employ or express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p.694), which at the same time supports a healthy interpersonal and organizational climate (Edmondson et al., 2004). People are more likely to believe they will be given the 'benefit of the doubt' when relationships within a given group are characterized by trust and respect (Kahn, 1990).

Researchers have studied psychological safety in various contexts, such as relationship outcomes for organizational learning (e.g. Carmeli et al., 2009; Cataldo et al., 2009), and as a feature of organizational culture (Schein, 2010). Influences on psychological safety vary across organizations, which results in different interpersonal climates of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). Edmondson and Mogelof (2006) explain driving forces that can increase the general climate of psychological safety within an organization. The behavior of higher-level managers affect employees' beliefs in the acceptability of open discussion regarding threatening issues. This can eventually influence views on psychological safety in the organization as a whole. When employees perceive higher-level managers in particular as supportive of innovation and believe that collaboration among peers is supported by the organization, they are more likely to perceive their working environment as having greater psychological safety (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006). When cross-functional relationships are encouraged and enabled by organizational norms and structures, organizational structure can reduce barriers between individuals and groups as well. Stronger interpersonal ties can

prevent organizational silos and increase the sharing of information which leads to stronger sense of psychological safety (Edmondson & Mogelof, 2006).

Even within companies with a strong organizational culture, the degree of psychological safety can differ greatly across work groups (Edmondson, 1999). Within a group it tends to be highly similar among people who work very closely together, and who share similar contextual influences and experiences (Edmondson, 1999). On the group level of analysis psychological safety is mostly considered a team characteristic shaped by team leader behavior in particular (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson et al., 2004). Edmondson coined the term *team psychological safety*, which describes a team climate that is “[...] characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves” (Edmondson, 1999, p.354), and in which risk-taking is safe. On the one hand, a good team climate and a high level of team trust can have a positive impact on team learning. In addition, positive changes within the team can eventually reach into the whole organization (Edmondson, 1999).

2.2.1. Organizational and team psychological safety

For the purpose of this study it was decided to use Baer and Frese’s extension of the construct of team psychological safety to an *organizational climate for psychological safety*. Their extension describes a climate where formal and informal organizational practices and procedures are guiding and supporting open and trustful interactions within the work environment (Baer & Frese, 2003). This relates psychological safety not only to group performance, as shown by Edmondson (1999), but also to a company's performance. Potential mechanisms by which organizational climate for psychological safety enables a higher degree of performance are: e.g. reduced risk in presenting new ideas in a safe climate (Edmondson, 1999), better team learning (Edmondson, 1999) and company-wide collaboration in solving problems (Baer & Frese, 2003).

2.2.2. Organizational conditions for team psychological safety

In order to describe concrete organizational conditions that enable psychological safety in a company's work culture, Edmondson et al. (2004) provided a framework that focuses on five organizational conditions (antecedents) and five team learning behavior (consequences) of team psychological safety (see figure 2).

In the following subchapters we will explain the elements supporting psychological safety in detail based on the work of Edmondson et al. (2004) (see figure 2). To limit the scope of this thesis we chose to limit our focus to the three organizational conditions of *trust and respect*, *team leader behavior*, and *supportive organizational context*.

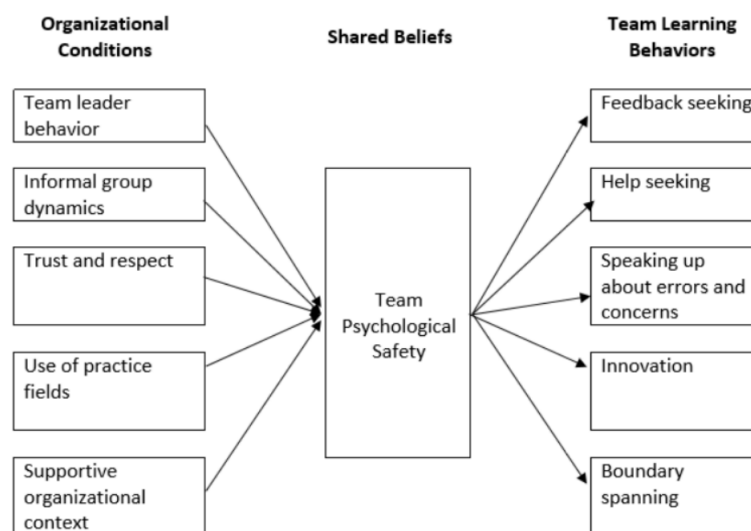


Figure 2: Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Team Psychological Safety from Edmondson et al. (2004)

2.2.2.1. Trust and respect

Trust is an essential element of psychological safety. It describes on an individual level whether or not a trusting relationship is genuinely developed between individuals, and if a person allows others to have the benefit of doubt, which is complementary to building a higher level of psychological safety (Edmondson, 2002). This shows as a higher willingness to communicate and share knowledge, more cooperative behaviors and expressing of opinions, etc. (Akgün et al., 2014; Erdem et al., 2003). It has also been shown that when employees are able to grow trust between colleagues individually, this has positive effects on psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). Tjosvold et al. (2004) investigated the climate of trust or interpersonal trust at the group level and found a similar pattern. Although this study did not use the term psychological safety, the psychological mechanisms underlying the effects of climate of trust on team learning are likely similar to those proposed for psychological safety (Tjosvold et al., 2004). It is therefore critical to understand how trust functions and how it brings an advantageous impact to individuals and teams.

Nevertheless, trust sounds fairly intangible because of its invisibility, and it is hard to quantitatively measure levels of trust. Zak (2017) distinguishes eight different categories of trust, which are taken as the basis for our study's questionnaire:

Recognize excellence	Making employees feel recognized from their work and have them be willing to work the best they can.
Induce challenge stress	Provide assignments that make employees feel positively challenged, therefore enabling employees to face the challenge with happy stress
Give people discretion in how they do their work	Ensuring employees have enough autonomy to work and be trusted on their ability.
Enable job crafting	Ensuring employees are given assignments they are interested in and care a lot about.
Share information broadly	Ensuring the organization keeps its information transparent and create an open atmosphere
Intentionally build relationships	Ensuring the workplace provides space and opportunities to make friends and manage social connections.
Facilitate whole-person growth	Ensuring the organization allows their employees to see themselves develop with the organization personally and professionally.
Show vulnerability	Ensuring the workspace does not discourage people to learn from mistakes and be vulnerable.

Figure 3: modified from Paul J. Zak, “The Neuroscience of Trust” (2017).

In modern organizations working in groups has become the norm, as few goals can be achieved by just one person. Yet in the long run, it is ineffective to simply merge a group of people together and expect cooperative teamwork to arise without considering how the team’s dynamic would have an impact on the result. Therefore, it is suggested that a more concrete strategy for nurturing trust efficiently could help corporations enhance psychological safety more productively, for example a division of assignments to activate trust in teamwork to the fullest (Jones & George, 1998). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the precondition of having trust as a helpful tool could be limited to ongoing teamwork or long-term cooperation, due to the fact that the aim of short-term teamwork might have conflicting goals and contexts, such as being extremely result oriented, only allowing numbers to represent performance, etc. (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). Although trust has different levels of influence in various conditions, it is still firmly believed that promoting a safer environment to work in is advantageous to the organization in several ways, such as lower turnover rate, higher level of satisfaction, less burnout, etc. (Zak, 2017). Therefore, managing trust to eventually contribute to psychological safety should not be neglected.

2.2.2.2. Team leader behavior

This section explains that a leader's behaviors can make a difference in the relationship with members, which leadership style would be the most efficient way to create psychological safety, and gives an example of how a transformative leader might frame psychological safety within teamwork.

Edmondson's theory describes how leaders are capable of creating a psychologically safe environment for employees. The claim is that they usually possess more skill sets and experience, which would make normal employees look up to and consider their position as their goal or next milestone. Therefore, the multi-functionality of a leader could describe functions such as guidance at work, indicated expectation of the performance or a mentor, etc (Edmondson et al., 2004). Moreover, when leaders create a safe environment, employees are more willing to speak up, collaborate and experiment with new strategies (Barnett, 2019). This is a significant process in every leader-subordinate relationship.

It has been noted in multiple studies that the Transformational Leadership style is the one with a significant positive influence on team learning behavior and team performance (e.g. Kumako & Asumeng, 2012; Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Detert & Burris, 2007). This style describes the type of leader that is more willing to work together with their subordinates to identify and create necessary changes. In Kumako and Asumeng's study in 2012, which focused on the learning behaviors of work teams in Ghana, they found out that transformational leadership is a critical moderator when facilitating the relationship between psychological safety and team learning behavior (see figure 4). Schaubroeck et al. (2011) confirms the influence of a transformational leadership style. Their study with employees from financial services companies with a transformational leadership style showed a significant effect on trust, also leading to more team performance.

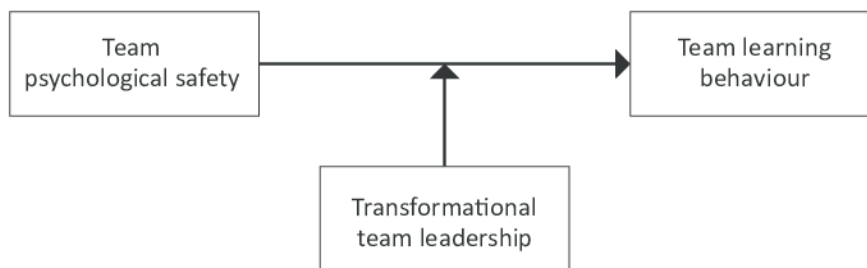


Figure 4: A hypothesised relationship with support from transformational team leadership from Kumako and Asumeng (2012).

On the organizational level, leadership has a direct influence on an organization's culture (Page et al., 2019), which means that it takes an important role in keeping the culture of an organization intact and to create a sense of purpose, vision and trust (Schein, 2010). Therefore, building and changing organizational culture requires leaders that establish values and norms that are reflected by a company's culture, and represent a driving indicator of organizational culture and its ability to change (Hurst & Hurst, 2016). Transformational leaders can support culture change processes by exemplifying respect and trust, and cooperative behavior to manage conflicts that can arise with culture change (Page et al., 2019). Another important element of psychological safety is the quality of feedback on an employee's performance. When a leader is willing to provide knowledge and skills, this may help increase effort, motivation or engagement to reduce discrepancies, which can meanwhile increase understanding between each other. It is important to note the point of the feedback discussed here is not about an exchange of ideas or a matter of giving a concrete answer, rather, it is an action to empower the others to comprehend, engage, and create more understanding to process information, with an ultimate intention - to create ongoing learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). If leaders fail to give constructive feedback, employees will have a more difficult time learning from mistakes. This may then lead to a culture where people are afraid to make mistakes, which hampers learning.

Schein (2010) suggests the following eight activities to create psychological safety for leaders to support organizational member's transformational learning:

- A compelling positive vision
- Formal training
- Involvement of the learner
- Informal training of relevant groups, and teams
- Practice fields, coaches, and feedback
- Positive role models
- Support groups in which learning problems can be discussed
- Systems and structures that are consistent with the new way of thinking and working (Schein, 2010)

By implementing these activities, leaders can help to reduce learning anxiety and increase the learner's sense of psychological safety. This can make team members feel that a new way of being is possible, and that the learning process itself will not be too anxiety provoking.

2.2.2.3. Organizational context support

In some cases individuals can be ready for change, but the organization might not be ready to adapt its work culture. An organizational commitment for culture change can be first enabled by the executive leadership team, but needs people, systems and practices to be engaged in the transformation process as well (Page et al., 2019).

A work team is usually provided with organizational resources and support. This is closely tied to a leader's style and decisions. A leader can be proactive and even exercise influence to have sufficient authority and resources for its team, or just accept existing organizational conventions and arrangements. Oftentimes, structural and contextual factors lie beyond the team leaders' direct control. If these factors can be influenced by team leaders and if the organization is flexible to provide the required resources and information, the individual teams are more likely to perform effectively (Wageman, 2001). To conclude, it can be said that enough context support for a team is likely to foster team psychological safety, because access to resources and information can reduce insecurity and defensiveness in a team (Edmondson et al., 2004). Siemsen et al. (2009) show exemplarily the effects of psychological safety on knowledge sharing among coworkers in manufacturing service operations. The researchers argue that the level of confidence individuals have in the knowledge to be shared would moderate this relationship.

2.3. Organizational culture change for sustainability

Different examples of modern organizations show that in order to survive in and adapt to a changing environment, changes are unavoidable, regardless of whether an organization is willing to (Martin, 2013). In order to be able to transform successfully, organizations should not hold on to outdated values. At the same time, it is natural to resist changes, as they represent uncertainty. Employees might be worried to lose their jobs or leave their comfort zone; at a deeper level, it might result in a loss of power (Kanter, 2012).

Researchers in the field of work and organizational psychology found out that the three crucial elements to facilitate change consist of strategy, structure and culture (Karanika-Murray & Oeij, 2017). These three elements have a close relationship to one another. As soon as one is changed, the other has to adapt accordingly. We can therefore tell that flexibility in the dynamics of change is vitally important. The willingness to learn new information, the capability to adapt to it, and the agility with which this is put into practice become the critical essentials to the change process (Morcos, 2018). In addition, an adaptive change process is also helpful to energize and engage employees, as it shows the capability and flexibility to refine and improve its strategy (Katzenbach et al., 2012). Particularly the element of culture can be seen as a main resource for companies to adapt to their changing

environments (Constanza et al., 2016). Relating to this, Schein (2010) explains the previously mentioned resistance to change as learning anxiety. The higher the learning anxiety, the stronger the resistance and defensiveness. According to Schein, any culture change involves unlearning as well as relearning. It therefore is, by definition, transformative. Schein's (2010) conceptual model for culture change acknowledges the difficulty of starting any transformative change because of the anxiety associated with new learning. A way to reduce learning anxiety and overcome resistance to change is to make the learner feel psychologically safe in order to see a possibility of solving the problem and learning something new without losing identity or integrity. The created motivation and openness for change can serve as a base for the next stages of the change process which include new learning in the form of defining or redefining concepts and standards, and later integrating and incorporating these in the organization.

When an organization sets out to transform itself in favor of sustainable development, creating psychological safety can bring real and significant changes. Senge et al. (2006) reminds that "sustainable development can't be achieved without innovation, and innovation is best achieved in a culture that embraces and fosters learning and change" (p. 535). A successful implementation of sustainability depends, therefore, on a clear intention to identify factors that enable or block learning, and to pursue change processes. Additionally, a well-established organizational culture can help manifest values and practices that are oriented on sustainability efficiently throughout the company (Cramer, 2005). Researchers suggested that tools and change strategies often aren't enough, and that failure of change often occurs because the fundamental culture of the organization remains the same (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), from which we can tell that organizational culture is crucial for implementing organizational change for sustainability.

3. Methodology

This chapter explains the method this study utilizes from conducting interviews to analyzing data. It will guide through why the research is designed the way it is, and how it is helpful to the study. Later, it will explain how data is collected, analyzed, and how this study is designed to ensure its reliability and validity. Finally, since every study has its strength and weakness, limitations of the study are listed out to clarify how the chosen method might affect the study.

3.1. Research design

In accordance with the purpose of this research paper and the research questions, a qualitative method was selected. A qualitative research methodology helps to achieve a deeper understanding of underlying processes and meanings of observed phenomena (Silverman, 2011). While quantitative research emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data, qualitative research focuses on words rather than quantifying data (Bryman, 2012). Since we cannot know the outcome of this study ahead of time, the research is based on an inductive approach. This approach is frequently used for qualitative research and focuses on the relationship between theory and research which aims at generating theories and less on generalizing its findings (6 & Bellamy, 2012). In order to follow the inductive approach of this study, a case study design was chosen to explore a specific case, which in this study is the experiences of employees and leaders' regarding the company culture at Perstorp, a Swedish multinational company from the chemical industry.

According to Bryman (2012), exploratory research enables drawing connections between different levels of analysis and aims at finding new insights (Bryman, 2012). For example, how individuals perceive trust and leadership in teams, and how this is in turn influenced by the organizational culture and strategy. Therefore, to answer our research question our study follows an exploratory approach, analyzing what is the company's understanding of the research problem (individual well-being and the creation of conditions for successful team learning) while trying to bring out new insights for the organisation's culture change strategy. The advantage of exploratory research is that it is flexible and adaptable to change which means that the direction of the study can change as a result of new insights emerging from data (Saunders, 2011). This approach has been proven to be useful to understand a problem and was therefore applied in this project by interviewing 'experts' in the subject which are in this case employees from different levels of the company.

3.2. Data collection

This study focuses on employees and leaders' experiences towards Perstorp's culture and how they feel about the relationship between colleagues. Since the intent was to collect qualitative perspectives with an in-depth reflection, a qualitative research method with the support of semi-structured interviews was preferred in this study. This semi-structured style of interviewing participants was chosen because it consists of open-ended questions. This allowed the interview to be designed with a clear framework, while enabling flexibility within the framework to extend the interview questions to collect more valuable information (Newcomer et al., 2015).

Taken into account that Perstorp is a multinational company, it would be interesting to gather thoughts from employees both in Sweden and abroad, as well as from different departments, positions and a different range of work experience at Perstorp. Seventeen employees responded to our call for interviews, with a mixture of four different leading and non-leading positions (non-leading employees, lower-level managers, middle-level managers, and higher-level managers) in nine locations within seven countries. Middle level and lower level participants are the majority of the participants as the impact of psychological safety and leader's behavior are more critical at these levels in organizations (Edmondson et al., 2004). The 17 employees are from various units, which are: Communications & Sustainability, Specialty Polyols & Solutions, Advanced Chemicals, Animal Nutrition, Supply Chain & Operations, and Innovation. Interviewees' age ranges from 27 to 50, with a widely different length of working experience for Perstorp. The charts offer an overview of the count of location, work experience and management level (see Appendix I). The interviews were done either by Skype meetings, Microsoft Teams or phone calls, depending on the situation and availability. The length of the interview ranged between 45 to 90 minutes, and did not require preparation from the participants' side. For the participant's data privacy, they were given a consent form to secure their anonymity and

authority over the data they provided during the interview (see Appendix II). Participants were informed the interview will be recorded for the usage of data collection and analysis, so the data can be more thoroughly collected and analyzed. The complete consent form can be found in the appendix.

The interview guide consists of three parts, which are (1) organizational culture and change, (2) trust related questions and (3) general thoughts (see Appendix III). Organizational culture and change is composed of questions regarding values, beliefs and organizational change, which is also an extract of Schein as well as Karanika-Murray and Oeij's theories (2017) (see section 2.1 - The role of organizational culture). The trust related questions are inspired by Schein (1985) and Zak's findings (2017) regarding trust's role in psychological safety, so more specific questions about the employee's experiences regarding trust are involved. The interview closes with questions about their general thoughts about Perstorpt to give an opportunity to participants to add insights outside of the direct scope of the earlier interview questions, which we considered to be in line with the exploratory nature of the research method. However, we did not take the responses to these questions into account in our analysis.

3.3. Data analysis

The collection of qualitative data often results in a large amount of data, in this case the interview transcripts require a clear approach for the analysis. Based on the qualitative method, a phenomenologist approach was used to analyze the collected data. Phenomenological research doesn't aim at providing clear explanations, but enables insights about investigated phenomena (Astalin, 2013). Phenomenological analysis consists of the description and analysis of a text in order to interpret its context. The focus in our analysis process was on the structural analysis of the transcripts. This can be considered to fit within the framework of phenomenology, because it directs towards essential meanings (Wolcott, 1996). With the intent to follow a similar structure to the theoretical framework and the interview guide, we referred to the aforementioned framework by Edmondson et al. (2004) (see table 1 below).

The data collected from the 17 semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix IV). The analysis was done by coding, which describes the labelling, separating, and organization of collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA was used to help reorganize and analyze the qualitative data. Table 1 shows three columns. The first column describes concepts of the categories, taken from the theoretical frameworks. The second column matches these categories with 12 main codes that we identified based on our interpretation of these frameworks. The third column associates the questions from the interview guide to the codes. However, it should be noted that the codes and topics in table 1 were not considered to be exclusive to specific questions, as different topics can emerge from answers to one single question. For example, codes for "showing vulnerability" were not only found in the according question ("How accepting is your workplace when you make mistakes or feel vulnerable?") but were also found in other parts of the interview.

Within the frame of the concepts, themes and patterns emerged, and were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' perceptions of psychological safety plays in the organization. This analysis process led to an extensive code-set. In total, 555 codes emerged from the 17 interview transcripts during the analysis which lead to 11 findings that are presented in the analysis part of the thesis (5. Findings and Analysis). In a third step, the categories and codes were visualised in a complex meta-map to better see connections between them, and reorganize the code-set in an organic way (see Appendix V). This served as a base to look for overarching patterns and themes that are described in the later discussion of this thesis.

Categories, codes and according interview questions guiding the analysis around antecedents for team psychological safety from Edmondson et al. (2004).

Categories	Codes	Interview questions
Trusting and respectful relationships	Intentionally build relationships	How would you describe the atmosphere among the colleagues at Perstorp?
	Values and beliefs	What are your personal beliefs and values in your career and how it is aligned with Perstorp?
Leader behavior	Leadership	All questions
	Give people discretion in how they do their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you often receive feedback from your manager? • Do you think Perstorp also encourages giving feedback, or does it depend more on the person's work style?
	Show vulnerability	How accepting is your workplace when you make mistakes or feel vulnerable?
Organizational context support	Share information broadly	Do you think Perstorp is comfortable enough to share new information?
	Encouraging knowledge sharing	How convenient is sharing knowledge and ideas (via network or sharing platforms, etc.)?
	Facilitate whole-person growth	Do you see opportunities for yourself at Perstorp to gain more knowledge and continuously grow?

Table 1: List of codes for team psychological safety

3.4. Reliability and validity of the research

In order to ensure the quality of social research two criteria are most relevant for an evaluation of research results: reliability and validity. The concept of *reliability* is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be repeated (Bryman, 2012). Here the measurement of the used qualitative data is most important. The system of measurement or coding for research data should be used consistently and in the same procedure by different researchers. A second way to assess the reliability of the findings is called the internal consistency method, which is ensured by additional data using the same design (Bellamy, 2011). In the case of interviews, which were the form of data collection in this thesis, additional questions were inserted, each phrased slightly differently, to ask the same thing. The purpose was to see if the questions result in similar answers from the respondents which provided evidence that the first questions were reliable. A further important criterion of research is *validity*, which concerns the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a research project (Bryman, 2012). It is the degree to which statements approximate to the truth and is most commonly separated into internal and external validity (Bellamy, 2011). Internal validity refers to the question of whether a conclusion about a causal relationship between two or more variables is consistent. External validity concerns the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context which can be in other situations or studies that were similar (Bryman, 2012). To meet the test of validity in this case study, the design of this thesis is specified to investigate topics/ phenomena and compare the results with published studies with similar matches. External validity and generalizability is more difficult to ensure in case study research. The question here is whether its focus on a single case can be generalized, so that the findings can be applied more generally to other cases.

3.5. Limitations

Similar to every other study, this study has potential limitations. This study aims to collect valuable data despite the unavoidable barriers, regardless, it is still important to list out the limitations to be aware of the potential factors the study might encounter to deliver a better result.

- **Insufficient sample size:** not having enough participants could result in an invalid statistical measurement, as the final result is based only on the selected participants, so selection bias and faulty generalization could occur. Moreover, there are employees from other units and other positions left uninvited because of the limited size of the study, meaning that there could be other voices to be heard. Another point to add is that the selection of the participants is highly dependent on the contact person from Perstorp, therefore the collected will be limited by this selection. Although we have a clear set of criteria of the employee type we are interested in interviewing, in the end the participants are selected by the contact person, who might also be limited by their connections within Perstorp.
- **Limitations of the chosen theoretical frameworks:** while we have tried to base our analysis on a well-established framework by Edmondson (2004), this can only capture data and knowledge that fits within that model. Therefore, insights that fall outside of this model may end up being overlooked. Additionally, the framework is applied on the team level, but interviewees might come up with answers that cover other levels, which can be insights about the organization as a whole. In order to keep the analysis simple, we still keep the chosen framework.
- **Limited access to data:** questions that are designed to ask the participants could be insufficient, better asked in another way or tone, better phrased, etc. The flow during the interview could vary from person to person, different personal chemistry, different personality or different mood at the time for the interviewer and the participant. In addition, different people might have different feelings when hearing the questions, e.g. some might feel open to answer whereas some might feel attacked, therefore, it is difficult to estimate whether two answers are truly similar and comparable.
- **Time constraints:** interviews are only designed for 45 to 90 minutes. Some participants could get tired during the lengthy interview, resulting in different moods compared to the beginning and the end of the interview, therefore uneven quality of the data. It could also be the case that the interview is not long enough, but since it is expected to not last more than an hour, the interview is forced to halt, yet the possibility is that more data could be collected if longer time is offered.
- **Cultural and personal bias:** as mentioned in the data collection, the composition of the participants is diverse, therefore there might be some cultural bias and personal bias from different positions affecting the answers. Although different answers are appreciated, if the participant themselves is biased regardless of the reason, the result might involve some useless data. In addition, since the interviewers are external personnel, it has a potential to ease or strain the atmosphere at different levels, so more or less of information can be revealed. Moreover, since there are higher management employees involved, it is common that they are more used to being more held back and general with their opinion, which might result in a doubt of honesty, affecting the accuracy of their answers.
- **Language barriers:** almost all the interviews are done in English, yet only one of the participants has English as their first language, meaning that during other interviews, both interviewers and interviewees are using a language considered as a second language. Information explained in a second language might reduce in quality or its original meaning. Hence, no matter how smooth the interview has gone, there could still be unspoken thoughts that cannot be expressed.

All in all, studies in any size with different limitations of time has its difficulties to overcome. Despite the potential limitations, the study still tried hard to exclude as many obstacles as possible to deliver a more neutral result.

4. Context of the Study

This chapter contains background information of Perstorp, including its history, its unique character as a multinational company, as well as its sustainability focus from the recent years. Having Perstorp introduced, the chapter will explain what this study strives to accomplish with the collaboration with Perstorp.

Perstorp's background

To begin with, some basic information will be given about the company that the study was done in collaboration with. Perstorp is a Swedish specialty chemicals innovator founded in the 1880's. It specializes in organic chemistry, process technology and application development leading high-growth niches such as powder and UV-cured coatings, plasticizers, synthetic lubricants and grain preservation (Perstorp, 2020a). Perstorp's products can be found in everyday life and it has been striving for more sustainable solutions in the world of chemicals. As an internationally recognized authority in the field of organic chemicals with an annual revenue of 14.9 billion Swedish krona in 2018, Perstorp has 1350 employees in total worldwide, yet their offices and production units can be found in Asia, Europe and North America (Perstorp, 2020b).

Perstorp as a multinational company

A unique point of Perstorp is that Perstorp is a multinational company (MNC). There are employees from different cultural backgrounds working together, which implies specific challenges in communication and coordination (Mba, 2015). Other examples of typical problems in this setting include situations where differences in the national cultures hinders the management style, or lead to misunderstandings (Isaksson, 2008). These could add more complexity when building a solid foundation of a company's culture. Although cross-cultural communication will not act as the focus of this study, it is good to note that this characteristic of Perstorp differentiates it from a local Swedish company.

Perstorp's sustainability focus

Perstorp has been striving to integrate sustainability into their corporate strategy. The core value they associate with this is to be more caring towards people and the planet. Caring for their employees has, therefore, become a major focus internally. To execute this mission, Perstorp developed a "*Careway Journey*" to ensure the health and safety of their own employees with a focus on, amongst other things, the prevention of incidents and accidents, and hope to be the role model in the industry (Perstorp, 2020c). Since 2017, the *Careway Journey* represents a positive initiative to increase the employee's well-being, such as through leadership training, coaching systems, and more strict physical safety regulations. Perstorp strongly believes in a more holistic system of caring for their employees that can contribute to their full potential performance and a safe working environment.

Mission of this study

The theoretical framework that this study is based on suggests that a human-centered organization is composed of a supportive organizational culture and structure, and has leaders that strengthen psychological safety. Several studies also show that trust among coworkers is one of the most critical elements contributing to psychological safety (Edmondson et al., 2004). However, whether the *Careway Journey* is strengthening trust between employees from different management levels, and whether organizational context is supportive to this, remains unknown. Thus, in order to figure out the reliability and effectiveness of the *Careway Journey* strategy, we decided to interview employees from different management levels at Perstorp to ask about their personal experiences from their workplace, to get a better picture of how the strategy has been lived up in reality.

5. Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the main analysis findings on how employees and leaders at Perstorp perceived psychological safety in teams and organizational change in the organization. The analysis findings are based on data from the qualitative interviews, and represent aspects of individually perceived psychological safety in teams at Perstorp. The three different categories of the analysis chapter: (1) trust and respectful relationships, (2) team leader behavior, and (3) organizational context support are taken from Edmondson's framework "Antecedents of team psychological safety" (2004).

In order to more easily distinguish statements from interviewees at different management levels,, interviewees in non-leading positions and lower-level managers are summarized as "lower-level managers" (LLM). Middle-level managers and higher-level managers are summarized as "higher-level managers" (HLM).

5.1. Trust and respect

In order to find out about the relationships with team members and the atmosphere at the workplace the interviewees were asked how they perceived the atmosphere among the colleagues at Perstorp. Questions about personal beliefs and values in their career and how these align with Perstorp gave additional insights about the employees belief in the company and their well-being.

5.1.1. Atmosphere and social interactions at the workplace

In general, both LLM and HLM interviewees mentioned a good and positive working atmosphere. They perceived colleagues to be helpful and caring about each other. They highlighted the familiar warm atmosphere and a sense of appreciation, others referred to the Swedish mentality as being supportive for an open and relaxed together. It was also learned from the interviews that Perstorp used a program called "pulse measurement" to conduct a monthly employee survey, enabling employees to open up discussions about their thoughts on the workplace atmosphere. LLM interviewees, on the other hand, perceived the atmosphere at an organizational level as stressful and lack of social interaction. They reported some situations, such as colleagues are staying comfortably in their own bunkers, and are uninterested in interacting with one another. This results in a less collaborative atmosphere.

"[The effects of the pulse measurement] you see in a team. It opens up discussions and enables people supporting each other." (LLM)

Some LLM employees showed a wish for more social activities, and described people at Perstorp as very focussed, which relates to a performance-oriented work attitude where informal settings and social exchange are less happening. For HLM interviewees, they have similar opinions but at an organizational level. A lack of cooperation within different departments and production sites are commonly seen. It is especially critical for high management employees as these units do need information from each other to execute its tasks, as well as to communicate about problems, blockages and possible improvements. If without the communication, performance would encounter barriers.

"My colleagues are very good to work with, we talk about most of the things. [Other teams] stay in their own little bunker and care about themselves." (LLM)

5.1.2. Individual's values and beliefs towards the company

When interviewees were answering questions related to their values and beliefs in their work life, both LLM and HLM interviewees could often draw a connection between their background in either education or work experience and their current role. They feel empowered by their role and believe that their position and knowledge can bring potential contributions to the company and the world. At the same time, because of the strong belief in values and high expectation of themselves, it becomes critical to them whether their profession and their concern for the best result to deliver are taken seriously. This scenario is especially seen when interviewing LLM interviewees, where they often voiced that the company is good at opening and leading discussions, yet oftentimes it ends with the discussion and the execution barely happens.

“Values not lived up in times of crisis [pandemic]. Empowerment is preached, not always put into practice. [...] I think the desire is there but it's very difficult in such a time to still live up to that.” (LLM)

Besides the execution from discussions, many LLM interviewees also mentioned their doubt in how Perstorp connects their core value, sustainability, with their strategy, because they did not see a full integration. Same issue applies to Perstorp's strategy, and the real life situation when concerning financial results. It is heard from both LLM and HLM interviewees that Perstorp is rather short-term focused. Some units also reported that they feel like they do not receive as much attention and resources as other units.

Perstorp's value in caring for their people and the future sustainability has a good reputation among their customers, and the sales units are also using this concept as a selling point to promote the brand. The question is whether Perstorp is really living up to its value. HLM Interviewees often gave general and positive feedback about their trust and belief in the company, yet the lower the level of the interviewee, the more precise the perspectives are demonstrated.

5.2. Team leader behavior

This part consists of general perceptions about leadership behavior from HLM and LLM interviewees perspective. Including how interviewees view a supportive leader to behave, their experience in making mistakes and receiving feedback from their manager, as well as their relation with their managers.

Most HLM interviewees present their own leadership behavior in a differentiated manner and agree on concrete conditions that compose a good leader. Overall, they aim at making others understand the why behind actions and promote honest communication. Problems should be addressed in the right setting by talking directly with the specific person. They try to support team members' personal growth and learning process, and by showing consistency in their behavior try to lead their teams by example.

5.2.1. The importance of role models

Most LLM interviewees see a form of empowerment by Perstorp, for example when Perstorp reinforces their vision, mission and values in business. However, in times of pandemic crisis, some perceive that values are not lived up as strongly as before. For instance, LLM interviewees are very keen on Perstorp's key value in sustainability, but their proposal on embedding more sustainability into work is sometimes only one-sided. They do not see their managers' interest in implementing. In another case, they commented that less necessary spendings is done, such as not hiring critical employees at this stage that would accelerate performance, or firing too many employees with professional knowledge, which made them doubt the company's true belief in really delivering the best result. Some LLM interviewees reported weak points in leadership behavior that are negatively influencing their work performance.

“I think it would be good to have more examples, especially from Top management. [...] That might stimulate the whole organization to be much more open.” (LLM)

For example, they realized the company's effort in creating a less hierarchical environment, and promoting a more open atmosphere, but they never see top management managers demonstrating the values.

5.2.2. Mistake culture

When asking about how accepting the workplace is when making mistakes or feeling vulnerable, answers by the LLM interviewees referred often to specific leaders' behavior. Such as some LLM interviewees mentioned their manager taking the responsibility if the mistakes they make have consequences, or they never felt like their mistakes have been something that irritated their manager. These leadership behaviors show that interviewees perceived that their team leaders hold their back and encourage them. Besides general leadership behavior, some LLM interviewees brought up the term *mistake culture* at Perstorp.

Mistake culture is broadly mentioned at Perstorp and is understood as a culture setting that leaves space for mistakes, and would strive to minimize the risk of letting mistakes turn into a blame game. Some LLM interviewees reported that they do sense that Perstorp encourages mistake culture, even better than their previous workplaces, whereas some LLM interviewees have an opposite feedback, mentioning the mistake culture is not yet on the level it should be at Perstorp. An example is that some employees at a leading position are less in favor of challenging the status quo, because the price of resulting in mistakes is too high to pay. Instead, they do nothing new. Another LLM interviewee also highlighted that in his area of work, they will get warnings if subject mistakes occur. Yet in many situations, they are simply exploring their daily work and trying to learn new things themselves, therefore mistakes could be unintentional, but they still get a warning. This interviewee specified that they perceive this immature mistake culture as a type of “management by fear”, because besides not allowing mistakes to occur, fear is added on the top. HLM managers on the other hand, are overall less certain with the mistake culture. They share their experiences on how mistake culture is realized on them, and they reported the mistake culture seems to be less practiced at a higher level management. One leader shared this insight and added that daring to make mistakes needs a base of trust, and this in turn requires time. Another leader highlighted the importance of being a role model is admitting mistakes, which is challenging to themselves as a leader.

In conclusion, although some LLM interviewees have good experiences with their managers, they also admitted it might differ between individuals. Therefore, interviewees in general think the mistake culture is not yet culturally embedded in the way Perstorp functions.

5.2.3. Feedback culture

Interviewees were asked about how often they receive feedback from the manager, and if Perstorp also encourages giving feedback brought different answers. In some LLM employees' opinion, giving feedback is more company driven.

“Perstorp does encourage feedback culture, and they do it really well, compared with [other] working culture[s]. I think Perstorp has an equal and less hierarchy culture.” (LLM)

However, more think that feedback is rather individually driven. LLM interviewees that often receive feedback mentioned that the type of feedback also varies between different leaders. Some leaders seem to reduce feedback to a minimum, relate it to the performance or give it only when it is specifically asked for. Despite the different types of feedback giving, a common scene is that feedbacks are usually more positive. Some LLM interviewees highlighted that it could be the Swedish mentality playing a role, because bringing critical thinking is difficult in the Swedish culture, therefore people tend to only give positive feedback to avoid conflicts.

“Swedish culture is more about harmony, we avoid confronting conflicts. It may have an influence on how we work too, for example we would always focus more on giving positive comments than negative, so I understand sometimes it might be hard for people that prefer a more straight-forward working attitude, but it is not really how Swedish culture works.” (LLM & HLM)

Perstorp is historically a Swedish company. Interviewees have expressed that they find it hard to identify whether the “Perstorp way” of handling business is predominantly a product of Swedish culture, or if it is a matter of a given leader’s personality. Both, some interviewees from Sweden and abroad made a point that they see the typical Swedish mentality. Some interviewees perceived a lack of efficiency, happening especially in the decision making and the efficiency of meetings. However, the feedback is not always negative. Some interviewees are positive about the perceived Swedish influence with a lot of other behaviors, such as generosity, being considerate and a sense of respect to each other’s private life, etc. Some non-Swedish interviewees try to pick up some spirits they learned from the headquarter in Sweden when they visited for business, and implement the concept in branches abroad to demonstrate the atmosphere from Sweden. Yet sometimes the local culture seems to be hindering, as when the cultural difference is too big, it could result in a cultural shock to the locals. However, the Swedish way of working also receives compliments from some interviewees, which contributes to a good mix of their local culture and Swedish culture. They also mentioned that because Perstorp is a Swedish company, it allows them to more reasonably communicate with

colleagues in a comfortably polite manner, which in their experience their local culture sometimes does not provide space for.

5.2.4. Lack of leaders support

From the data, almost all interviewees report that they are happy with their current manager. Some described themselves as fortunate enough to have an understanding manager, others described their relationship as more neutral. Since almost all interviewees have been with Perstorp for 5-15 years, they have also worked with more than one manager. A couple LLM interviewees mentioned that they had actively proposed some ideas concerning either their physical safety or a more sustainable business idea to their manager, but their manager did not get back to them. A couple of LLM interviewees in particular, mentioned that in their area of work, their physical safety is exposed in danger in their everyday working life. Their manager only reacts or is willing to communicate when accidents happen. This statement by the LLM interviewees highlighted that changes are often individually driven, and that "it has not been a norm to collect knowledge and be open with professional advice." One interviewee expressed that they held onto their suggestion until they had the chance to meet the right manager that would understand and support their idea.

When interviewees were asked about the support and empowerment when facilitating changes at their position, the topic tended to shift towards their understanding of the dynamics between upper and lower level management. Some LLM interviewees mentioned that they sometimes do not understand the upper level managers' decisions. They therefore explained to the managers their points and why they disagreed with the decision, but the manager only briefly told them to not worry, which did not solve their concern.

Some LLM interviewees also added that they didn't understand some perceived contradictions. For instance, one interviewee gave as an example that Perstorp just announced their new focus of the business, but slowed down the decision making process in their unit, which results in a slow pace of adoption.

"At the financial times when the management team decided to shift their focus to this unit, the team also reduced the decision power. This is very contradictory. Why would you empower someone but take away its power at the same time?" (HLM)

These issues in communication and their frustration had them wonder what Perstorp is really looking for.

5.3. Organizational context support

The categories for the following analysis results are based on Edmondsons (2004) statement that access to resources and information can foster psychological safety at the workplace. For this study, the terms resources and information were interpreted as information- and knowledge sharing, and resources, for example in form of training or individual support for the individual to learn and grow. The interviewees were, therefore, asked about the role that information and knowledge sharing plays at Perstorp, and if they see opportunities for themselves to gain more knowledge and to continuously grow at their workplace.

5.3.1. Stress and well-being

Other topics that interviewees shared a lot of insights about, is the stress level at Perstorp. Both LLM and HLM interviewees considered their stress level at Perstorp to be high, yet they expressed that they do not have problem adapting and enjoy the fast-paced work environment. Some LLM interviewees, especially those that have not joined Perstorp for long, expressed more concerns on how stress at work mentally affects them. The stress LLM interviewees mentioned come not only from the fact that the field of work itself is fast-paced, but also when onboarding, they lacked the mentoring and guidance. This results in them hardly feeling like they are ready, and the fast-paced working atmosphere on the top makes the lack of instructions tougher for them to perform.

Perstorp at the same time does realize there is room for improvements, therefore their people strategy called "Careway Journey", has been working on caring more about their employees' health not only

from a physical, but also mental perspective. Most LLM interviewees pointed out that it is hard to not notice the effort Perstorp is putting to care more about them. This made them think if it still works hard on their social issues within the company. Even though the Careway Journey is covering more mental topics than before, from a professional perspective, LLM interviewees mentioned they would appreciate it more if Perstorp does not forget about bringing them on track in terms of their job field. Such as having a mentor or learning from other colleagues' mistakes, in order to avoid the hectic pace which is a vital role causing them stress.

5.3.2. Personal development

Regarding organizational context support, interviewees were asked which opportunities they see for themselves at Perstorp to gain more knowledge and continuously grow. There is evidence in data that Perstorp does create conditions for personal growth, constant learning and people perceive an atmosphere that encourages people to learn more. Both LLM and HLM agree that they are positive about their career growth at Perstorp, as they know they have much to learn, and there is space for ideas and opportunities to drive things forward. Within a part of Perstorp's leadership training, some employees had a chance to be trained as a continuous improvement manager for their production site. This managerial role is meant to train the candidates to not only possess more coaching skills in their professional field, but also act as a mentor when their colleagues need someone to talk to, allowing more emotional space to happen. Interviewees that attended the training see themselves develop not only in their profession, but also they are positive to the fact that they can support their colleagues with the leadership and coaching skills they gathered from the training.

However, as the workload and stress topic mentioned before, although some interviewees are excited about their personal development, it is hard for them to fit training and workshops into their hectic schedule. They perceive that there is too much focus put on the individual shoulders, which refers to a high individual workload.

5.3.3. Information sharing

Interviewees were asked about the convenience of information sharing in the company. It is found out that most LLM and HLM interviewees barely had a feeling of not knowing enough, and the feedbacks are usually positive with keywords such as transparent and open. They have seen efforts from the company to bring many on board to explain new directions and decisions. It was mentioned that the information flow has improved over the last years, and that there is a visible effort for improvement. Most interviewees understand that it is being decided consciously by top management and managers which information is relevant for each unit and person, and sent out accordingly. Also, some employees showed satisfaction about how information was spread during corona time. They mentioned that despite the inconvenience, they saw a higher level of transparency and frequency in information sharing, and they are positive with the collaboration of communication at Perstorp. From another perspective, due to the world pandemic resulting in a context of working from home full-time when interviews took place, interviewees partially agree that this urgent situation forced the company to improve the company's usage of digital communication and tools.

"There is an increased level of digitalization after corona, the challenges are that they have to make sure the process goes through all business structures, and also people have to possess a new mindset for the digital world." (HLM)

Yet, this change itself does not justify the effectiveness of the tools, but can be seen as an enhancement to consider in the future.

However, not all users have the same opinion. Some interviewees mentioned that sometimes they feel like they are undergoing information overload.

"It would be nice if they can help sort the information and not just send in a lot of information at a time. I receive a lot of regulations, of course I don't have to know them all, but it would be nice if they deliver information in a way that is easier to understand." (LLM)

This statement shows that there is sometimes irrelevant information as well as too much information provided. Nevertheless, despite the information overload, interviewees expressed that they valued

being informed, yet expressed that the ways and tools of sharing information lack friendliness for users.

Although the information sharing is improving during pandemic time, some HLM interviewees share another perspective of information sharing, and how they see it can be used as a tool to interrupt the flow. They pointed out that their positions rely a lot on information from their upper managers, and when someone either at their level or higher is not sharing some information, they can easily be blinded. And when that happens, it would directly affect the LLM employees too, as they do not get the direction to work on. It is therefore concerned that information does not always reach the lower levels efficiently and might be kept out due to interest of power, pragmatism or different opinions in efficiency. The consequence of informal information exchange can be the exclusion of some people from relevant information, and requires certain resources and positional power for the individual to get access to this information source.

5.3.4. Frequent reorganization

Like many organizations, Perstorp periodically undergoes reorganizations that affect their entire business structure. Interviewees agree to a certain extent that this is a part of the process of continuous improvement, yet every reorganization means something different to different units. The overall perception of the interviewees is that Perstorp reorganizes itself on a frequent basis. The frequent reorganization tires some units. Several LLM interviewees mentioned that they have seen new hires come and go because of faulty reorganization.

“I am not the only one that thinks the reorganization is too frequent. They reorganize so often that the new departments haven't even had enough time to deliver the results, then they fired everyone from the team. I think the HR department maybe also has responsibility in this, they should know the people and also whose documents they are dealing with. If they know, they would know they are helping the company let go valuable people.” (LLM)

Several LLM interviewees mentioned that simply because of the frequent reorganization, they would not recommend Perstorp to other people, because they do not want others to experience the downside of reorganization. In addition, they mentioned they do not always understand the intention of the reorganization, and that reorganizations even forced more knowledgeable employees to resign earlier than they should, which lead to gaps in specific knowledge. However, reorganization is not all negative. A couple HLM interviewees see benefits in the reorganization, such as more women in leading positions and more efficiency

5.3.5. Knowledge sharing

On the question of how convenient knowledge and idea sharing via networks or sharing platforms is, most interviewees showed mostly critical attitudes. A lot of LLM interviewees said that the topic of knowledge sharing does not seem to be on the agenda for most people. It is usually only shared within smaller groups and with strong self initiatives.

Although knowledge sharing is not at an organizational level yet, we learned that knowledge sharing already happens within small groups, and usually in an unofficial setting. Multiple LLM interviewees shared insights and opinions on why knowledge sharing is not a widely spoken topic. One factor that seems to hinder knowledge sharing is referring mostly to a high workload, which seems to hinder the motivation to do so. Other LLM interviewees, when asking them what demotivates them to share their knowledge, they think there is no benefit or pay off if they share their knowledge or ideas. Some other LLM interviewees referred to their lack of motivation from their high workload, and the fact that knowledge sharing is just not an active topic in their working environment. They do not see people driving the initiatives. Also, an LLM interviewee mentioned their internal communication platform called “Compass.”, but not so many people are using it at Perstorp. Some interviewees referred to Compass as being useful, others perceived this platform as too overloaded and not being up to date. According to other employees, Compass is missing more elements for conversations and direct interactions. Overall, it was said that knowledge sharing lacks a clear strategy.

6. Discussion

This chapter will answer the sub research questions and end with answering the main research question. The answers are based on the combination of the discovery from findings and analysis, and theories that were mentioned in the theoretical background.

6.1. How does trust play a role from employees' perspective? (Sub-RQ-1)

We know that the perception of psychological safety tends to be highly similar among people who work closely together, because team members are sharing similar contextual influences and experiences (Edmondson, 1999). It has been shown that a good team climate and a high level of team trust supports learning in teams, which in turn can affect organizational changes within the organization (Edmondson, 2004). Findings from the study highlight the importance of relationships with team members and a supportive atmosphere at the workplace from the perspective of both LLM and HLM employees. More LLM employees draw a connection between a performance-oriented work attitude and a lack of social activities. These were considered as important for building up trust and a more informal information flow amongst colleagues and departments. When employees are able to grow trust between colleagues individually the level of psychological safety tends to be higher (Kahn, 1990). Therefore, it is suggested that more mutual exchange and support for example through mentoring or learning from other colleagues' and their mistakes, could not only lead to more trust in the workplace, but also help dealing with a fast changing environment.

The analysed data showed that most interviewees feel empowered by their role and show a strong belief in Perstorp values. Still, some LLM interviewees are not convinced that Perstorp is really living up to its values and is better in opening up and leading discussions than putting new ideas and strategies into practice. Some units also reported that they feel like they do not receive as much attention and resources as other units, which implies a risk of negative consequences from having employees feel neglected. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, trust is vital for both innovative work within the organization, e.g. in project teams (Jones and George 1998). Blomqvist (1997) recalls different antecedents that create a base for trust in professional relationships in business contexts: (1) relevant competences (Blomqvist, 1997), (2) signs of goodwill which can be positive intentions towards each other (Blomqvist, 1997), and (3) the actual behavior which can show in kept promises becoming more visible (Bidault and Jarillo, 1997). Adding to this, organizational values as relatively permanent elements are guiding employees behavior, and therefore, create a setting for the experience of trust (Jones and George 1998). Perstorp already shows clear values that most interviewees perceived to be present throughout the company. Still, there seems to be potential for Perstorp to add more consistency in the actual behavior, and to live up to their values, which eventually can strengthen the experience of trust on an organizational level.

6.2. How does leader behavior influence psychological safety? (Sub-RQ-2)

In the theoretical background we discussed how the behavior of leaders can have an influence on the relationships with team members, and psychological safety can only be secured when leaders are willing to respect, trust and cooperate (Edmondson et al., 2004). Especially transformational style leaders have been shown to be more capable of motivating employees and accompanying them through changes (Page et al. 2019). In our study different scenarios emerged describing situations within Perstorp where employees currently do not feel psychologically secured (not feeling safe to speak up, try new things or propose ideas). Our interviews show that HLM employees agree on the traits of how an ideal leader is supposed to behave. However, multiple LLM employees expressed that their HLM superiors did not always live up to these desired traits. Despite a few positive experiences from some interviewees, the findings show that employees are still seeking an environment where leaders are more willing to support them. Many of the examples given by employees suggest that they have unmet needs for guidance, and a lack of clarity on how to meet expectations. As explained by Hattie & Timperley (2007), feedback is essential for nurturing a learning process, which makes it an important point to address if Perstorp's wishes to further develop a "mistake culture". It is not within the scope of this study to ascertain how much a person can learn to become a certain type of leader. However, it is still important for leaders to acknowledge the importance of how a transformational leadership style can benefit culture change. If managers are more aware of the potential of their behavior and how they guide other employees, they are more likely to work better on their skills. In

this way, the better cooperation with other employees and the reduction of discrepancy can not only create a sustainable learning cycle, but also offer employees a safe zone to work.

6.3. How can organizations strengthen psychological safety in a feasible construct? (Sub-RQ 3)

According to Wageman any work team needs to be provided with organizational resources and organizational support, and is closely tied to its leader's style and decisions. On the one hand, leaders depend to a high degree on organizational conditions and can change conditions to protect psychological safety of their team only when equipped with the authority by the organization to do so. Therefore, team behavior and performance is most affected by structural and contextual factors that often lie beyond the team leaders' direct control (Wageman, 2001).

The study revealed different hindering factors on the organizational level. One aspect was frequent reorganizations at Perstorp. These were considered beneficial by the HLM employees. On the other hand, some LLM interviewees mentioned that they did not always understand the intention of the reorganization. Some also believed that the reorganisations forced more knowledgeable employees to resign earlier than they should have, which led to gaps in specific knowledge. Another central element that came up in multiple interviews was a partially insufficient information flow between different departments, as well as between departments and production sites. This was considered to hinder social connections and information exchange. On the vertical level, information from top-down didn't efficiently reach the lower levels, because of conflicting interests and opposite information and agendas. As a point of contrast, the information flow surrounding the corona crisis was perceived positively. Here, Perstorp can build on this base, and further develop new strategies for improving the information exchange between different areas of the company. When asked about the topic of knowledge sharing, the wish for "a more collaborative atmosphere and more sharing" was also prevalent. Knowledge sharing does not seem to be an active topic in employees' working environments due to a high workload, no clear benefit and few people driving those initiatives. Still, we learned that it still happens within small groups, and usually in an unofficial setting. According to Siemsen et al. (2009) psychological safety can positively affect knowledge sharing among colleagues if individuals have confidence in the knowledge to be shared. At Perstorp, this would require a clear strategy to foster more collaborative practices. It is important to show the benefits of those practices for the people involved and to ensure an overall level of psychological safety and trust.

Furthermore, organizational resources and support is not limited to information and knowledge sharing. It can be extended to support employee's learning and for personal growth. There is evidence in the data that Perstorp does create conditions for personal growth and constant learning. Both LLM and HLM agree that they are positive about their career growth at Perstorp, as there is space for ideas and opportunities to drive things forward. A positive example that was mentioned mostly by HLM employees is leadership training for continuous improvement at production sites, allowing more coaching and mental support to take place. Even though Perstorp seems to put effort into knowing employees' thoughts on the workplace atmosphere, more LLM employees perceive a high level of workload and a stressful atmosphere in the company. This can have a negative effect on the individual wellbeing and the quality of relationships. In general, there was openness amongst most of the LLM interviewees for supportive training formats. However, they mention that the individual workload and stress level makes it hard for them to attend training and workshops, and perceive that there is too much focus put on the individual shoulders. Schein mentioned different activities for leaders of an organization to support employees learning and growth besides formal training. These are for example involvement of the learner, informal training of relevant groups and teams, coaching and feedback. support groups in which learning problems can be discussed (Schein, 2010). Here, Perstorp can build on the positive experiences and side effects of the leadership training for continuous improvement to ensure that they lead to more coaching, mentoring and knowledge sharing amongst the colleagues. Existing initiatives and support formats like leadership training and peer-to-peer coaching should consider the individual workload and be more adapted to individual workload.

6.4. What are the enabling and blocking factors for strengthening psychological safety in organizations? (RQ)

The study started from navigating Edmondson's theory in psychological safety to examining the theory in practice. In Perstorp's case this has resulted in illustrating several elements that would contribute to a stronger sense of psychological safety if addressed. The interviewed employees at Perstorp indicated that a positive atmosphere among colleagues in teams and a high level of trust allows them to perceive their working environment as a safe place psychologically. Still, multiple interviewees noted an inconsistency between proclaimed company values and applying them in practice. We can deduce from this that a positive atmosphere and trust in the company's values is very visible at Perstorp, but that this could be strengthened by showing more consistency in the actual behavior of people in leadership positions, ensuring that they live up to these values. This eventually can strengthen the experience of trust on an organizational level.

Elaborating on this, the data shows that motivation and employees' sense of psychological safety depends much on their leaders' behaviors, which reflects mostly on whether or not their leader provides an accepting work environment when they make mistakes, and whether they guide them further with feedback for improvement when this happens. From this, we learn that when leaders are not behaving the way that aligns with the company's value, the contradiction in their authenticity might be questioned, and later result in mistrust in leadership.

Aside from support like trust, climate and leadership, we learn from the findings that there are also feasible methods to strengthen psychological safety, which is also found to go hand in hand with trust. From the data, what we learn about well-being is that a high stress level and workload are factors that negatively affect employees' well-being. We would suggest that this could be partially addressed by measures to inspect employees' well-being earlier and find out what might be hindering their performance. In this way, employees can develop their trust from their employer that they genuinely care about their mental health. Finally, we learn from the findings that the benefit behind better information flow is not only about higher performance and better social connections, it is also about the perception of whether or not the company provides an open atmosphere in sharing information transparently. We suggest that this trait can have further influence not only on work efficiency, but also on building a stronger sense of trust and psychological safety, which in the longer term contributes to more self-sustaining actions. It is therefore recommended that a more open mindset on both information and knowledge sharing should be better promoted and practiced, as a more collaborative atmosphere can happen when higher transparency takes place.

7. Conclusion

The conclusion chapter will include a summary of the previously answered research questions and provide further recommendations to the future research.

7.1. Summary

Perstorp has declared its intention to combine sustainability into their corporate strategy, and as part of this has developed the "Careway Journey". This is because they acknowledge that promoting sustainability within a company is not only about changing the products, it is also about changing its mindset and workplace culture. It requires providing tools to learn and change, and thus, support employees and thrive to develop a better self as a company. In the discussion we saw that the wellbeing of employees at the workplace is critical to psychological safety. Without it, it would be difficult to activate the learning process, not to mention a cultural change, which relies heavily on the employees' wellbeing and participation. If Perstorp wants its Careway initiative to succeed, it requires a deeper understanding of its employees. It is therefore important that it looks into ensuring psychological safety, and that its attempts at cultural change involves empowering its employees.

This study in collaboration with Perstorp has enabled us to explore how a company reflects on itself, and the different perspectives that employees at various levels have regarding their employer's initiatives to change its culture. Even though most employees feel empowered by their role and show a strong belief in the company's values, Perstorp could strive for living up to its value and focus more on putting new ideas and strategies into practice. Knowing that personal trust is a mechanism for promoting organizational trust (Blomqvist & Ståhle, 2000), gives an important role to managers as they learn what kind of behavior is rewarded in their organizations (Whitener et al., 1998). Interpersonal and inter-organizational trust develops and impacts each other. Therefore, managers with a trustworthy character and trusting personality may introduce a "trusting" culture that will be learned and diffused into the organization (Blomqvist & Ståhle, 2000). Furthermore, an emphasis on transformational leadership can leverage local change processes at all levels while connecting these change processes to what happens in the company's surrounding environment. Inside the company, managers can create a climate of psychological safety to decrease interpersonal risks and enable collaboration, particularly in the face of changing environments, and complex and interdependent organizations. The organization could benefit from having employees who speak up and empower them to bring out their voices and ideas. Examples of successful leadership given by employees in our interviews suggest that it is often less about knowing exactly what to do, and more about engaging with the current situation and being visible and vulnerable towards the members of a team or company.

It should be remembered that psychological safety is not always sufficient by itself to support the creation and maintenance of a productive and positive work culture. Without a clear shared goal and vision, members of a team may lack motivation to engage in learning-oriented actions and change (Page et al., 2019). To this end, leaders can build and change organizational culture by establishing values and norms that are reflected by the company's culture (Hurst & Hurst, 2016). Still, leaders that ensure psychological safety can help to reduce learning anxiety which can make team members feel that a new way of being is possible, and that the learning and change process itself will not be too anxiety provoking (Schein, 2010). Therefore, leaders represent a driving indicator of organizational culture and its ability to change. At this point, organizational culture with its specifics in terms of values, communication and decision-making can encourage even more managerial trustworthy behavior (Blomqvist & Ståhle, 2000).

7.2. Future recommendations for theory and practice

This study brought up insights about how one company is trying to support its members in its cultural change processes, and how it facilitates an organizational culture around care for the people. Such change processes require a change of individual mindsets and behaviors. To this end a particular focus on lower level employee perspectives can help in multiple ways. It aids aligning strategies and aspirations better with their needs, and when not possible, supports transparency about the reasons behind that. Possible research methods for this purpose could be a company-wide survey, as our sample of seventeen employees is limited. Focus groups could contribute with qualitative data to

compare how change processes and according support are perceived and vary between departments and functional units.

Future research in organizational studies could further explore how multinational companies in particular affect psychological safety despite their complex nature. This could mean collecting data from a variety of team and organizational settings, in particular the effect of psychological safety in culturally diverse teams. This could bring a better understanding of the universal factors that contribute to the role of psychological safety and the motivation within cultures of varying types of organizations.

Overall, we learned that psychological safety should be considered as one of the cores of any change process in companies. Change processes are often challenged by resistance to change, and with the support of psychological safety from employees, changes can be more smoothly implemented (Schein, 2010). Therefore, this study suggests that climates for psychological safety should be considered and incorporated into existing change management processes. Finally, while the identification of enabling and hindering factors for strengthening psychological safety within Perstorp is a useful tool, it is important to note that change does not happen through centralized force of power but through new ideas, connections, and social networks that underlie all large-scale systemic changes (Senge et al., 2006). Successful change does not occur because of a single decision from the higher management, but due to a critical mass of individuals and companies deciding to act differently and take responsibility.

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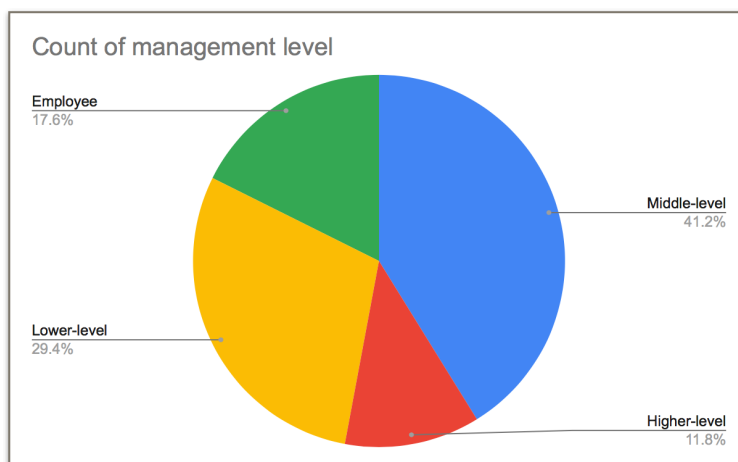
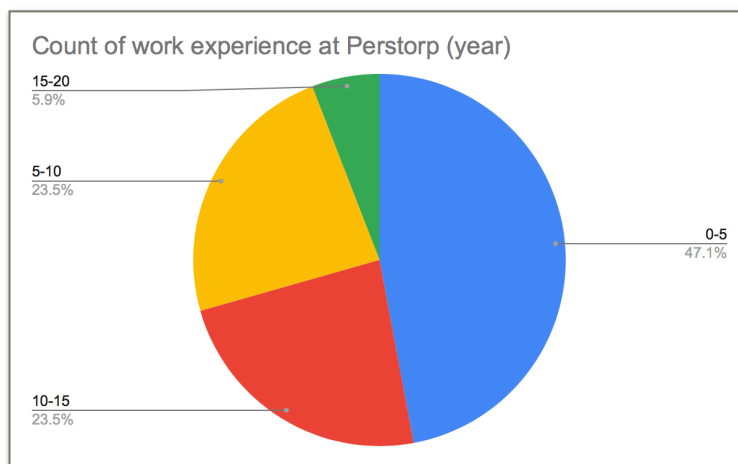
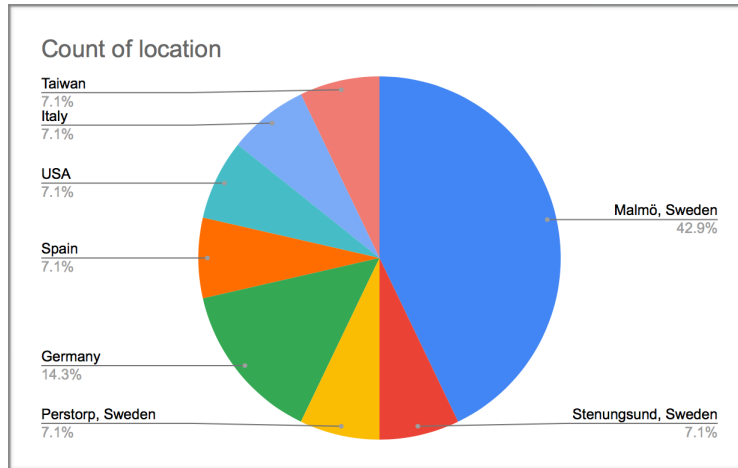
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Appendix

Appendix I - Overview of information about the interviewees



Appendix II - Consent form



Consent to take part in the research from Yu Wei Shih & Anika Koch Malmö University, master program Leadership for Sustainability 2020

- I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time to resume to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview at any time.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this study will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis upon necessity.
- I understand I have all the right to ask about any thesis related questions during the interview.

Date, place

Signature

Please send back to yuweishih424@gmail.com

Appendix III- Revised interview guide

Introduction questions

1. How long have you been working at Perstorp?
2. What brought you to work at Perstorp?

Organizational culture and change

3. How do you consider your role in the organization?
4. What are your personal beliefs in your career and how it is aligned with Perstorp?
5. From your personal experience, do you see changes in the organizations? (it could be anything from intangible to tangible)
 - a. How are the changes perceived by other colleagues?

Trust related questions¹

Recognition of excellence

6. Do you think achieving the best matters a lot in your area of work?

Induce challenge stress.

7. Does it often happen to you that new tasks or assignments seem exciting to you? (If yes, why? If no, why?)

Give people discretion in how they do their work

8. To whom do you report your performance to, and also, would you say receiving and giving feedback on the work is typical Perstorp?

Enable job crafting

9. Does it often happen to you that it is flexible from your side to propose new projects, or change the project's framework the way you prefer?

Share information broadly

10. Do you think Perstorp is comfortable enough to share new information, like new strategies, changes in the organization, salary?

Encouraging knowledge sharing (new question)

11. How convenient is sharing knowledge and ideas via network or sharing platforms, etc.?

Intentionally build relationships

12. How would you describe the atmosphere among the colleagues at Perstorp?

Facilitate whole-person growth

13. Do you see opportunities for yourself at Perstorp to gain more knowledge and continuously grow?

Show vulnerability.

14. How accepting is your workplace when you make mistakes or feel vulnerable?

¹ from Paul J. Zak, "The Neuroscience of Trust" (2017)

Appendix IV - Example of a transcribed interview

1. I: 1) In the beginning we would like to know how long have you been working in Perstorp?
#00:01:57-1#
2. B: I started 2005, so 15 years. Time flies. #00:02:07-2#
3. I: 2) How do you consider your role in the organization? #00:02:16-3#
4. B: I've been during these 15 years having multiple different roles. I've been working in our supply chain organization I've been working within our production organization, I have been the plant manager there, supply chain in different roles as well. I've been doing continuous improvements also in operations and now for three years back, I'm heading one of our businesses. So, I've been jumping around quite the loft. I think I have a pretty good view on Perstorp overrule and how things are connected and how people work together and so on. My current role is purely business- developing the business that we have responsible results and for the business units, profit and strategy. How do we go forward with the products that we have? What markets do we want to play? #00:03:42-1#
5. I: 2.2) How would you define your role in organization more from a philosophical perspective?
#00:03:51-6#
6. B: Then my role quite often is more like an integrator. That is usually more the role I take, making sure that the right connections are there in the organization and that the right people talk to each other. That we base our decisions on the right type of information etc. And then also to set the agenda on what we should focus on now. #00:04:45-8#
7. I: 3) After the 15 years is quite a long time. What do you think are your current beliefs in the vision of the organization? #00:05:02-9#
8. B: I wouldn't be here if I 1. I did not like what I am doing and 2. if I didn't like the company as such. How we do things and what we do and so on. After 15 years Perstorp is absolutely a different company today than what it was back then. Maybe because my roles have been different, but surely that the company role has shifted a lot, but especially in the 5-6 years. There is a change for sure- a change for the better in most ways I would say absolutely.
#00:07:08-7#
9. In my view we've always had a company that has been, since it is rather small it's okay to have an overview of how things work, getting to know the people and feeling an involvement and commitment about what's actually happening so that you can understand it and can see that you can impact things. More or less, wherever you are in the organization, at least within your parts there. That I felt all alone since I joined day one that I can drive and I can change things. That is still there. I think values have been very clear throughout the time. We are a quite nice company in a way where we listen to people, we are trying to bring people in, new people always feel welcomed joining the company. You don't feel that there is a lot of politics. Even though I think that the amount of politics may have increased somewhat. Maybe due to where I am in the organization, maybe due to a cultural change over the years. A little bit hard to say actually- You don't have all the aspects, you never have the full picture. My picture is that there may be a little bit more of that. #00:09:07-2#
10. Vision? I don't think that has changed to be honest. I think there's been a view of where we're heading and that's still there. I am more part of creating that view today than I was before. So, my contribution is much bigger. I feel that I can impact and drive that yes, but I also have an obligation to communicate that throughout the organization. #00:09:54-2#
11. Also, I think I had a vision for my work throughout these years actually, but of course it was more limited before when I had a project as a part of the organization. Then I'm driving this one and then you expand a project site. It is wider throughout the company, but also impacting others when we talk about segments of the company. You can have clarity in many different layers and in that way I don't feel like there's a big difference actually. If you feel that you can have that, also when you were maybe a product project manager (that I was when I started) you still feel ambition and drive things that you want to do even though your scope is smaller. I

always had that which has been for me really good, but in different parts, different areas, different scopes. #00:12:01-6#

12. I: Do you think what you're doing at work makes sense to you? #00:12:18-7#
13. B: You have both always. Or, maybe I should rephrase and then say "I can probably see a reason for why everything is done but I don't always agree with that it's the most important". Some people might want this type of information right now, which is important to them and for me it is not important. Still I understand why this person (The board or CEO or business area manager) needs this information.
14. Hopefully, they have a purpose. #00:13:27-2#
15. I: 4) After 15 years, do you see changes in organization so far? #00:13:47-1#
16. B: Driving operational excellence in the beginning we bought a Consultancy company that talked a lot about involvement and ensuring that we need a purpose and management of change (Things that have always been known to people, but maybe we have not focused enough on). That has gradually changed. Now it is a lot about accountability and responsibility etc. That has been a gradual journey to drive back and see that is the way we would do things going. It's not the easiest way, but it's probably the most rewarding way in terms of both having people enjoying work and also actually getting results in the end. You can do that in a good way. So, I think that's been a very long journey, sometimes slow-moving, sometimes having push backs, sometimes people don't really see why we do this, new ideas coming in. It's been sort of gradually growing, but slowly. That has been a change journey that is still ongoing for many years, in a different way than before. #00:16:50-0#
17. That is not a Perstorp thing, but also universal, but you need to take it on and you can grow it within a company and turn it into a 'company culture' that we decide to nurture or not. Now we're on the nurturing path, saying this is our company culture that would like to have. Then you push and drive that. #00:17:16-4#
18. I: 4.1) How are the changes (or no changes) perceived by other colleagues? (Do you think that you can see, because of your role the whole culture in comparison to other employees?) #00:17:45-1#
19. B: I hope that this is not the case, then we haven't really succeeded. But I do think that it's probably depending on how long you have been with the company and which parts and roles you had within the company throughout these years. Then you see this journey more clearly or not. In the beginning there were lots of parts of the company not involved at all, not seeing this or feeling it. They would probably have a very different view. And if you joined the company the last five years you probably wouldn't really recognize the same type of journey. You need to decide and really nurture the type of culture you want to have. You do change people and you don't feel it the same way in all parts of the company. You need to spend a lot of time in order to drive the culture you want to have. I don't know if everybody feels that they have a clear view on it. #00:19:30-8#
20. I: Is it convincing to you that Perstorp is really trying its best to become a more responsible company to their own employees? #00:19:45-3#
21. B: I would confirm that absolutely. You can always ask how are we tracking the way we should, but there is a clear ambition and target that would really drive it, that is very clear. It is more clear now, then It has been in the past. In the beginning maybe being more of a bottom-up journey. It's very clear that Jan (Secher) is taking this on now and it's more of a top-down driven journey. It needs to be everybody. Maybe one of the areas where you need to think a bit more. If you take over and drive it too much top-down, you miss the bottom part. So you need to have this balance which is the critical area we are striving for. #00:21:30-4#
22. I: 5.) Do you think achieving the best matters a lot in your area of work? #00:21:38-1#
23. B: Absolutely That's the target and goal everyday. So, for sure the whole involvement (getting everyone on track and so on) is to me the means to achieve your targets. I'm a firm believer that if you have people on board, then you will achieve so much more. I am not capable of telling people what to do, because I don't even know all these issues and I don't understand everything.

Everyone has to step up and look at that from their view, their knowledge and make their decisions on the day-to-day tasks. It would be much quicker, faster and more agile than one or two or three persons can be. You do this in order to achieve your best everyday. #00:23:48-3#

24. I: 6) Does it often happen to you that new tasks or assignments seem exciting to you? (If yes, why? If no, why?) #00:24:07-0#
25. B: Most of the tasks are exciting and new. Me as everyone else is looking for where we can learn new and break new ground, understand things that I maybe haven't understood before, and drive things forward. That is at least for me a very strong driver, for many others as well. It might be tough and might be hard but our chance to succeed is there and if we push through, we can succeed. Being locked in your head and not feeling that you are getting anywhere then you lose it. #00:25:43-6#
26. I: 7.1) How do you get feedback for your performance? #00:26:07-5#
27. B: That is delivering on the targets that we have. By all honesty it's not only that. We can drive it the right way, and it doesn't always mean that the results are exactly the way you would like it to. I think that there is a need to recognize if we're driving things the way we should? What are we doing? There are external changes and multiple factors impacting this, some are within our control, others are not within our control. We should deliver but making sure we do the right things to get up there and have better results. #00:27:32-3#
28. I: 7.2) To whom do you report your performance?
29. B: No, I have a business area and the Executive vice-president above me. Results are always number one, but if you take covid-19 which is beyond all of us. No one will deliver the results under these circumstances. It is changing over to 'Let's make sure that we do everything we can to make the best out of the situation, with a good conscience'. So many Factors are changing around us that we should drive. #00:28:55-7#
30. I: 8.) Does it often happen to you that it is flexible from your side to propose new projects, or change the project's framework the way you prefer?#00:29:13-6#
31. B: It shouldn't be that way. You shouldn't choose things you're interested in, you should choose things from. It's not really choosing what you like. Then you can never probably deny that that has some parts of it that you try to make sure that people have an interest to take on the project. I'm trying to get that match wherever I can. Who should be chosen based on facts. Value creation is how we drive it. So you need to find a way to do both. #00:30:33-6#
32. I: 9.) Do you think Perstop is comfortable enough to share new information, like new strategies, changes in the organization? #00:31:02-7#
33. B: Strategies, activities, what's ongoing, trends on the market are things we share a lot. Then people will always ask for more and then sometimes expect things that aren't even there. You can have very different views of what is strategy as well. Something that will tell each and everyone in the company what to do or is it more of an overarching ambition? I don't think that we are holding things back, there are things that shouldn't be shared, like strategies or projects like pacific operations. You need to make sure that you would do it in a way that it's a responsible way. #00:32:45-0#
34. I: 9.1) Does Perstop put effort into spreading the information? #00:33:32-7#
35. B: I think on organizational changes, the bigger ones, there has been a lot of communication and trying to do that to the people and showing why we do it. More in that area than on strategy. We can do more on strategy and bring that out. Then you need a continuous breakdown to the next levels. That has been discussed quite a lot. That would be interesting to hear your views in your interviews, if people really can see how this is all connected. I don't know how all the breakdown looks like and how it is transported to the people, like customer service or somewhere else. You can try to get a process that should drive this in the right way and need to find a balance there to not spend all the time on this. #00:36:15-7#
36. I: 10.) How convenient is sharing knowledge and ideas via network or sharing platforms, etc.? #00:37:04-7#

37. B: That's also the question how much time you should spend on making all of that available and publishing and keeping it updated. I can get most of the information if I reach out to people and talk to them. I could probably get most of the information via this. I cannot just go online and there's a PowerPoint ready and now I see the big threads. #00:38:13-3#
38. I think we're getting better at doing online training and put them online for people to look at. That is increasing. Tools like teams are helping out, but it still requires people to some extent know each other to some extent, know who should I contact, how should I bring people in, how much time do I spend down on participating in cross-functional work. That is time consuming. It is not super easy to get it going. You need an external driver and a good inter-functional collaboration. If you just look at it from our efforts it has never come by itself, but with a lot of effort. #00:40:38-9#
39. I: 11.) How would you describe the atmosphere among the colleagues at Perstorp? #00:40:52-1#
40. B: I think it's a very friendly set up. It is quite interesting to hear when you have other people coming in that's not been part of that company before. They also say it is very friendly. We may be sometimes too nice. You can be too friendly, too nice as well. Sometimes you need to strike the balance there and we are maybe on the side of being too friendly. But you need to have a certain push and say what is the deadline and there are always some tougher decisions to be made. You can be friendly, you can be friends, but have some boundaries and balance to strike. All in all, it is friendly and people share issues or something they don't like. Anyone should feel safe and secure to bring it up. But you need to have the boundaries. #00:43:46-4#
41. I: 12.) Do you see opportunities for yourself at Perstorp to gain more knowledge and continuously grow? #00:44:21-7#
42. B: Yeah absolutely, you can do that. I think my feeling is 'the more you dig, the more you understand that you don't understand'. There's a lot more to think about, what to do to take next steps? You can do that within the same company. Of course, there are things that will not change here. I don't feel that I have come to a level where I don't learn anymore. On the contrary, I learn a lot everyday and you need to learn a lot everyday. You need to keep up with all the changes that are around you in the world. #00:45:48-4#
43. I: 13.) How accepting is your workplace when you make mistakes or feel vulnerable (in your team and the organization as a whole)? #00:46:23-7#
44. B: I think we are quite accepting. I always try to be as a manager, because you should make sure what is not ok, but at the same time if I know people have tried their best and really made an effort, my key objective is to learning from it and see what can we do to fix it and how can we prevent from happening again.. So, I think that we are quite okay with that. Maybe it is more tricky to actually make sure that you
45. do the learning and implement that. You want to fix the problem quickly and that that is usually focus number one. Did you really get a learning experience and did you really change something to install a way of working that prevents it from happening again. We're working, that's events happening again maybe. #00:48:02-8#
46. I think that my personality and Perstorp set up are rather like that. Maybe that's why I'm still here. Then of course there are differences between different people and another manager might act in a different way. Some might say that I'm too accepting. So there's absolutely personal touch to it and there's a company's touch to it. For me I think those go well hand in hand. I don't feel a contradiction there. #00:49:24-4#
47. You can if you would violate your own beliefs and thoughts daily, it would be kind of hard to continue working there. In a workplace that would be less accepting I'm not sure I would enjoy working there. Accepting sounds like anything goes- That's not the case. It is about learning, but if it happens over and over again, then it's a different story. #00:50:27-8#
48. I: Do you have any questions for us? #00:50:36-6#

49. B: No. I think it is fine. With your knowledge I think you can add something and help the company. It's up to us to think of what the heck can we do with them or maybe you have a thought for us as well. #00:51:41-6#

