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Acknowledgement

This thesis is written by Iselin Haugen as a concluding part of achieving a Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology at BI Business School in Oslo. The topic of this research is leadership development in a digital time.

By exploring the blended leadership development program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’, this thesis aims to identify how it can contribute to learning and development of leaders. The inspiration for choosing this subject originate from personal interest, in addition to being highly relevant in today’s environment. I hope that this thesis will contribute to the research field, give valuable insights of using blended learning in leadership development and shed light on aspects worth including in future programs or research.

The process of writing this thesis has been a challenge both professional and personally. Simultaneously, to be able to explore a topic of interest in depth has been insightful and interesting. It has been a true learning process.

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Summary

This thesis investigates how blended learning can contribute to leadership development to better fit for a digital future. This is done through a qualitative examination, by exploring the new executive program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ at BI. The purpose of the present study is to identify key elements of a blended learning program that foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time. The study illuminates three aspects of particular interest. *The program in itself*, in terms of using blended learning, turns out to be an important factor. Thus, some specific *learning resources* used in ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ seems to yield positive outcomes on participants learning outcomes, such as virtual learning teams. Hence, suggesting that using these learning resources should foster learning and development. In addition, the use of *arts-based methods* creates important knowledge and have benefits suitable for leaders to incorporate in their work life.

Through an evaluation of the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ this thesis reveal several specific learning outcomes and give examples of how informants have already applied some of the content and knowledge at work. Moreover, informants report an overall satisfaction with the program. In essence, it illustrates how a blended leadership development program can contribute to learning and development of leaders in a digital time.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Today's workplace has received a lot of attention lately because of the rapid changes due to technological advancements. Alton (2018) notes that working conditions such as working remotely is accelerating, which has become even more evident with the corona crisis hitting the market in March 2020. The need for social distancing and strict regulation resulted in an explosion of employees working from home (Altinn, 2020). This crisis demonstrated many challenges of leading virtually, such as: digital meetings, digital communication and digital leadership (Frisch & Greene, 2020; Larson, Vroman & Makarius, 2020; Chhaya, 2020). Knowledge of how to deal with these issues became visible, indicating a need for leadership development suitable for a digital time.

Traditionally, leadership development programs have been run through face-to-face seminars between the consultant or teacher and the participants. Literature indicates that this traditional way of leadership development struggles to transfer theory into practice (Day, 2000; Raelin, 2008). Simultaneously, digital education with MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), blended learning and other approaches in combination with digitalization are emerging (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Chauhan, 2014). The characteristics of MOOC is an online course, free of charge and available for anyone who wants to participate (Porter, 2015). In contrast, blended learning is often used in a specific course or a program with limited number of participants. It is a combination of face-to-face meetings and online learning experience (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The latter has qualities that match the changing conditions in the workplace; maybe blended learning could be a solution to close the gap between theory and practice? With digitalization of higher education and executive programs, it is timely to ask whether leadership programs can be approached through blended learning.

What we can find from existing programs within leadership and digitalization is little. In Norway, four universities provide leadership programs about digitalization of organizations, namely: University of Agder, NTNU, OsloMet and University of South-Eastern Norway. Notably, all of them seems to be delivered through traditional face-to-face seminars. Likewise, when searching for the same features worldwide, the options are limited, however, some universities provide it, for instance; IMD Business School, Melbourne Business School and Colombia

Business School. When looking into the curriculum of all of the abovementioned universities, they focus on leadership and digitalization in combination with these topics: strategy, change management and/or innovation. All topics relate more on how to understand digitalization in the business context, rather than focus on personal development of the leader. Hence, there is a need for leadership programs that not only deal with the themes of digital leadership, but also programs delivered as a blending of digital platforms, units and learning resources as well as physical seminars. There are several good arguments for such a development. First, the traditional leadership programs require attendance for days and weeks are difficult to combine with a full-time job for busy managers. Second, the mix between learning and practice is easier to combine with digital learning. The learning becomes a continual process as managers may have access to digital learning tools through their phones and computers wherever they are. Third, managers need to walk the talk. They need to be exposed to digital learning tools and communication programs, in order to experience the benefits and drawbacks with it.

Hernez-Broome & Hughes (2004, p. 30) points out “leading virtually is already a reality, and requirements to lead geographically dispersed units and teams will only increase. Technology will not be a solution for this challenge, but it will surely be a tool”. Their statement is also applicable to leadership development as technology can be a tool for helping leadership development adapt to a digital time, such as through blended learning. This calls for research on how blended learning might enhance leadership development programs to better fit for the future. Therefore, I propose the following research question:

How can a blended leadership development program foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time?

There are several ways to address this issue; I want to do it by exploring the blended learning program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’. Primarily because it utilizes a combination of leadership theory, digitalization and arts-based methods that seem to have never been done before. Additionally, it uses blended learning, a pedagogical form that includes several technological resources, which will be interesting to explore the participants’ experience with this way of

learning. Hence, an evaluation of this program can give valuable information for development of future blended learning programs.

This thesis continues with a short presentation of the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’. Then, a literature review with relevant theory are discussed, the topics are leadership, leadership development, evaluation of leadership development and how individuals are learning. Further, the research design and method for conducting this research is then presented, before evaluating the findings from this study with the informants’ subjective experience and relevant theory, in light of the given research question. Lastly, limitations, future research and a conclusion are presented.

1.1 ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’

Tilstedeværende ledelse (I en digital tid)

‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ is a new executive master of management program at BI, which was launched autumn 2019. This program is meant to fill a gap in the leadership development domain, trying to give insights to important topics relevant for leadership in a digital time. The workplace is changing rapidly, space and place are no longer a boundary. Communication are more important than ever, both in physical and digital space. At the same time, there is a concern with information overload (Misner, 2014). Leaders lack knowledge of how to deal with these issues. This program tries to contribute to this knowledge so leaders are better equipped to manage leadership in a digital time with all its advantages and challenges.

This program is a key contributor to the new focus area at BI. Together with five other world leading business schools, they have created a collaboration and an alliance. Comprising of Imperial College Business School, Lee Kong Chain School of Business, ESMT Berlin, Ivey Business School and EDHEC Business School. A new digital learning platform, called Insendi, was launched with a combination of cutting-edge technology and faculty expertise, to accommodate a growing demand for a more globally accessible and flexible study experience (BI Norwegian Business School, 2018). Insendi is the new platform that hopefully can revamp the traditional way of doing education at higher levels. Day (2000) points

out that, classroom-based programs have limitations like challenges with transfer of training and high start-up costs. Notably the former is probably more evident now as technology is highly important in all organizations, yet the education is lacking behind. This alliance might change that, as “a key aim of the partnership is to challenge the perception of digital education as a sub-standard alternative to classroom-based programs (BI Norwegian Business School, 2018).

The program use a blended learning approach. This implies that it operates with a combination of online learning and face-to-face classroom experience. Allen, Seaman and Garret (2007) notes that the content must be between 30 to 79% in order to be classified as blended learning. This program deliver approximately 66% of its content online, as explained below. Hence, it is blended learning. Another characteristic of blended learning is that in entails a different type of pedagogy. ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ is built on the assumption that learning is more effectively achieved when participants are involved and co-producing the content. When participants actively share and participate, both in class and online, they contribute to the overall learning process. “This form of distributed, network based, sharing, co-producing pedagogics places the participants in the center with the teacher as coach and adviser in the learning process, just like leadership should be in a digital time” (BI Norwegian Business School, n.d.). This is in big contrast to the traditional way of delivering executive education and leadership development programs, as most of them only contains face-to-face seminars, where learning are primarily viewed as individuals’ acquisition of the presented content.

The program consist of nine units. Six of them are 100% digital and the last three are in combination of digital and classroom-based activities. Each unit are build up with a key topic, as presented below. The content in these units include learning goals, central questions for participants to reflect on and syllabus. The learning goals and central questions in each unit are used to create a cohesive structure for learning. Supplementary learning activities like podcasts, short movies, learning logs and open discussion tasks, such as “whiteboard” or “sticky notes” are included to create a diverse learning experience.

<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 1 Introduction: Redefining leadership</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 2 Work and leadership in a digital time: disruption, concentration and efficiency</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 3 Seminar 1 (BI) Leadership in digital and virtual space</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 4 Leadership in virtual teams: Communication and process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 5 New leadership perspectives: Theory for knowledge organizations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 6 Seminar 2 (Italy) Meeting places in a digital time: New ways to communicate</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 7 Aesthetics in leadership: From head to body</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 8 Communication in leadership: In meeting with another</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIT 9 Seminar 3 (BI) Mindful leadership: Social media in leadership</p>

Figure 1: Illustration of units at Insendi for ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’

Lastly, an important part of the program is that the participants gets divided into virtual learning teams where they can reflect on topics, as well as reflect on the synergy in the group in terms of communication, sharing, collaboration and transfer value. The course description are attached in appendix (3).

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the thesis will present relevant theory for the research question. It will first give an historical overview of leadership theories that have had an impact within leadership research. Then, the thesis will draw a line from leadership theory to leadership development. It will discuss aspects that are relevant, like how we should distinguish leader development vs leadership development. Related to this topic, the thesis will present some new perspectives and tools that can be included in leadership development, such as arts-based methods. Furthermore, an overview of two approaches appropriate for evaluating leadership development initiatives are presented. Lastly, theory of how individuals are learning, discussing relevant concepts like blended learning, formal/informal learning and learning through practice.

2.1 Historical perspectives on leadership theories

How did we end up where we are today in the leadership development field? It is essential to give a brief overview of some of the more influential leadership

theories developed through history, in order to understand where we are today, as these theories are a part of the foundation in leadership development. The theories chosen in this chapter have important contributions on the perspective of leadership. Several of these theories builds on each other and previous work. Hence, it is necessary to explain them to create a better understanding of each theory. This overview demonstrates how the concept of leadership has changed over time. The concept of leadership influences how leadership development are implemented, suggesting that leadership development must change accordingly. Thus, looking into what previously have been done in the field of research is a tool for creating awareness and perspective necessary to discuss how blended learning in leadership development may be used.

Theory	Time	Short description
Trait theory	1930s-	Focus on characteristic of the leader
Behavior theory	1950s-	Behavior of leader affect followers – task vs relational
Contingency theory	1970s-	Different situations require different types of leadership
LMX theory	1970s-	Development of an exchange relationship between leader and subordinates, affects workplace outcomes
Transactional and transformational theory	1970s-	Transactional focus on exchange relationship, leader appeal to followers benefits and self-interest from it Transformational focus on motivation of followers to deliver beyond the expected, by elevating their interest
Servant leadership theory	1970s-	Leader help others to achieve goals through empowerment and individual development
Authentic leadership theory	2000s-	The leader are true to their values. Genuine, transparent and ethical
Shared leadership theory	2000s-	Focus on distribution and delegation of leadership responsibilities
Aesthetic leadership theory	2000s-	Inspiration from the arts. Embodied relationship between leader and follower by using the human senses

2.1.1 *The trait and behavior theory*

Earlier leadership theories have traditionally focused primarily on characteristics of the leader, and how these make them either effective or ineffective (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The criticism of these approaches are often related to the fact that there are several contingencies that are not included in their perspective on leadership. Such as the relationship between the leader and the follower. A leadership style that first addressed this issue was LMX (Leader-Member Exchange) theory, which will be discussed later. The first attempt to systematic study leadership resulted in “*Great man theory*”. They believed that leaders were born not made. Looking at great political, social and military leaders, they tried to identify specific characteristics and innate qualities that these leaders possessed (Northouse, 2019). The trait approach evolved from this as it “did not make assumptions about whether leadership traits were inherent or acquired. They simply asserted that leaders’ characteristics are different from non-leaders” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p.48). Additionally, findings from Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986) suggest that individuals’ perception of leadership was strongly associated with traits. Despite this, in Stogdill’s (1948, retrieved from Northouse, 2019) review, he concluded that possessing certain traits does not automatically make you a great leader, it is dependent on situational factors. This re-conceptualized the view of leadership, putting attention to the relationship between people in social situations (Northouse, 2019). Thus opened up the way for the behavioral approach, which emphasized how the behavior of the leader affects followers. It is highly influenced by the Ohio studies and Michigan studies. The former identified *initiating structure* and *consideration* as two general types of leader behavior (Stogdill, 1974). The latter found *production orientation* and *employee orientation* as two main types of leader behavior (Likert, 1961). Both studies indicate the same; it results in what we today know as *task behavior* and *relationship behavior*. Northouse (2019) notes that the primary purpose of the behavioral approach is to explain how followers can be influenced to reach goals by combining these two types of behaviors.

2.2.2 *Contingency theories*

The lack of consistent results from trait- and behavioral theories influenced the development of Contingency theories (Yukl, 2013). There are several different theories within this domain, such as path-goal theory. Evans (1970) introduced the

path-goal theory and it was further developed by House (1971). It can best be explained by how subordinates are motivated by their leaders to achieve a goal (Northouse, 2019). It is as a process in which the leaders behavior or style influence the performance and satisfaction of their subordinates. House and Mitchell (1974, p. 83) explained four different behaviors: *directive*, *supportive*, *participative* and *achievement-oriented*. Which behavior to use, depends on situational factors like employee characteristics, task and environment characteristics (Yukl, 2013). Another model is the LPC contingency model by Fiedler (1967; 1978, retrieved from Yukl, 2013). He believed that the effectiveness of leaders are determined by two factors: *leadership style* and *situational favorableness*. The former can be measured using a scale he developed called LPC scale (Least preferred co-worker), low LPC score are task oriented whereas high LPC score are relation oriented (Yukl, 2013). The latter is complex and consist of three variables: *leader-member relation*, *task structure* and *leader's position power*. Yukl (2013) explain that in order to maximize the effectiveness there are two options, either choose the appropriate behavior for the situation or change situation to fit the behavior of the leader. This suggest that Fiedler believed that the leadership style is fixed, hence difficult to change. Lastly, the situational approach, in essence, is about how different situations will demand different types of leadership. It composes of two dimensions, *directive behavior* and *supportive behavior*, both must be appropriately applied in a given situation (Northouse, 2019). Most known within this approach is Hersey and Blanchard (1969; Blanchard, 1985, retrieved from Northouse, 2019), their model have been revised and refined several time, namely, the Situational Leadership® II (SLII®) model. Based on the abovementioned dimensions, they are further classified into four categories of leadership styles, *directing*, *coaching*, *supporting*, *delegating*. Each style is based on whether the leader are high or low on directive and supportive behavior. Thereby, a leader has the possibility to recognize that followers have different requirements, depending on a situation, and adapt to it. It straightforwardness is its strength, while it is criticized for lacking a strong theoretical foundation (Northouse, 2019). Consequently, this paper will focus on the situational leadership theory. The reason for choosing this theory is its relevance for the program 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' as it is based on leaders adapting their leadership to the situations. For instance, technology, spaces and places are factors influencing how leaders should lead.

2.2.3 LMX theory

The first leadership theory to address the interaction between leader and follower as a focal point, are LMX theory. Within this approach leadership are conceptualized as a dyadic relationship (Northouse, 2019). The central concept is the development of a partnership between the leader and follower, formed gradually through reciprocal reinforcement of behavior (Yukl, 2013). Thus, it will give access to several benefits, such as commitment and loyalty (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, some limitations are evident in the literature. Yukl (2013) explain how the development of a close relationship with one subordinate might be dysfunctional due to benefits provided, creating perception of inequity. Moreover, some of the leadership behaviors necessary for facilitation of collective performance are not included in the dyadic theories.

2.2.4 Transactional and transformational theory

James M. Burns was the first to introduce the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership in 1978 (Northouse, 2019). Yukl (2013) describes the latter as an exchange between leader and follower, by appealing to the followers self-interests and benefits from the exchange. Two factors was identified as the essence of transactional leadership, namely, *contingent reward* which is the process of setting up constructive transactions with followers, with clearly established expectations and reward for meeting them. *Management by exception*, which is the degree a leader take corrective action based on results from the leader-follower exchange (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Howell and Avolio (1993) distinguished between being active or passive in this process. Active management by exception includes monitoring follower behavior, trying to anticipate problems and initiate corrective actions before problems occur. Passive management by exception will wait to take action until after the problems are present. In essence, what differs the two is the timing of the leader's intervention. In contrast, transformational leadership focus on forsaking the short-term goals and immediate self-interests, instead transforming followers to pursue a motivation to deliver beyond what is expected by creating identification with the leader and elevating their interests (Northouse, 2019). Four dimensions constitute transformational leadership, namely, *idealized influence (charisma)* causing followers to identify with the leader, because of their manners; a charismatic leader appeals to followers' emotional level, take stands and show confidence. *Inspirational*

motivation, leaders providing an inspiring and appealing vision to their followers. Leaders who possess such talent are optimistic in their communication entailing future goals and provide meaning for upcoming tasks. *Intellectual stimulation* the extent to which leaders are willing to take risk, challenge assumptions and promote followers' ideas. Creativity are stimulated and encouraged by leaders with this trait. Finally, *individualized consideration*, leaders who wish to support followers' individual goals through coaching while paying attention to their needs and concerns (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). It is evident that this leadership approach are inspired by charismatic leadership theory (Ronald, 2014). Illustrating the popularity of these theories, Judge and Piccolo (2004) did a keyword search from 1990 – 2003 in PsycINFO database, their findings revealed that transformational and charismatic leadership have been studied more than all of the abovementioned theories together.

2.2.5 *Servant leadership theory*

Servant leadership is a term coined by Robert K. Greenleaf (Northouse, 2019). It was first addressed in the early 1970s, yet the attention from other scholars was slow until recently (Day et al., 2014b). The perception that servant leadership and transformational leadership are rather similar was the focus in Gregory Stone, Russel and Patterson's (2004) study. Their findings revealed that there are many basic similarities such as visionary leaders, influence of followers and show consideration for others. Despite this, the most evident difference, the focus of transformational leaders are on organizational objectives, whereas servant leaders put their attention to the people. Proposed by Greenleaf, the primary responsibility of leaders is to serve followers, which is the essence of ethical leadership. Using servant leadership in the workplace entail helping others to achieve shared goals and objectives through facilitation of empowerment and individual development (Yukl, 2013). Northouse (2019) points out that this leadership theory has limited theoretical foundation. Hence, there is a need for more research on the topic.

2.2.6 *Authentic leadership theory*

A representation in the recent areas of leadership research is authentic leadership theory. It implies that the leader must be genuine in their approach. Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009, p. 423) has defined authentic leadership as "a pattern of transparent and ethical leader behavior that encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers' inputs".

No consensus have been given to this definition and there are several definitions with different views (Northouse, 2019). Simultaneously, it seems like a general agreement about four contributing factors to cover the concept of authentic leadership. Namely, *balanced processing*, *internalized moral perspective*, *relational transparency* and *self-awareness* (Avolio et al., 2009). The strength of this approach is that everyone can learn to be more authentic, it emphasizes that leaders, over time, can develop behaviors and values linked to authentic leadership (Northouse, 2019). Nevertheless, it is mentioned that whether authentic leadership yields positive organizational outcomes is unclear. Thus questions about its effectivity and if context matters should be addressed.

2.2.7 Shared leadership theory

Another theory representing the recent leadership theories is shared leadership. It views collective performance as an important factor. Pearce and Conger (2003, p. 21) describe it as “a dyadic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both”. The argumentation of the newer perspectives is that distribution and delegation of leadership responsibilities is fundamental for leaders to facilitate, along with shared leadership, empowering and transformational leadership are used (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; De Paoli, 2015). One can argue that this makes self-leadership relevant as well. This leadership theory goes beyond the traditional view of having a leader with formal hierarchical authority controlling and trying to influence their employees, instead they believe all employees could lead themselves to some degree (Pearce & Manz, 2005). A lot of research have reported positive effect on work related outcomes, such as productivity and job satisfaction, when using self-leadership (Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2010). What these theories have in common is that they challenge the traditional perspectives of leadership, which might be important for future workplaces with high degree of digitalization. De Paoli (2015, p. 124), mention that “the leader-centric focus on leadership is for virtual leadership substituted by a shared and empowered leadership approach whereby people lead themselves in accordance with goals and agendas”. This indicates that these approaches are important in an emerging digital time.

2.2.8 Aesthetic leadership theories

Aesthetic, embodied and mindful leadership are all part of a newer approach within leadership theories. With inspiration from the arts through studies of dance, the theatre world and orchestras, this leadership research is trying to enrich how we understand and analyze leadership and organizations (De Paoli, Røyseng & Wennes, 2017). Hansen, Ropo and Sauer (2007, p. 545) explain aesthetics as “sensory knowledge and felt meaning of objects and experiences”. From this perspective, leadership can be viewed as the embodied relationship between leader and follower by using the human senses such as touching, listening and hearing. Moreover, aesthetic leadership activates feelings and sensuous perceptions (Ropo, De Paoli & Bathurst, 2017). In similar vein, mindful leadership is about being present in the moment. There are four aspects necessary in order to be present: *body*, *spirit*, *mind* and *emotion* (Ehrlich, 2017). The core of mindful leadership relates to what can be described as the essence of aesthetic and embodied leadership. Ehrlich (2017) points out that being truly present includes being mindful of all four aspects, only then will it be possible to connect with others through impactful presence. However, skills such as empathy and listening are needed in order for building strong relationships. In essence, leaders should be engaged with their body, senses and emotions. While we are living in a digital time, De Paoli et al., (2017) states that the abovementioned aspects are often neglected when discussing working and leading digitally. Notably, these authors have made a link between aesthetic and embodied research, with research on virtual and digital work in combination with leadership.

2.2 Perspectives within leadership development

Based on the abovementioned leadership theories discussed it is clearly difficult to establish ‘the perfect’ leadership theory. Each approach bring something valuable for future research and several new theories are emerging. The foundation of every leadership development programs are constructed and based on different leadership theories. ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ is no exception. As the brief review above has revealed there are a broad range of theories focusing on different aspects in the leadership domain. The construction of ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ entails aspects from situational leadership theory (contingency theory), authentic leadership theory, self/shared leadership theory and aesthetic leadership theory. Day & Harrison (2007) states how leadership

development and the ideas around it must evolve in line with the changing conceptualization of leadership. Hence, ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ illustrates an example of their statement by incorporating several recent leadership theories in the program.

The main focus within leadership development literature have been on improving behavior and skills of individuals (Day, 2000; Yukl, 2013; DeRue & Myers, 2014). Nonetheless, organizations are not interested in which leadership theory is right, which is probably impossible to determine definitively, what is important for them is how they can develop leaders and their leadership as efficiently and effectively as possible (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & Mckee, 2014a). Leadership development has been defined as “every form of growth or stage of development in the life cycle that promotes, encourages, and assists the expansion of knowledge and expertise required to optimize one's leadership potential and performance” (Brungardt, 1996, p. 83). With this definition, it implies that leadership development is not a static or fixed process, rather a continuous process. It is dynamic and comprise of multiple interactions persisting over time (Day et al., 2014a). Hackman and Wageman (2007) points out that there is little agreement about the best strategies for developing leaders. DeRue and Myers (2014, p. 834) states “it remains unclear what the critical knowledge gaps are related to leadership development, and where future research needs to focus in order to help organizations more effectively identify and develop future leadership talent”. Simultaneously, its complexity rise a call for more scholarly attention on the topic (Lynham, 2000; Day et al., 2014a). Moreover, they mention how it should be researched independent from the general field of leadership.

The leadership development domain is inherently important for practitioners. Companies spent almost \$31 billion on leadership development initiatives in 2015 (Wakefield, Abbatiello & Agarwal (2016). While the investment is extremely high, there seems to be a conceptual confusion on the topic. According to Day (2000), there is a difference between *leader* development and *leadership* development. The former focus on intrapersonal competence, such as self-motivation, self-awareness and self-regulation. Hence, development of the human capital (Day, 2000). As a result, an individual will probably gain new knowledge, skills or abilities. However, this distinction does not take the complexity of human

interaction into considerations. In contrast, the latter, focus on interpersonal competence, like social awareness and social skills. Contributing in the development of the social capital (Day, 2000). It has a relational and dyadic focus. Hence, development happens through social context. While it is important to be aware of the difference, the two concepts should not be separated. The best result will be to incorporate both approaches. “Either approach is incomplete by itself” (Day, 2000, p. 605). Based on this distinction, it is evident that the history of leadership development have primarily focused on the *leader* aspect. As noted, earlier leadership theories, like trait theory, was situated around the individual leader. Consequently, the perception of identifying what characterizes successful leaders and then develop these, often, tangible leadership behaviors, skills or competencies became the essence of leadership development. Kennedy, Carroll, Francoeur, Edwards and Turnbull (2013) describe this way of development as a *skill set approach*. Moreover, they argue that we are moving away from this approach to a *mindset approach*. Thereby shifting the focus of leadership from being attached to an individual, instead viewed as a phenomenon that exists between people. This do not imply that we are moving away from what Day (2000) described as *leader* development. Our intrapersonal competencies should still be developed, even though our perception of leadership has changed. Individual development of skills and knowledge will still be important, what makes the difference is what type of skills and knowledge that will be relevant. Hence, it raises a question: what type intrapersonal competencies are essential in a digital time? Moreover, will a program designed with blended learning be more suitable to foster learning and development of these skills and knowledge?

As leadership perspectives has evolved and changed over time, so has leadership development. From trait and behavior perspective, to dyadic and relationship oriented. With the newer leadership perspectives, like aesthetic and embodied, self and shared leadership. In relation to the aforementioned and leadership development in a digital time, some topics are highly relevant to discuss. The upcoming section will elaborate on arts-based perspectives and methods applicable for leadership development and digital tool in leadership development. Discussing how they might be relevant to include in a blended learning program to foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time.

2.2.1 Arts-based perspectives and methods in leadership development

The core of arts-based methods draw lines from the aesthetic and embodied leadership theory, with focus on feelings, sensuous perception, awareness of being present and in the moment. A considerable amount of studies has already looked into using arts-based methods within the field of leadership development.

Kennedy et al., (2015) presents a technique from the movie industry, montage, as a method for disrupting habits of how we work. Suggesting that it can foster openness to diversity and differences, for instance in dysfunctional teams.

Schedlitzki, Jarvis and MacInnes (2015, p. 412) explore the Greek mythology and storytelling, arguing that: “projective focus of the re-storying process encourages critical self-reflection and discussion of the socially constructed nature of organizational roles, relationships and leadership”. It allows participants to reflect, explore emotions and questioning the status quo. These are examples that helps people to understand how arts-based methods and the aesthetics can give valuable outcomes in the leadership development terrain. Thus, the essence from arts-based methods seems to provide insight to a new way of learning or create knowledge and perspectives that are applicable in digital workplace context.

There are several challenges leaders face at work where arts-based methods may be a tool for improving the different situations. “In working life these methods can represent a deep, particular and playful way of expressing personal and professional issues, an approach that can foster human growth and bring a sense of meaning and wholeness to life” (Meltzer, 2016, p. 78). Taylor and Ladkin (2009) states that along with culture, leadership and group dynamics are examples of areas in the workplace where arts-based methods is useful to implement. These areas are influenced by digitalization, hence incorporating arts-based methods in leadership development suitable for a digital time might yield positive outcomes.

Arts-based methods are approaches distinctive from traditional organizational development approaches. Several researchers have argued that arts-based methods can supplement the traditional, rational way of understanding, thinking and learning, with a more holistic approach to leadership and management (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; Scharmer & Kaeufer, 2010; Springborg & Ladkin, 2018). Proposed by Taylor and Ladkin (2009), *skill transfer*, *projective technique*, *illustration of essence* and *making* are four different processes that forms the basis of arts-based

methods. In this paper, the focus will be on the two first mentioned processes. Noteworthy, for leaders to see the real value of using arts-based methods, it is important to clearly state how these interventions generates useful learning outcomes (Springborg & Ladkin, 2018).

The essence of skill transfer is that there are a skill that can be learned from arts that could be applied effectively to leadership and management in organizations (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). The desired outcome is that those skills will enable the leader to perform their roles or tasks more effectively. Taylor and Ladkin (2009, p. 64) points out that “arts-based methods allow managers to feel the experience of those skills rather than think about them”. Thus, it tries to provide a good anchor so they begin to use it in their daily work. Research has applied this concept for more than twenty years. An example is the way Barrett (1998) used jazz improvisation in leadership development, stating that managers face similar situations as jazz musicians with problems that are usually ambiguous and unstructured. “In a world in which yesterday’s responses become inappropriate maps for today’s challenges, managers must improvise and would do well to pay attention to what jazz musicians are doing” (Barrett, 1998, p. 286).

In contrast, Taylor and Ladkin (2009, p. 55) explain projective technique as “the output of artistic endeavors allow participants to reveal inner thoughts and feeling that may not be accessible through more conventional developmental modes”. Hence, it tries to foster reflection through projection. Thus, it can described as a gut-felt knowing. Projective technique can be useful as a meaning maker; it helps creating an enhanced understanding of daily complex organizational issues and produces a nuanced picture of it (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). Meltzer (2016) demonstrates an example of projective technique in leadership development; she used animal figures where the participants had to choose an animal they identified themselves with and transfer “everyday behavior and feelings into a new context” (p. 79). As a result, it can foster reflexivity, creativity and improvement of leadership competence.

2.2.2 Digital tools in leadership development

The technological advancement makes it possible to adapt and deliver solutions and tools for educational purpose with intention to strengthen the learning

outcome. Hence, a blended learning program should try to incorporate some of these to utilize its advantages. Digital tools can encompass podcast or YouTube videos. When using these types of tools in educational settings, there are several potential learning outcomes; Berk (2009) suggested a list with 20 of them, for instance: increase understanding, foster creativity, inspire and motivate, foster deeper learning and make learning fun. In their research, Tan and Pearce (2011) concluded that using YouTube in the classroom was helpful and an effective way of supporting students learning. Noteworthy is the study by Henderson, Selwyn and Aston (2017), they collected a list of reasons why digital technology was useful in relation to educational purpose. Their findings implies that flexibility, accessibility, communication and collaboration, and different perspectives of learning content was highly valuable for students. These findings can be considered relatable to Berk's suggested list of potential learning outcomes, indicating that digital tools have benefits worth including in leadership development. Moreover, Cebeci and Tekdal (2006) did a research on whether podcast could be used as audio learning objects. They mentioned how its' inherited pedagogically advantages could make podcast a complimentary tool for e-learning, such as the flexibility to listen to it whenever you want. Thus, learning through listening might be its most essential pedagogical characteristic. In essence, using digital tools in educational purposes, such as leadership development, should foster positive outcomes. However, there are some questions that should be raised, like how much do they actually learn from these tools?

One of Berk's (2009) potential learning outcomes was how digital tools can serve as vehicle or a catalyst for collaboration. To build on this, suggesting that using virtual learning teams could enhance this learning outcome along with those mentioned above. Thereby, increase the overall learning. Listening to podcasts or viewing YouTube videos might create some learning by themselves. Nevertheless, if the content is shared, discussed and reflected upon with peers, the chance of increased learning are in place. Another aspect that makes virtual teams relevant to use in leadership development is the meta-learning about virtual teams in itself. Using teams have become a vital part in most organizations. Teams make it possible to combine different skills, perspectives and talents in order to achieve a common goal (Siebdrat, Hoegland & Ernst, 2009). With increased technology, tools and knowledge available, virtual teams has emerged as the new way of

working. The vast majority of literature on this topic is developed within the last twenty years (Martins, Gilson & Maynard, 2004; Gilson, Jones Young, Vartiainen & Hakonen, 2015). What differentiate this way of working is that individuals are often geographically dispersed with limited face-to-face contact. Hence, group members work independently and communicate through different electronic devises (Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). Caulat (2006) pointed out how organizations believed that if they got the right people, the right process and the right technology then the team would automatically perform. However, Siebdrat et al., (2009) mention that this way of thinking is unrealistic. To collaborate as a virtual team it require extra effort compared to traditional team settings, with important factors as coordination, conflict management, building trust and leadership (Liao, 2016). What is important is that every virtual teams find their own unique way of working, just like a code of conduct (Caulat, 2006). Participating in a virtual team in an educational setting makes it possible for students to reflect on real-life issues, such as, how to build trust, how does leadership work in virtual teams and how to secure a good working environment. Hence, it will not only work as a tool for learning, it will also give valuable transfer from theoretical world to practice.

2.3 Evaluation of leadership development

When looking into a new leadership development program it is important to do an evaluation. There are several reasons for this: first, it can give valuable insights into aspects relevant for this thesis' research question. Second, it will indicate if the program was successful. Third, it might shed light on possible improvements of the program. Topno (2012, p. 16) defines evaluation as “the process of forming value judgments about the quality of programs, products and goals”. Moreover, she explains that performance and behavior changes of the participants is also important to incorporate when assessing the impact of a leadership developmental program. The complexity of factors involved in leadership development makes it difficult to evaluate. Elements like time and money constraints are crucial, thus it involves peoples' experience, which can differ among participants from the same leadership development program. In addition, evaluation and comparison might be difficult to achieve due to variation in training methods such as, classroom-based, blended-learning approach, coaching and on the job training.

Evident in the literature is the lack of research and adequately models or instruments evaluating outcomes of leadership development programs (Collins & Holton, 2004; Black & Earnest, 2009). Despite the fact that there are proposed several approaches for evaluation, they all have limitations. To mention some of them: CIPP – context, input, process and product evaluation, created in the late 1960s (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) CIRO – context, input, reaction and outcome (Warr, Bird & Rackson, 1970), EvaluLEAD (Grove, Kibel & Hass, 2005), Kirkpatrick’s four levels (Kirkpatrick, 1979) and Decision-based evaluation (Kraiger, 2002). This thesis will discuss the two latter.

Level 1 is reaction. It tells you if the participants liked the program (Kirkpatrick, 1979). Hence, this stage is related to feelings. Motivation, engagement and interest are important factors. Nevertheless, Kirkpatrick (1979) points out that the outcome of this level will not include if any learning has taken place. This will be measured in Level 2 – Learning. Which can be defined as “the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills as a result of attending the program” (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Notably, the learning level will not measure on-the-job use (Kirkpatrick, 1979). Both level 1 and level 2 are likely to be measured right after the program is terminated. Level 3 is behavior. At this stage, they measure the extent to if the participants behavior is changed because of participation in the program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Moreover, they state that four conditions are necessary for change to occur; *desire to change, know what and how to do it, right climate and reward*. The last level 4 is about results. Kirkpatrick (1979) mention that desired results are often stated through the programs objectives. As the first three levels are more related to outcomes on an individual level, the last if often linked to tangible organizational outcomes. Return of investment (ROI) are often associated with this. Examples could be reduced turnover and/or reduces cost, increased quality and/or increased efficiency.

The model of Kirkpatrick is viewed as hierarchical, indicating that there must be favorable outcomes at a lower level for a favorable outcome to be achieved at a higher level (Clement, 1982). This is linked to the three assumptions about Kirkpatrick’s model, which is heavily critiqued: 1. The levels have ascending value of information, 2. Levels of evaluation are causally linked, and 3. The levels

are positively intercorrelated (Alliger & Janak, 1989). If these assumptions was true, then the ultimate goal would always be to gain best possible outcome at the result level. However, not all programs have the intention to reach change as an outcome at all levels. Whether or not people choose to use this model as a tool to evaluate their program, Alliger and Janak (1989, p. 331) states, “the power of Kirkpatrick’s is its simplicity and its ability to help people think about training evaluation criteria”. Hence, it will probably have a positive effect if implemented either way.

The intention of decision-based evaluation is to encourage those who apply evaluations on a training program to make better choices, in terms of why, what and when evaluate (Kraiger, 2002). The idea is that when decisions about why is determined, then the answer to what and when will be guided by this decision. Based on Twitchell, Holden and Trott’s (2001, retrieved from Kraiger, 2002) study, the purpose for conducting evaluations appears to be threefold. Notably: 1. Decision-making, 2. Feedback and, 3. Marketing. These purposes are the core of the decision-based model and it clearly distinguish the collection method from evaluation target (Kraiger, 2002). This model emphasize three different targets, training content and design, change in learners and organizational payoffs. Consequently, it suggest that when evaluating a program, if it has only one purpose for evaluation, then it is not necessary to evaluate all three targets. For instance, as illustrated in figure 2 below, if feedback to the trainer is desired, then only evaluating training content and design will be relevant. This is a contrast to Kirkpatrick’s model, which emphasize that all levels should be evaluated.

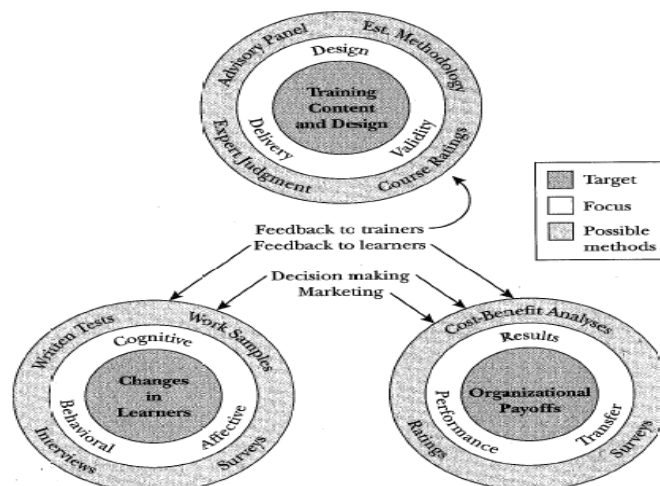


Figure 2: Targets of evaluation (Kraiger, 2002, p. 343).

If the target is training content and design, then focal issues to address should relate to the program design, delivery of the program or its content validity (Kraiger, 2002). Moreover, the model suggest that a good way to measure this is through participant reactions. Thus, it will tell us if the program is successful in terms of its composition. When the target is changes in learner the evaluation should focus on cognitive, affective and behavioral changes in the participant (Kraiger, 2002). Different possible outcomes are motivation, attitude, skill acquisition, executive control and situated problem solving. This part will tell us if the participant actually have learned something from the program. The final target in this model is organizational payoffs. Evaluation at this point will indicate if the participate can transfer what is learned into their workplace and apply it, in addition trying to reveal if the program had a bottom-line impact on the effectiveness (Kraiger, 2002).

The essence of this model, by separating the targets of evaluation from each other, are correcting for one ambiguity inherent in the evaluation framework to Kirkpatrick (Kraiger, 2002). Changes in behavior and performance are not necessary linked. Hence, the participant might change their behavior because of the program but not create improvement in job performance or vice versa.

2.4 How to learn?

In order to explore how a blended leadership development program might foster learning and development we need to understand the concept of learning. As this chapter of the thesis will try to demonstrate, learning is multifaceted and there are probably not one universal way people learn best. Raelin (2008) points out that learning constitutes competitive advantage in organizations as it creates, deepens and adapts knowledge. To stay competitive is crucial in a rapidly changing environment. Hence, it is interesting to look into learning theory as it might give valuable insights into how individuals are learning, as it is an important factor when we want to understand how leaders might learn and develop best. Bass and Vaughan, 1966) defines learning as a “relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of practice or experience”. It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills or attitudes. Noteworthy there are individual differences that might affect the learning outcome, like personality, the learning environment, age

and intellectual ability (Cowling & Mailer, 1998). Moreover, these authors indicate that the learning process might be slow without commitment.

There are several ways to understand the concept of learning; most commonly are probably the individual acquisition of knowledge and skills and/or the participation in social contexts. However, Elkjaer (2004) have suggested a “third way” of learning, which is the development of knowledge and experience in social context. This “third way” tries to incorporate the two previously mentioned views, rather than looking at learning as either acquisition of knowledge and skills or participation. Hence, it tries to extend the learning process to include reflective thinking or individual and joint inquiry (Elkjaer, 2004). Reflection has been emphasized as a central part in the learning process (Garrison, 1991; Elkjaer, 2004; Kempster, 2009). Consequently, the perception of learning as merely acquisition of information is insufficient. This way of thinking, learning as individual acquisition, is predominant in the understanding of learning because it is known from formal education and reflects how learning is understood (Elkjaer, 2004). This can explain why classroom based education suffer from low commitment. Thus, Raelin (2008) notes how the classroom model of learning struggle with link between theory and practice, as a result learning seems impractical, boring and irrelevant. Using blended learning could be a solution to prevent such feelings. This approach will be elaborated further in the next section.

2.4.1 Blended learning

Blended learning is both straightforward and complex in its approach. To put it simply, it is a combination of online learning experience with face-to-face classroom experience. Dziuban, Hartman & Moskal (2004) described it like this “blended learning should be viewed as a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment, rather than a ratio of delivery modalities”. The complexity lies in its implementation, it is applicable in so many context and the virtually design possibilities are limitless (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). For this reason, it is not likely that you will find identical blended learning designs. There are several advantages of implementing a blended learning approach in higher education. It is popular in educational settings due to its flexibility and for providing timely and

continuous learning (Rasheed, Kamsin & Abdulla, 2020). Hernez-Broome & Hughes (2004) mention how using blended learning in leadership development will probably maximize the effectiveness because it offers the best of both worlds. The need for physical interaction, cooperation and exchange with other participants are still crucial elements in the learning process, but the technology creates opportunities for individual adjustment. In executive programs, this will allow participants to easier combine studies and work simultaneously. Nevertheless, there are some challenges related to this approach. In the study of Boelens, De Wever and Voet (2017) they identified four key challenges of blended learning: 1. Incorporating flexibility, 2. Facilitating interaction, 3. Facilitating students' learning process and 4. Fostering an effective learning climate. Moreover, Rasheed, et al., (2020) did a review of the blended learning literature, their results revealed challenges related to students' self-regulations with the online component, such as procrastination.

2.4.2 Formal and informal learning

Formal learning are usually based on educational and training settings like a classroom, online or a mix of both. It is characterized as a systematic and structured way of organizing learning in terms of learning objectives and support from a teacher (EC, 2001). In contrast, informal learning can be described as invisible learning, considering that people usually lack awareness of their own learning, in terms of the situation is not recognized as learning (Eraut, 2004). Typical situations for informal learning are work-related, like trial and error, cooperation and discussions with colleagues and observing others. However, it is not mutual exclusive within work-related settings, in practice; it can take place anytime and anywhere. Eraut (2004, p. 247) explains that informal learning “recognizes the social significance of learning from other people, but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization”. Hence, it can be argued that informal learning are complementary to learning through practice and experience. Social settings are important for individuals learning outcome, such as reflecting with others. In line with this argument, Raelin (2008, p. 67) states, “theory makes sense only through practice, and practice makes sense only through reflection as enhanced by theory”. Although these learning practices can be considered as quite different, Kempster (2009) suggest that formal learning can

function as a catalyst for enhancing informal leadership development. In essence, the theory indicates that people will learn best when both practices are combined.

2.4.3 Learning through practice

Learning is a dynamic process that occurs over time (McCall, 2010). Thus, it is influenced by the context. It is important to consider the contextual factors when discussing learning since people have different ways in which they learn best. Kempster (2009, p. 60) points out, “the significance of context to individual learning is central to the role of engagement and interaction in social settings, shaping what is learnt through an emphasis on what is considered important and salient to an individual within a community”. Taking this to account, creating a diverse learning experience will probably enhance the overall learning in a group because it will cover different ways of how individuals are learning. Raelin (2008) notes that sharing experiences, theories and reflections with each other are how people often learn best.

McCall (2004, p. 127) states, “the primary source of learning to lead, to the extent that leadership can be learned, is experience”. This supports the notion of learning by doing. Thus, the 70:20:10 framework emphasize the importance of learning from experience. It combines different learning practices and has been widely adopted by practitioners. The framework indicates that seventy percent of learning occurs through work-based experience, twenty percent from social interaction and ten percent is formal training (McCall, Lombardo & Morrison, 1988). The strength of this framework is the awareness it creates, that learning and development can happen outside formal learning approaches. Moreover its emphasis of using the combination from several forms of learning to effectively build capabilities (Kajweski & Madsen, 2012). Despite its popularity among practitioners, the effectiveness of this framework has not been demonstrated in relation to the transfer of learning (Johnson, Blackman & Buick, 2018). In their report, Kajewski & Madsen (2012) noted that measuring the impact of experiential learning, also referred to as informal learning, was reported as challenging for the organizations, when compared to formal training. Additionally, findings from Johnson et al., (2018) suggests that there are some misconceptions regarding the implementation of the 70:20:10 framework. Most relevant are: 1. Overconfidence in experiential learning will automatically

culminate in capability development 2. Failure to recognize the role social learning plays often resulting in a narrow interpretation. McCall (2004) explain the former as, people do not necessarily learn automatically from experience, they might learn something, nothing at all or the wrong thing. Johnson et al., (2018) believe that the glue to secure learning from experience, in addition to integrating the formal learning, is the social aspect. This relates to the latter misconception, which also can be an explanation of why the effectiveness of this framework in terms of transfer of learning is lacking. To conclude, experiential, social and formal learning are, important factors when looking at how leaders will learn. All three should be incorporated to gain best possible learning outcome.

PART III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this section, the thesis will present the research design and method used to conduct this research. It will explain the process of collecting the data. How the data is analyzed. Lastly, it will discuss the quality criteria and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research method

This research study aims to explore how the blended learning program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ can contribute to the leadership development domain. Hence, using an exploratory research method. The reason for choosing an exploratory design is that it requires an open approach when doing research into the unknown. The lack of research with blended learning and leadership development makes it suitable to use, as we do not know what we will discover. Previous research have evaluated leadership development programs, but these are likely not relevant as the pedagogy and delivery method is different in a blended learning program than a traditional face-to-face program. Research should be conducted in a way that strives to not presume to know what we will find. Hence, the result cannot be guided by preconceptions or anticipations (Fisher, Buglear, Lowry, Mutch, & Tansley, 2010). For this purpose, a qualitative research design is most suitable. The flexibility is the key difference between a qualitative and quantitative method (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Qualitative research seeks to understand in depth a social phenomenon within its context, a process of naturalistic inquiry, focusing on why rather than what (Klenke, Martin & Wallace, 2016). Its strength is the ability to present complex

descriptions of an individual's experience (Mack et al., 2005). Qualitative research views social phenomena holistically and use an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015). An inductive reasoning is more exploratory and open-ended (Jacobsen, 2015). With this research study, I want to build rather than test theory. Bryman and Bell (2015) notes how theory is the outcome of research when using an inductive stance. Which confirms the appropriateness of using this method based on the purpose of this study.

3.2 Data collection

For this research, in-depth interviews will be used as data collection method. "It is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 29). Moreover, I have access to an extensive course evaluation for 'Mindful Leadership (in a digital time)' directed by BI. This questionnaire included much more than a standard course evaluation as it used both closed and open-ended questions. Topics the questionnaire addressed was: expectations to the program, learning effect for knowledge and skills in leadership, outcome of learning activities, learning log, virtual learning team, outcome of seminars and outcome of working with the exam. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix (6). This material will be reviewed and might give valuable insights into findings from the interviews. Because this research seeks to discover novel insights regarding blended learning and leadership development, the data will be collected at two different times with same participants. Such longitudinal approach is convenient, as participants' experience should be processed over time when doing research into an unknown field. The first data collection will be in the beginning of the program and the second will be after the participants finished the program.

3.2.1 Sample

The sample was collected with a mix of purposeful and quota sampling. The former refers to identify people who have the answers to the research question (Fisher et al., 2010), the latter is about deciding how many people to include with different characteristics such as age and gender (Mack et al., 2005). As this research is based on a new executive program at BI, those participating in it will be most suitable to interview. The total amount of participants were 25 people, 5 men and 20 women. They represent a variation in age ranging from approximately 30 to 60 years. Their workplace represent both private and public sector. While

trying to get a variation in the representation, the following characteristics were included: gender, age and work in private or public sector. Based on these “criteria” the participants were randomly picked and the final sample included five people – three women and two men. I got their contact information with assistance from the course responsible. All of them received a text message explaining the purpose of the study and asking if they wanted to participate. It is important to note that in qualitative research studies the sample is limited and is not representative to the population, which is not the purpose of this type of study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Nevertheless, the data must be handled accordingly. In addition, since findings from the questionnaire are relevant to use in the analysis, then it is important to note that the total amount of respondents was 13 out of 25. These were anonymous so it is not possible to say anything specific about the sample other than half of the participants in the program responded.

3.2.2 Conducting the interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method for this study. The way it is conducted allows for greater flexibility in contrast to structured interviews (Klenke, Martin & Wallace, 2016). Moreover, the comparability is better with semi-structured rather than unstructured interviews since there is no guaranty that the participants will get the same questions with the latter (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are based on an interview guide, including topics related to the research question, focusing on open-ended questions (Tolley, Ulin, Mack, Robinson & Succop, 2016). Using this type of questions, including probing will give the interviewee the opportunity to respond with their own words instead of forcing them with fixed responses (Mack et al., 2005). The Interview guide can be found in Appendix (4 and 5).

The interviews took place in different settings depending on what suited the participants. Some of them preferred to do it at their workplace, the rest wanted to do it at BI. Fisher et al., (2010) points out that it is seldom ideal to conduct the interviews at the interviewees’ workplace, however they might be more comfortable to talk. In addition, it is a matter of practicalities. The context in which the interview is conducted can often influence the answer from the interviewee, this is called the context effect (Jacobsen, 2015). It is difficult to avoid because of practicalities. Nonetheless, it is important as a researcher to be

aware of since it is a possible bias. In terms of variation in interview setting, it may result in differences in responses. This was taken under consideration during the research process.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded with permission from the participants. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes including an introduction, wrap-up and summary. All interviewees signed a Consent Declaration “Samtykkeerklæring” (see Appendix 2). This research study is approved and in line with regulations from NSD – Norwegian Center for Research Data (see Appendix 1).

3.3 Data analysis

Since the data were collected at two times, the process of analyzing the material are a bit more complex. After the first five interviews were conducted, the recordings were transcribed and interpreted. This was done to make sure the process was guided by the data itself, so the preliminary analysis of the first interview session did not influence the second interview session and vice versa. Hence, the material from the last five interviews were also transcribed and interpreted. In both cases, the data were arranged into preliminary categories. Then the process of coding all the material started, trying to draw out important material from what was collected (Fisher et al., 2010). The goal is to identify meaningful perceptions. In total, the material was structured into nine different categories with several sub-categories accordingly; “expectation”, “motivation”, “leadership”, “about the program – blended learning”, “learning resources”, “arts-based methods”, “learning outcomes”, “transfer value” and “other”. After this process, then I revisited the literature to ensure a good connection between the data and the theory. The process of revisiting the theoretical foundation, comparing and reevaluating the data provides exploratory power in this research context. Thus, it allows the researcher to keep an open mind and the risk of premature conclusions are reduced. Moreover, it is important to note that analyzing data from the questionnaire happened separately from the analyzing of the interviews. This was done to make sure the process was guided by the data itself. In essence, the questionnaire should not influence the analyzing of interviews and vice versa. As a researcher, this was taken under consideration during the whole process and created an awareness while doing the analysis.

3.4 Quality criteria

It is important to evaluate the quality of the research when designing and conducting a study. Reliability, validity and replication is three of the most important criteria for evaluation (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Tolley et al., (2016) explain that these criteria are redefined for qualitative research to ensure greater relevance when evaluating, since the aim of qualitative research is to explore, understand and discover. Guba (1981) proposed four elements that comprise the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Tolley at al., (2016, p. 51-53) explain these elements; credibility is about the confidence in the truth of the findings.

Dependability relies on the fact that we can find logically consistent patterns of response if the data are dependable. Confirmability is about the researchers' role in the process, the extent to how their personal values can intrude. Lastly, transferability is about producing conceptually representative data (not statistically) of people in a specific context. Guba and Lincoln (1982) drew the parallels between the two types of quality criteria: credibility – internal validity, transferability – external validity, dependability – reliability and confirmability – objectivity. Taken together these are all important measure to consider during this research process. As this thesis used in-depth interviews with real participants from a real executive program at BI. In addition to data gathered from the extensive course evaluation, the total amount is sufficient for giving a good perception of the reality. Hence, it is reasonable argue that it is credible.

Nevertheless, when using a qualitative approach, this thesis could have some limitation regarding transferability and external validity. When investigating one specific leadership development program it might hinder the possibility to generalize across social settings. Thus, it relies on the subjective meaning and perception from each informant, which may influence the outcome of this study to not be as valid. Simultaneously Fisher et al., (2010) notes when drawing interpretations and conclusion from research findings, then findings can be true, which is the case for this thesis. Concerning dependability and reliability, one might assume that this research is likely to be low because it is based on perception of informants' reality, which is context dependent and can change over time. Hence, it can be difficult to repeat the study. Notably, the purpose of this thesis is to explore how blended learning can contribute to the leadership

development domain, which is an unknown field, despite its difficulties with regards to quality criteria it can still give valuable information for future studies.

3.5 Ethical considerations

When conducting research there will always be ethical consideration that must be taken into account. Thus, it is important to reflect over their implications. Bassey (2000, p. 80) notes, “What is important is that the process is conducted in a sufficiently systematic way to ensure the ethic of trustworthiness and the ethic of respect for persons”. This implies that the researcher must make sure to receive informed consent from the participants. In essence, “ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate” (Mack et al., 2005, p. 9). As mentioned above, all participants signed a Consent Declaration. This paper describes the purpose of the study, that participation is voluntary, their rights are stated (in terms of privacy and confidentiality) and termination of the data collected. These points are in line with what Klenke, Martin and Wallace (2016) explain as important ethical principles.

Postholm (2010) describe how the researcher might lose their focus and scientific lenses because of their involvement in the culture the research is based on. To be conscious about this, in terms of critical self-reflection and self-awareness, the researcher will be able to address potential biases and predispositions that might affect this research. This is described as reflexivity (Klenke, Martin & Wallace, 2016). What is important in this research to uncover and reflect upon is that I am a student assistant in the course ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’, which this thesis will be based on. This represent a potential bias especially when conducting interviews with the informants. However, most of my contribution to this course was before it launched last autumn. Notably, I introduced myself in front of the class so they all were familiar with who I am. In addition, I have explained that I will be writing a thesis on this particular program. Consequently, I have reflected upon these overlapping roles and as a result, I deliberately kept a distance to the participants throughout the rest of the program. As I was not only concerned for myself, but also to prevent participants to connect with me on a level that could have influenced the outcome of this research negatively. Moreover, I was conscious about keeping an open mind during the interviews and if I noticed that

the informants was “holding back” on their thoughts and feelings, I would ensure them that I am interested in everything, both positive and negative. This possible bias is also linked to confirmability: reflecting on the role as a researcher are important for ensuring quality of the thesis. Hence, I believe my student assistant role will not interfere with the results of this research. Nevertheless, it is an important aspect to be conscious about throughout the whole process of doing this research.

PART IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following section will elaborate and discuss the main results found in this study. Looking at what key elements a blended leadership development program should include to foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time, relevant theoretical perspectives and research are applied in the discussion. Additionally, the last part of this section will present an evaluation of the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’. The subsequent section aims to identify specific learning outcomes the informants have gained from the program. Further, the practical implications and future research will be elaborated. Lastly, the concluding remarks of the thesis are presented.

The findings from this study revealed three overarching themes of how blended leadership development programs can foster learning and development. 1. The program in itself: In terms of the design, structure and learning pedagogy. 2. Learning resources: Entailing, podcasts, learning logs and virtual learning teams. 3. Arts-based methods: Introducing contemporary dance and storytelling. In addition to the importance of spaces and places. Each theme will in light of informants’ subjective reflections, demonstrate their value and usefulness in relation to informants’ learning outcomes in the upcoming part. Hence, illustrating how ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ have fostered learning and development.

4.1 Blended leadership program

When a leadership development program are designed, it is important to consider how people learn as it should guide decisions about construction of the program, as well as which combination of learning elements to include. ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ used a blended learning approach. An underlying assumption

for using this approach is how participants should be in the center of the learning process. It allows participants to actively share and co-produce the content (BI Norwegian Business School, n.d). Notably, it is also an argument for how blended learning might be a solution for closing the gap between education and practice. As this way of learning is more relatable for how people actually work, one might therefore argue that blended learning in itself are important for learning and development of leadership.

[About blended learning] I think this is a very nice way to learn. I think we are trained in the same way of working as how we will work more... as how we are going to work in the future. So I think this is highly applicable
– Informant 4

Furthermore, an advantage of blended learning underlies in its pedagogical learning approach. It uses a combination of individual acquisition of knowledge and skills, and participation. It is the same learning approach as Elkjaer (2004) describes as a “third way” of learning, with focus on reflective thinking. This method is incorporated in blended learning as it actively tries to facilitate for reflection and valuable interaction among participants (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The findings from this study suggest that participants view this way of learning as essential for their overall learning outcome. Sharing, reflecting and discussing together enhance their understanding of each topic, thereby indicating that this interaction with others must be included to increase participants’ learning experience.

I feel that everything in this program kind of sums it up to the interaction, communication and cooperation, what influences this in different ways. Either through meeting in virtual space, physical or where, what and how we facilitate this – Informant 4

Those conversations we had with each other have been a very useful learning process, to put words on it and get others point of view –
Informant 1

I learn by using the articles in a discussion, so that is actually the source. That interaction around the subject, it is where the learning happens – informant 5

Despite this, one of the key challenges noted by Boelens et al., (2017), was how blended learning can facilitate this interaction effectively. Since the findings from this study indicate interaction as crucial for participants' learning outcome, then we need to understand, what processes affect valuable interaction and how can we deal with these processes? Some informants raised concerns about the effectiveness of discussions when the group is big. This might imply that group size is relevant to consider when designing a blended leadership development program. Moreover, a study by Saqr, Nouri and Jormanainen (2019) points out that a large group might create a substantial distance between competent peers. A reason for this feeling might be caused by lack of knowledge on the topic discussed. Hence, it can alter the quality of the interaction. To prevent this lack of theoretical foundation, formal learning through lectures and curriculum are important factors. However, it demands effort from each participant to acquire the necessary knowledge.

I think curriculum is input, the same is preparations for the seminars and preparations in general. When I have a lot of input and reflections, then I want some output. Exchange and discuss with others – Informant 2

Evidently, structure seems to be an essential element to consider when designing blended learning programs. In particular, structure appears to contribute to two different outcomes, 1. Self-regulation challenges, and 2. The learning aspect

[About the platform] Positive... That I maybe get a better structure. So I know 'okay, unit 6 is Italy', then before the trip to Italy, a physical seminar, then I should probably read everything before unit 6 – Informant 2

If the program is well structured, then it gives the participants a good overview to create a structure for themselves. This in turn might enhance their learning outcome as the participants can facilitate their own learning process.

Simultaneously, it can help participants avoid self-regulation challenges. In their review, Rasheed et al., (2020) created an overview of potential challenges, such as limited preparation before class, procrastination and poor time management skills. Those who attend leadership development programs often combine it with full-time job, which can create some time management issues. Thereby, a good argument for creating a well-structured blended learning program is the predictability and flexibility it generates to avoid these self-regulation challenges. Thus, several informants reported how convenient it was to both plan how to work with future units, but also the ability to look back at previous units.

How a blended learning program is structured in terms of the content and learning resources are building blocks for the overall learning outcome. Those resources will guide the learning process, as the teacher will not be able to facilitate directly in person. When using a blended learning approach, much of the content will be delivered 100% online, consequently the content and learning resources delivered on the platform must be well structured and self-explanatory.

*It was something about this course that if you did, if you used those resources and what was on the platform and in addition made your own little system *laughing*, then it was very easy to accomplish – Informant 1*

[About the platform] (...) But how this was constructed and pedagogically with these learning goals and explanations about things, unit, podcast and learning goals. Also, what have been very important for us when we work virtually are these questions – we used it as a foundation. Moreover, they have been extremely valuable, considering actually going into the matter and apply the theory presented in these articles and talk about them – Informant 4

The subjective experience of all informants is that they seemed in general satisfied with how the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ was structured and that they were able to use the content actively. This is in line with Hubackova and Semradova (2016), noting that one factor that influences the success of blended learning is the participants’ ability to utilize those tools available. Overall, a good structure can help the program overcome one of the key

challenges with blended learning, presented by Boelens et al., (2017), which is to facilitate students' learning process. Nevertheless, some informants noted some technological issues with a couple of tasks at the Insendi platform, such as 'whiteboard'. As a result, they did not do these tasks or did not see the point of doing them. A first possible explanation for these shortcomings could be that the platform is quite new and teething problems should be expected. Another possible explanation is that some of these tasks from the Insendi platform was not incorporated into the physical seminars in terms of discussing the topic and task with feedback from the teacher. Hence, participants probably did not get the intended learning outcome from these tasks.

4.2 Blended learning resources

The type of learning resources chosen when designing a leadership development program can influence the learning outcome. Thus, illustrate how it can foster learning and development. Hence, it is important to look at what type of resources should be included in a blended learning program that might enhance participants learning outcome. Results from this study reveal three learning resources that stands out: 1. Podcasts, 2. Learning log, and 3. Virtual learning teams. These will be discussed accordingly.

All informants report that podcasts as a learning resource in the program 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' was highly valuable to their learning and development.

I have listen to the podcasts several times. Very nice. I like it a lot that it is variation in how the theory is presented. I think it pedagogically is very clever (...) It is also enhancing, as I experience it, my learning. Also, linking it to, which is important to me, link it to real-life. So, it have been an important tool for me – Informant 4

Based on findings in this study, podcasts seems to yield several positive outcomes for learning and development. First, it seems like podcasts offer an opportunity to close the gap between theory and practice. This struggle have been evident in classroom model of learning (Raelin, 2008). Suggested in this thesis, that blended learning might be the solution for this problem, with findings implying that

podcast is an important tool for achieving this. A reason for this could be found in how the content is often presented more concrete and relatable, compared to an academic article. Secondly, the pedagogical aspect.

(...) My brain works like; I am probably an audiovisual person, with an audiovisual learning style. So if I can read, look and listen... Then I never forget it. Only reading is very heavy – Informant 5

Some informants report that podcasts and YouTube have been important learning resources for them in order to get a deeper understanding of the topics. A reason for this might relate to the first aspect above, as the content are often discussed in work-life context. Moreover, existing literature suggest that learning style should be considered when developing a program to ensure learning effectiveness (Becker, Kehoe & Tennent, 2007; Othman & Amiruddin, 2010). There are several models related to this, for instance VARK (Visuals, Aural, Reader/Writer and Kinesthetic) by Neil Fleming. Nevertheless, Rolfe and Cheek (2012) notes that there are controversies in the literature on learning styles so it should not be considered as an absolute, instead work as a guide. In line with findings from this study, it seems like the pedagogical aspect of considering the use of different learning resources, can be beneficial for participants learning and development. In particular, podcasts. Lastly, the flexibility aspect of using podcasts. It allows participants to listen anywhere, anytime and as many times, they want.

[Podcast] Very fun. It worked very well. You can sit down and listen at different places. It is much more flexible in terms of time and you can listen to it over again. It gives a bit different dynamic than what you get from lectures – Informant 2

I think the podcasts are great. I kind of, I love podcasts, lots of podcasts, I like this podcast very much. After all, I have learned from them. But, podcasts is something you listen to on the move – Informant 5

In the literature review, this thesis questioned how much do people actually learn from listening to podcasts. Findings clearly indicate that the participants in the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ have learned something from

using podcasts as a learning resource. Despite this, informants also report that they often listen to it while walking their dog or traveling to work. How much learning is being absorbed in these settings? Consequently, participants learning outcome, from podcast as a learning resource, might be context dependent. Implying that the context in which the participants listen to it might influence how much they actually learn. As noted by Cebeci and Tekdal (2006), podcasts could work as a complimentary tool. Hence, suggesting that it should be combined with other learning resources to fully leverage on its potential. If podcast are put into a system when a blended learning program is designed, then the participants learning outcome might be enhanced.

Following up on the abovementioned suggestion, some informants explained how learning log might have contributed to their learning process with podcasts.

Learning log, I think it is very nice. I try to write learning log per unit. Just some notes that I understand, right... So, maybe if we did not have learning log, then I would have forgotten everything from the podcasts, maybe – Informant 2

Evident in the literature is the lack of research on this topic. Therefore, it is difficult to assume any connection. Nevertheless, Baker (2020) recently wrote a teaching tip with use of learning log in an information system security class, expressing how it can serve as a basis for future discussions. In addition, be a vital tool for other individual learning experiences, in terms of making connections. This implies that findings from this study are highly relevant. Thus indicating that we need more research on how learning resources like podcasts and learning logs are affecting peoples learning outcome, as well as looking into how these can complement each other.

Another learning resource that might help to increase the learning outcome from both podcasts and learning log is virtual learning teams. Several informants pointed out that they used their learning log to write questions they had after reading articles or listening to podcasts, so they could discuss them in their virtual learning teams later. This finding is consistent with existing literature when suggesting that people learn more when they discuss and share experiences with

others (Raelin, 2008). This indicates that virtual learning teams can be a valuable tool for learning and development.

[About virtual learning teams] that sharing of experience is incredible important (...). For me, how I learn, it is in that moment I can take theory and move it over to real life, in my own life. Also, listen to others' experience that is when it starts taking root within me and really starts to give value – Informant 4

Furthermore, this sharing of experience creates an environment that might help closing the gap between theory and practice. Many informants stated that these virtual learning teams allowed them to reflect and discuss their experience from work with each theme presented in the program. Such exchange of experience can help participants get a deeper understanding of those topics, as some might be a bit abstract or difficult to understand when reading about it individually. Thus, each individual have their own perspectives of how they interpret the learning material, which can broaden the knowledge for the rest of the team. Makani, Durier-Copp, Kiceniuk and Blandford (2016, p.1) mentioned that, “virtual teams (VT) are said to foster "deeper" learning, but have not been empirically studied in the academic sphere”. Findings from this present study supports this notion of a deeper learning. However, we need more research on this subject.

The learning team I was in, when we found the format, then it was very okay. Because we managed to meet and discuss those units, or we did not discuss so much theory, but more exchange of experience on themes related to what we have encountered at work – Informant 1

A pedagogical advantage of using virtual learning teams is the meta-learning it represents. They get first-hand experience on how virtual teams function, especially in terms of leadership, trust and communication. These concepts are a part of challenges related to virtual teams. Furst, Reeves, Rosen and Blackburn (2004) have divided those challenges into three categories, 1. Logistical problems 2. Interpersonal concerns 3. Technology issues. The first address issues like coordination and communication difficulties. The second relates to reduced trust, collaboration, difficult to create shared responsibility and establish effective

working relationships. The third concerns learning and using appropriate tools and technologies (Furst et al., 2004; Siebdrat et al., 2009; Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). All participants are mutual dependent on each other for trying to benefit from this learning resource. They have most likely encountered different aspects of these challenges. A few informants noted how the technology hindered an effective meeting because some group members struggled to connect to the communication tool they were using. However, all informants, in different degree, explained how their experience with using these virtual learning teams allowed them to put theory into practice by actually trying what was taught in the course. For instance, one group had the chance to practice some of the newer leadership theories and perspectives.

(...) That we got these groups, worked – at least my group worked extremely well. To work with complete different people and see how it works so well, and the strength of each individual. Therefore, it became leadership, or active leadership. It was really self and shared leadership in these groups, so you got to test some of these models and got a feeling of it – Informant 3

This finding is in line with previous research, as De Paoli (2015, p. 122) notes, “in a virtual context, supported by a shared and equally distributed technology, reciprocal interdependence and mutual influence processes lead easily towards more collective and shared leadership processes”. Nevertheless, Makani et al., (2016) point out how virtual teams as a learning mechanism within online learning, little is known about its effectiveness. This study represent a beginning, findings indicate that virtual learning teams represent an important part of participants learning outcome in the blended leadership development program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’. Hence, the effectiveness can relate to enhanced learning experience. However, we need more research on the topic.

4.3 Arts-based methods

Arts-based methods have received increased attention from scholars in relation to leadership practices (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; Schedlitzki et al., 2015; Meltzer, 2016; Springborg & Ladkin, 2018). The leadership development program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ used both theory and exercises from

aesthetic, embodied and arts-based research. Findings from the present study suggest that three different elements yield positive outcomes, namely 1. Contemporary dance, 2. Storytelling, and 3. Spaces and places. This next section will discuss them in more detail.

4.3.1 Contemporary dance

There seems to be a growing interest in dance and leadership (Ropo & Sauer, 2008; Zeitner, Rowe & Jackson, 2015), as an arts-based tool for leadership development (Springborg & Sutherland, 2014). Contemporary dance offer participants' the opportunity to experience skill transfer. Taylor and Ladkin (2009) have explained skill transfer as something you can learn from arts and apply it to leadership practices. The goal is that the leader will then perform their tasks or roles more effectively. Finding indicates that learning have taken place, but it is difficult to determine if their performance have become more effective due to time constraints of the thesis, in terms of when data was collected. Future research should do a more extensive longitudinal study, trying to capture if exercises like contemporary dance results in enhanced or improved leadership performance over time.

I think they summarized it so well in that dance. That you can think freely, but you need to have some rules, some boundaries. Then you can be creative in-between. And you see that it works. Also, I think it gave a good perspective that it is actually true – Informant 1

The use of contemporary dance in 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' was a positive experience based on all informants' report. Moreover, findings indicate that this exercise was important for the synergy in the group. This is in line with existing literature; Leadership as a social construction, its essence exists in the interaction between people, created by bodily experiences through our senses. The feeling of collectivity in a group can be enhanced by bodily presence (Ropo & Sauer, 2008). Hence, one can argue that this dance exercise allowed the participants of the program to let go and connect with their senses. Thus, by being bodily present they experienced a shared and mutual connection, which changed the way all participants interacted with each other. This suggest that using dance

as an arts-based tool in leadership development programs can foster a better group climate that further might influence the learning outcome.

Like in the first seminar with these lifts and dancing, you are challenged, and everyone did it. And I think, something happened to the whole dynamic – Informant 3

Another thing was that dance exercise we had, which was actually quite short and easy. But, it gives a completely different type of connection with each other, which contributes to create another framing. I think it was very crucial for the interaction in this program – Informant 4

Despite that all informants had a good experience with this dance exercise, some of them explained how they started out quite sceptic. First, because of statements like “I can’t dance”. In addition to that, they did not see the relevance. Springborg and Sutherland (2014) found in their study that their participants had blockages, could be physical, mental or emotional. Consequently, it limited their capability to reflect and be aware of these aesthetic qualities through their bodies, even though it was in a safe learning environment. One might argue that these blockages were present in some of the participants in this program. Moreover, the statement below also exemplify how others’ perception of dance as a tool for learning in leadership development is probably limited by such blockages. Likewise, it can explain the rejection of aesthetic approaches to the organizational environment Biehl-Missal and Springbort (2016) have witnessed in the management field.

Especially those dancers were very good. Those places I told about this, then people ask ‘what the heck have that to do with leadership’. At the end, they connected it to leadership – Informant 5

One informant proposed that it might have been even better if the connection to leadership was made prior to the dance exercise. This could maybe reduce or remove the participants’ blockage, as discussed above. Thus, enhance their learning experience. This suggestion is in line with findings from Springborg and Ladkin (2018): for leaders to see the real value of using arts-based methods, it is important to clearly state how these interventions generates useful learning

outcomes. However, there is also a chance that such information might have altered the purpose of the exercise. Biehl-Missal & Springborg, (2016) states that one of the strengths using dance as an arts-based tool or method is the potential to explore dynamics of 21st century leadership and organization (...) it is particularly applicable to times of constant change. This makes it highly relevant to include in a program for leadership development in a digital time

4.3.2 *Storytelling*

According to all informants, storytelling turned out to be a valuable exercise for everyone, but in different contexts. Some of them reported a more personal learning experience. Using storytelling in leadership development can facilitate critical reflection about one self and others (Schedlitzki et al., 2014). Thus, such reflection might allow for personal growth. This is in line with findings from this study. Thereby, suggesting that storytelling can be used as means to develop as a leader. Auvinen, Aaltio and Blomquist (2013) notes that people can learn much about leadership behavior and improve their communication with others by using storytelling and reflection over own behavior. Hence, these findings are consistent with existing literature.

Storytelling have helped me in a way as a leader, to be able to present myself, as a whole person – Informant 4

Storytelling... To maybe become more aware of what shaped you, what made you who you are. You get those reflexes when you come back [from Italy] – Informant 1

Sensemaking is another aspect that seems to be of importance with use of storytelling. Schedlitzki et al., (2014) explain three forms of sensemaking: *retrospective, here-and-now* and *prospective*. This implies that storytelling can be used to connect with or learn from the past, create a picture of where the organization are today and what the future should look like. Notably, a process like this will likely demand employee engagement in order to succeed with sensemaking through storytelling. Auvinen, Aaltio and Blomqvist (2012) identified seven areas where storytelling can influence, such as motivation and inspiration. Hence, these two are most likely important factors for achieving

sensemaking through creating employee engagement. One informant have already encouraged their employee to use storytelling in their company to achieve sensemaking. Illustrating the value of using storytelling in the program, as perceived by the informant.

I actually recommend that we start using storytelling techniques [at work]. Because we do not know where we are going either, so somehow make a good, clear goal. Create and give us all a feeling of where we are headed – Informant 5

This finding indicate that storytelling are not only working as a means to develop a leader to become a better leader. It can also be used to improve different aspects in an organization. The abovementioned example illustrates how storytelling hopefully can help them to create a vision or goal. In similar vein, one informant reported that after learning and experiencing storytelling in the leadership development program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’, how this informant communicated with the team changed and had positive results.

Before, then it was constantly repeating that ‘you must place these data properly’. Now I understand that the message is boring, so I changed it, so I made a little story with use of Lego. We have big blocks that we build an okay house with, then we have small pieces of Lego that allows us to build house with flowers and rabbits and stuff. So I tried to tell ‘we want to build a house, how that house is going to be is very dependent of the tool we use, so if we have bad data then our models will be bad, but if we have good data then (...)’. They finally understood it. I got very good feedback after this – Informant 2

Storytelling as illustrated in this example can be explained as a projective technique. A process that forms the basis of storytelling as an arts-based method. In essence, it helps to create a better understanding of complex problems or activities in the organization, like a meaning maker (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). Furthermore, this example also illustrates the importance of communication, interaction and engagement with the audience in order to achieve wanted outcomes. Two different messages can convey the same essence, but the way it is

told can have an impact on how your colleagues or employees interpret it. Coherent with previous research, Schedlitzki et al., (2014) states that it is important to engage the audience both cognitively and emotionally when using storytelling, it allows them to recreate a meaning for themselves based on the story.

4.3.3 Spaces and places

Evident from the findings in this study is how the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ have made all informants aware of how important spaces and places are in work-life context. How the workplace is constructed in terms of material arrangements shapes and modifies leadership (Ropo, De Paoli, Salovaara & Sauer, 2015). Hence, it is valuable to learn about how to deal with issues related to spaces and places, in order to understand how leadership is affected by it. This can be illustrated through Bernstein and Waber (2019) findings, they point out that after a transition to open offices, face-to-face interaction dropped almost seventy percent, simultaneously to compensate for this drop, digital interaction increased. In essence, it indicates that leadership have become more virtual and leading people face-to-face require different skills than leading people virtually. Nevertheless, De Paoli (2015, p. 112) states that “technology changes, but people tend to continue working and leading in the same way”. This suggest that knowledge of spaces and places might help participants understand that context shapes leadership. Moreover, depending on how their workplace is constructed, their leadership might need to change in order to match better with the environment.

I have become more mindful of office space design that it is of great significance – Informant 2

I have got a lot more feeling for this with area and how we build up, how we create a meeting place, how we facilitate. Like everything around – Informant 1

All informants highlights that the seminar in Italy was very important for their learning experience. It allowed them to reflect on literature presented in this program by putting theory to practice.

[Donatella] she is extremely present when she teach. But, she kind of lifts it up, that meta-perspective one level up by choosing to have it in Italy, which was hers. She did not only say when you have a meeting or have digital... And this was a very digital program, like a lot happened outside, on the platform. But that she said something about having it on meaningful places, and then showed it in practice – Informant 3

*[About Italy] And I realized, just to say it, very well, the concept of actually going there. I realized it better in retrospect rather than in advance. In advance I was a bit like, thinking (...) well, then we get a nice trip to Italy *laughing*. Nevertheless, I realized its value in the aftermath – Informant 4*

[What makes Italy important?] The program 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)', the essence of it and the literature we have, it got a whole other value because of the stay in Italy. Could not have gotten it here at BI. I think it is very important to take people, especially in this program, out of their context, out of their daily tasks, so you actually get to feel what it means to be present – Informant 5

Ropo et al., (2015) points out that space-related organizational studies and leadership as a term are scarcely discussed or mentioned together. This study have tried to connect them, with findings implying that spaces and places are important topics to include in leadership development. In essence, awareness and knowledge of spaces and places is necessary for leaders today and the future. Moreover, the corona crisis illustrates how important this knowledge are in a digital time. As the situation required most organizations to work from home, many uncertainties followed. How to lead your employees, how to ensure productivity and how to communicate. These are some examples of issues companies have faced during corona. One might argue that for many organizations this crisis have been a push towards a more digital workplace. Notably, Sigve Brekke CEO of Telenor, recently announced that they are so satisfied with the work their employees have done during this crisis that they will permanently offer employees to work remotely (Kaspersen, 2020). Thus, he notes that the leaders must think differently

when changing this work situation. Similarly, Facebook is also pushing towards more flexible and remote workers. Their CEO Mark Zuckerberg believe that Facebook's workforce will consist of up to 50% remote workers within 5-10 years (Wagner, 2020). To conclude, it seems reasonable to argue that remote working will likely increase, with following changing demands regarding leadership. Based on findings in this study it seems like knowledge of how to deal with spaces and places are essential for a future with more digital workplaces.

4.4 Evaluation of 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)'

When this thesis aims to explore how a blended leadership development program can foster learning and development, in this case through the participation in the program 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)', it is useful to do an evaluation of the program as it can give valuable information. Both in terms of answering the proposed research question, but also to provide direction for future studies and/or future leadership development programs. To ensure an evaluation who target all important aspects, this thesis will include two approaches, namely: Kirkpatrick's four levels and Decision-based evaluation.

Level 1 in Kirkpatrick's model focus on the satisfaction of the program, in terms of the participants' feelings and motivation. Notably this level do not include if the participants have learned something (Kirkpatrick, 1979). One might argue that this level is similar to what Kraiger (2002) calls training content and design, which is one of three targets in the Decision-based model. Both aims to discover if the content and the composition of the program is good enough and/or if there is a need for improvements. All informants reported during their interview that they are satisfied with the blended learning approach. As noted earlier, blended learning provides flexibility and structure that made it easier to complete the program. Nevertheless, informant 1 pointed out that "*I think we have received a lot of facilitation, I must repeat that *laughing**". Even though this participant was the only one stating this, it might reveal something important. 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' is a new program and there is a chance that when designing the program, especially since they use blended learning and a "new" platform, which they are not so familiar with yet. That they might include a bit too much to make sure a transition from traditional face-to-face program to blended learning program goes as smooth as possible. Additionally, structure was one of

the main findings in this study that was important for the learning outcome when using blended learning. As most of the time, participants only have the information from the platform to guide their learning. Notably, it seems to be a thin line between too much facilitation and enough facilitation. In line with findings from the interviews, the data from the questionnaire reveals that all 13 respondents agree or strongly agree that their expectations were met (See figure 3). This is an indication of satisfaction among the participants. Moreover, 12 out of 13 respondents strongly agree that the program gave them inspiration in their work, whereas eight strongly agree that their motivation to become leader is enhanced due to the program. Only one respondent strongly disagreed to the latter statement (see figure 4). Nevertheless, these findings provide good support for satisfaction with the program and content among the participants.

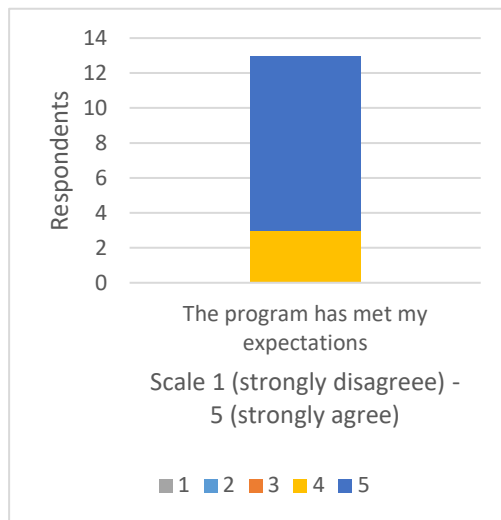


Figure 3 - Expectations

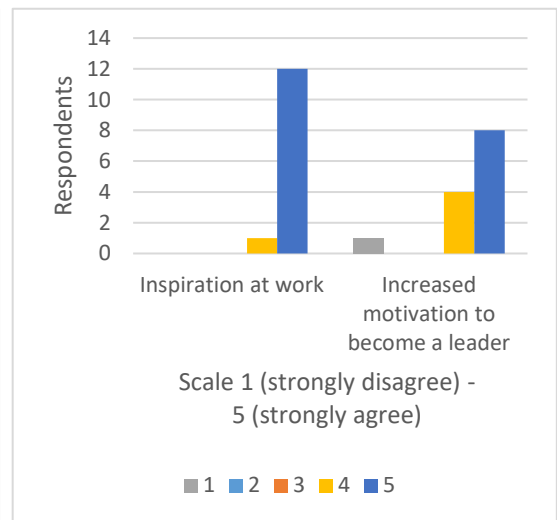


Figure 4 - Inspiration and Motivation

Simultaneously, one aspect became evident during the interviews that informants' reported as potential for improvements, namely the Insendi platform.

There are some functions [e.g. whiteboard] that we discussed at the first seminar, which of course could be optimized and do differently or organize differently. But... But, I must say that I think it is a very well-functioning compared to the current use of it – Informant 4

I think I mentioned it earlier, but I think it is a one-way platform, that is one challenge (...) And, I also think it is made responsive. That you have it as a browser and if you just shrink it, you will see it as on a mobile. But it

is very bad responsive (...) And I think especially that the Insendi platform should definitely be an app – Informant 5

However, the findings are inconclusive, in terms of; a few informants did not report any issues with the platform and seemed generally satisfied, while others were more negative in their statement. This might be caused by participants' previous experience with similar platforms or generally using a lot of technological tools in their work life. Resulting in higher expectations compared to those who most likely have never used a platform like Insendi or other technological tools before. To sum it up, participants of 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' seems to be satisfied with the program and the content, but some aspects of the platform should be improved for the future.

Level 2 in Kirkpatrick's model measure if learning have taken place. However, on-the-job use will not be covered at this level (Kirkpatrick, 1979). In terms of the Decision-based model, level 2 can relate to the target, changes in learner. What differentiate these two models is that the former separates change in behavior away from changes that reflects learning, which is Level 3. Whereas the latter include behavioral changes in learning. 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)' developed six main skills that participants should learn from the program:

1. To be able to document and be reflected about own work day and leadership in a digital time.
2. To be able to communicate and lead effectively in the digital and virtual space.
3. To choose the right digital platforms for communication and leadership and deal with ethical challenges properly.
4. To be able to choose the right places and work- and meeting spaces most suitable for different tasks and leadership.
5. To be able to use leadership approaches and techniques for communication from theatres.
6. To be able to develop an effective story about oneself as a leader or the organization based on established storytelling principles.

(BI Norwegian Business School, n.d.).

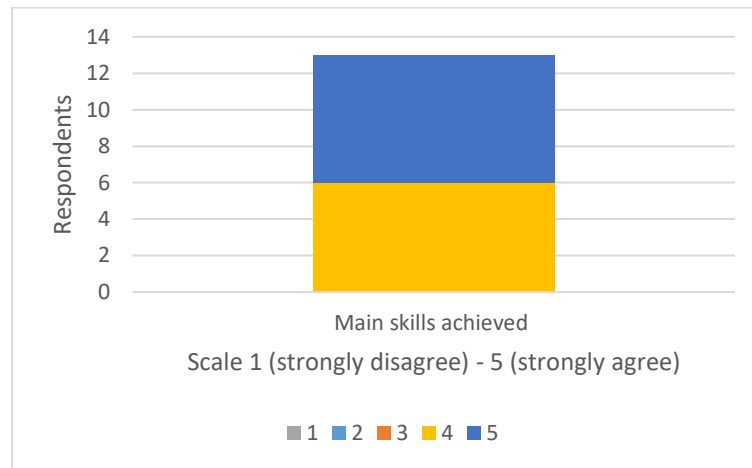


Figure 5 – Main skills

Looking at results from the questionnaire (see figure 5); these findings indicate that learning has taken place as all 13 respondents either agree or strongly agree that the abovementioned main skills are achieved. Moreover, findings from the interviews supports this. It is illustrated by actively comparing informants' statements to the above-mentioned skills while trying to evaluate if learning has taken place. In terms of the first skill about leadership and work life in a digital time, Informant 5 explain: *"I have got a slightly different perspective on things, I see things differently. It changed my leadership perspective or what I perceive as leadership - more like a phenomenon than one sender and one recipient, or one leader and one follower"*. Another informant had a similar experience:

I feel that I have become more conscious that it is not one type of leadership (...) to look at it from different perspectives, and that we all need different type of leadership. Maybe also have more room for those conversations, everything does not have to be a reporting – Informant 1

The second and third skills are similar, both entails communication and leadership digitally. However, the third also include knowledge of how to choose right platform. Informant 3 points out *"Immensely big [outcome]. I have become much better at using digital tools"*. Another informant explain:

*What I have learned and have read in the curriculum *hehe* is that you should implement virtual coffee, a bit small talks in virtual meetings as*

well. Like finding something in common, especially the first time. So like personal skills, because previously I expected that everyone are like me, so when we have a meeting we only discuss “the task”, but I feel like things become better if you do it differently” – Informant 2

The fourth skill are about spaces and places, to understand how it can influence the work life. Informant 3 notes “[I have become more reflected on] choice of places and the importance of it”. All informants report how the seminar in Italy was the biggest reason for understanding the importance of spaces and places. It allowed them to feel and experience what the literature said. This relates back to how people learn and reflect what McCall (2004) states that, experience is the primary source of learning.

[Most valuable from Italy] How much meeting place has to say maybe (...) We are not moving as a management team, so I have been to a lot of bad seminars at hotels (...) we must invest time and use time on it, if we want to improve. So only going to a SAS hotel and have meeting in a small room, then you could just dropped it” – Informant 1

The fifth and last skill reflects the ability to use arts-based methods in their work life, such as storytelling.

[Important for learning outcome] The one thing that we have talked much about, storytelling, to come out as an authentic leader and dare to show who you are. Both curriculum, tasks/practices and everything, also Donatella have been valuable for the outcome” – Informant 4

To conclude, these six main skills that ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ aimed to achieve seems to be accomplished based on the findings from the interviews and questionnaire. Nevertheless, it is not possible to conclude that all participants feel like they have learned all six main skills. A possible explanation for this is that not all skills might be as relevant in their job and/or life. However, it is possible to assume that learning have taken place in this program.

As noted earlier, level 3 is behavior. This can be difficult to measure for several reasons. First, because of time constraint of this thesis, it was only possible to interview and collect data at latest; right after the participants had finished the program. Hence, it could be difficult for participants to notice behavioral changes until later. As Informant 5 points out: “[About learning outcomes] it is quite recently finished so it is exciting to see if it internalizes itself in me”. This is supported by research that those participating in a program might need three to six months after to implement new behavior (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Second, participants might not realize themselves that they have changed behavior, only if friends, family or colleagues mention it. Notably, one might change behavior at work, but not in front of family and friends, and vice versa. Despite this, findings from the questionnaire indicate that some behavioral change might have occurred (see figure 6). Ten respondents strongly agree that their self-awareness has increased after participating in ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’. Simultaneously all respondents either agree or strongly agree that their self-confidence has increased as well. An example to illustrate how it has changed one informant:

It has been much more of a personal journey. It has provided... it has expanded sort of the perspective... and opened up that there is a greater acceptance to be oneself in the leadership role. Compared to my predetermined belief that you must somehow squeeze yourself into some kind of pattern. It has been liberating – Informant 4

Even though the last question had more spread result, which can be explained by that it is difficult to determine yourself if you have improved in this area, because it depends on your employees and colleagues perception. Nevertheless, these findings together could indicate that participants have changed their behavior to some degree, as increased self-awareness and confidence are factors that might influence how people behave. Apparently, these findings are inconsistent with some existing literature, as Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) states that four conditions must be present for change to occur. These are: desire to change, know what and how to do it, right climate and reward. As noted, findings from the interviews and the questionnaire indicate that, some change have occurred. One might argue that people can change without an intention to do so. In addition, it is

likely that some of these conditions should be present for a better change process; however, not all must be present for change to occur.

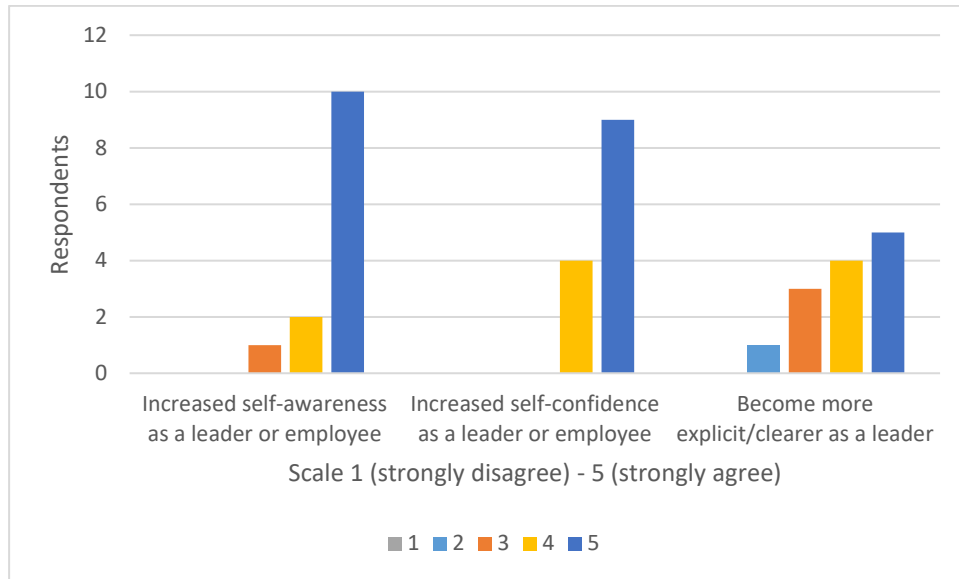


Figure 6 – Self-awareness, Self-confidence and Explicit/Clearer

Level 4 in Kirkpatrick’s model is results and it focus only on organizational outcomes such as ROI. This will not be relevant for this thesis, as the aim is to explore how the program might foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time. In contrast, the last target of the Decision-based model is organizational payoffs. It include the same aspect as Kirkpatrick, however, it also entails transfer of knowledge: the extent to if participants are able to apply what they have learned from the program at work (Kraiger, 2002). The latter is highly relevant for the research question and an evaluation of the program. Notably, Kirkpatrick also include transfer of knowledge but he incorporates it into behavioral change – level 3. This was one ambiguity corrected by the Decision-based model, as one cannot assume that behavioral change is linked to performance and vice versa (Kraiger, 2002). Nevertheless, findings from the interviews indicate that there are several aspects that already have been applied at work.

I try to listen more and be more open – Informant 1

I tried to incorporate virtual coffee breaks. Like digital, virtual coffee breaks. Everyone thinks it was okay (...). Generally, I became more conscious on how I should behave in virtual meetings – Informant 2

A bit safer in terms of how I work now, as a leader. So I think I have become clearer on certain things – Informant 3

*I think for me it is about, if I should sum it up, then I must say I... *thinks for a long time* it sounds almost non-Norwegian, but I believe a bit more in myself – Informant 4*

I organize and set up a lot of meetings myself, and I am more aware now on how I set up digital meetings and when I have physical meetings then I don't use the aquariums. Where I work, there are so many options so I am much more aware of where I choose to have meetings – Informant 5

Even though findings in this study indicate that, some transfer of knowledge seems to be tested out. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, participants might need more time after finishing the program, before new knowledge and skills can be sufficiently applied at work. To illustrate this, one informant used an analogy to compare driving and learning.

(...) and it is the automatization, which is what I am looking for (...). It is when you automate it, that is when you get good (...) I am not looking for how to gear, I am looking for how to drive – Informant 5

This might be an explanation of the findings, suggesting that what informants have experienced at the point of data collection is “how to gear” and maybe are lacking that automatization. However, another explanation for findings implying transfer of knowledge at an early stage can be the use of a blended learning approach. As this learning pedagogy allow participants to work with the program wherever, whenever they want. The learning becomes a continual process. That maybe the implementation process are faster with blended learning approach compared to traditional leadership development programs that have been run

primarily through face-to-face seminars. This is something that would be interesting to research further.

In sum, all informants report different examples of transfer of knowledge. Based on the interviews there are three overall “themes” of learning outcomes, which informants have expressed through their subjective experience throughout the interviews and the abovementioned examples. 1. Communication skills, 2. Spaces and places (including how to deal with virtual teams), and 3. Personal identity or own leadership. Consequently, these findings illustrates how ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ have fostered learning and development of leaders.

To conclude, this evaluation reveals an overall satisfaction with the program. Nevertheless, there are potential improvements noted by some of the informants regarding the Insendi platform. Like suggesting it to be an app instead of one-way, responsive browser. Moreover, some of the virtual tasks such as ‘whiteboard’ did not function well. Notably, these are technological improvements, which should not be a difficult to improve. Findings from the interviews and questionnaire have illustrated that both learning and some transfer of knowledge has happened.

PART V: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The goal of this thesis is to build rather than test theory. Using an inductive stance to create meaning and depth. Hence, it is important to note, qualitative studies must be evaluated differently than quantitative, which focus on deduction and generalization. This thesis investigates leadership development and the use of blended learning approach. The former is a broad and complex topic, while the latter is quite new and with little research on the topic. Naturally, it contains several limitations. These will be discussed accordingly.

There is a limitation in the representativeness, when considering the sample size in this study. Notably, qualitative research in general have limited sample and cannot be representative to the population (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Thus, the purpose of this study is not to aim for representative findings, but to investigate a relatively new field of research. Hence, a small amount of informants suits the

purpose and together with the questionnaire, it can be assumed to be a valid theoretical sample.

Generalization is another limitation to consider as this study investigates one specific leadership development program. Since it is used a qualitative method it might limit the possibility to apply the findings in a broader context. Nevertheless, the findings is an important contribution as the field of research on leadership development and blended learning is limited. Hence, it can give valuable insights into the concept ‘blended learning’, which could be applied in other leadership development programs or in other educational settings.

There might be a limitation concerning the interviews, as it was conducted in Norwegian, whereas this thesis is written in English. Consequently, some of the essence in the findings might be lost in translation. However, the awareness of this possible limitation have been present during the whole process.

Simultaneously, the interviews were conducted at different places for the convenience of the informants’ busy schedule. There could be a chance that the variation in interview setting might have influenced the outcome in terms of their responses. This is what Jacobsen (2015) describes as context effect. However, this was known prior to the study, so the awareness of this have been present during the process and was taken under consideration while conducting the interviews as well as analyzing them.

Furthermore, informants’ ability to reflect on a topic that entails personal development could possibly influence their answer during the interviews. As discussed earlier, it can be difficult for them to notice changes and/or transfer of knowledge to their workplace, as the last interviews took place right after they had finished the program. Unfortunately, the time constraints of the thesis made it impossible to do a third data collection, which could have captured the changes and/or transfer of knowledge more properly. Hence, future research should do a more extensive longitudinal approach to investigate the outcomes of a blended leadership development program. Suggesting that a third data collection should be conducted at least six months after. Allowing the content to internalize over time is important as learning is a continual process and might be difficult to discover shortly after the program is over. Then it might be possible to discover more in

depth, different behavioral changes. In addition, it could be interesting to include employees, peers or colleagues in such study, as their perception of the participants' behavior might differ from their own.

Future studies could do a research by comparing a blended learning program to a face-to-face program, looking at how the program is delivered, if it influences the learning outcomes for participants or not. What positive and/or negative effects each delivery method have. Moreover, as noted earlier, it would be interesting to investigate whether blended learning enables faster implementation from theory to practice, compared to face-to-face programs. This could give valuable information to educational institutions as it might guide the development of future programs.

Lastly, an interesting aspect for future research to investigate is to look into a blended learning program, looking into what happens in-between seminars and online units in terms of learning. Moreover, maybe look deeper into if the findings from this study, in terms of blended learning resources e.g. virtual learning teams or podcasts. Trying to uncover how they might facilitate learning and/or if there are other aspects not discovered from this study. In addition, looking into how these learning resources might complement each other. In essence, as finding in this study indicate a positive influence on participants learning outcomes, future research are encouraged to explore these concepts in more detail.

PART VI: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored how blended learning might contribute to leadership development to better fit for the future. This was done through an investigation of the program 'Mindful leadership (in a digital time)', a new executive program at BI. The purpose of the research was to identify key elements from a blended learning program that foster learning and development of leaders in a digital time.

It became apparent in this study, how the program in itself seems to be an important factor for creating learning and development. In particular, the way it is *designed*, the *structure* provided through the online platform and the *learning pedagogy*. Existing research reveal that leadership development with traditional face-to-face seminars struggle with the link between theory and practice. Findings from the present study suggest that using blended learning can be a solution to this

problem. First, a blended learning program might allow participants to incorporate the learning at an earlier stage as most of the program are available online. Hence, they can work on it wherever and whenever they have time, resulting in a continual learning process. Second, the learning resources utilized in the program ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ seems to yield positive outcomes in terms of content being more concrete and relatable to their work life.

Notably, these learning resources are one of the key elements found in this study that foster learning and development. According to informants’ subjective experiences, *podcasts*, *learning log* and their *virtual learning team* have all contributed to their learning outcome. As a result, this study provide insight to the understanding of how people learn, which should guide decisions on how a program is constructed. Informants report during the interviews that reflection and discussion with others are crucial for their own learning process. This is in line with existing research. Podcast offer a flexible way to absorb information and it is often presented in a way so the content is easy to understand. However, suggesting that learning log might be a complementary tool for maximizing the learning potential from podcast, as it can be difficult to remember its content while listening “on the move”. Furthermore, virtual learning teams allow participants to engage in cooperation and reflection, by discussing content (e.g. from the podcasts). Thus, it offers meta-learning about virtual teams. Participants get first-hand experience of how leadership, communication and cooperation work in such teams. In addition to knowledge on how to deal with problems related to virtual teams. This will give participants valuable experience to handle virtual teams at work better, which arguably are and will be present in the future workplaces.

The third key element identified in this study is arts-based methods. Findings have illustrated how there are aspects from the arts that can be applied in leadership practices. Hence, incorporating these could foster learning and development. *Contemporary dance* offered an experience that created a bodily presence, which influenced the group synergy. As a result, it might have increased participants learning outcome because of better group climate. Moreover, findings in this study indicate that *storytelling* can be used as a means to develop as a leader because it facilitates for critical reflection, which in turn might result in personal

growth. Thus, it can improve aspects of workplace practices, such as creating a vision and improve communication. These are examples informants already have incorporated into their work life. Lastly, findings suggest that knowledge of *spaces and places* are important, especially in a digital time with increased remote work. Nevertheless, findings from this study also reveal that there are blockages and preconception regarding arts-based methods as a tool for leadership development and leadership practices. Consequently, people struggle to understand how it is relevant. As noted in existing literature it is important to clearly explain the learning potential.

In addition to these key elements, the evaluation of ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ demonstrated an overall satisfaction with the program. In light of presented material, it is evident that participants have experienced increased knowledge and/or skills in particular three “themes”. Increased *communication skills*, knowledge of *spaces and places* (includes how to deal with virtual teams) and development of their *personal identity or own leadership*. In essence, these learning outcomes indicate that ‘Mindful leadership (in a digital time)’ have fostered learning and development of leaders.

Overall, this thesis shed light on several aspects that should be taken under consideration when constructing a leadership development program. One might argue that some of these aspects could be applied in other educational settings as well. Evidently is the lack of research on most of the topics discussed in this thesis. Consequently, this study adds to the almost non-existent body of literature on blended learning and leadership development. Moreover, it provides direction for future studies, as several aspects from this thesis will be interesting to investigate further.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Approved Application NSD

7.8.2020

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 1.7.2020.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

<https://meldeskjema.nsd.no/vurdering/5d9471cd-7a9f-41f7-96de-7149b8aef3b1>

1/1

Appendix 2: Consent Declaration (“Samtykkeerklæring”)

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

”Lederutvikling i en digital tid”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan digital plattform kan være med å forbedre lederutvikling i en digital tid. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette er en masteroppgave hvor jeg skal undersøke hvordan digitale plattformer kan være med å forbedre lederutvikling i en digital tid. Jeg skal kartlegge dine erfaringer, hva du har lært og hvordan du har kunne anvende dette i arbeidslivet.

Samtidig er dette første kurset i Tilstedeværende ledelse så opplysningene vil også bli kunne brukt til å forbedre kurset basert på dine tilbakemeldinger.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Handelshøyskolen BI er ansvarlig for prosjektet

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget til å delta på denne undersøkelsen er plukket ut med tanke på kjønn, ulik alder og om arbeidsplassen er offentlig/privat. Dette er for å sikre et bredes mulig utvalg av deltagerene.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du har et personlig intervju med meg som vil ta deg ca. 60 minutter. Du vil som nevnt bli spurt om dine forventinger til kurset, hvordan erfaringen din er med plattformen Insendi og hva du lærer generelt på kurset Tilstedeværende ledelse. Jeg tar lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er jeg, Iselin Haugen, som utfører prosjektet og min veileder, Donatella De Paoli som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene. Du vil bli anonymisert slik at du ikke risikerer å bli gjenkjent, dette gjelder også i selve masteroppgaven.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes senest 1 juli 2020. Da skal masteroppgaven innleveres. Siden datamaterialet er anonymisert så vil dokumentene bli oppbevart, men opptakene vil bli slettet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Handelshøyskolen BI har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med: Handelshøyskolen BI ved Donatella de Paoli på epost: donatella.d.paoli@bi.no (Veileder).

I tillegg kan jeg, Iselin Haugen, nås på epost: Iselin.Haugen@student.bi.no

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
Iselin Haugen

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet Lederutvikling i en digital tid, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 1 juli 2020.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 3: Course description

Course title:

Mindful Leadership (in a digital time)

Department:

Department of Leadership and Organizational Behaviour

Course coordinator(s):

Associate Professor Donatella De Paoli

Short description of the course/program

This is a leadership program meant to prepare and develop participants' competence and insight to lead people in a digital time. The program will make the participants conscious about both the opportunities and challenges that communication technology brings. The content is based on research about digital media and leadership, such as virtual leadership, digital leadership, distributed leadership, remote leadership and more. There has never been more limitless communication, as the same time that both leaders and employees experience less contact with each other, decreased engagement to the community, less time for tasks requiring concentration, inefficient meetings, more distractions and stress. The program will develop the participants' ability to lead better and more effectively both in the digital space and physical space. The most important themes in the program are; work, organization and leadership in digital work, digital communication technology in leadership and ethical dilemmas, leadership perspectives for a digital time, aesthetic, embodied leadership, offices and meeting places in a digital time, arts-based methods and more.

The leadership program consists of three modules with these themes;

- 1. What new challenges in cooperation and leadership is digital media and technology bringing? Which new leadership opportunities are there in digital technology and virtual teams? What new leadership perspectives and theories are relevant?*
- 2. How can leaders communicate better with inspiration and learning from leadership and acting techniques from the theatre, storytelling from film and the selection of meaningful places and spaces to meet?*
- 3. How can leaders create connection, good emotional contact and trust with mindful, coaching, aesthetic and emotional embodied leadership?]*

The program will contain an intellectual knowledge dimension with the participants' reading and elaborating academic research and theories, as well as a practice dimension with participants' doing exercises, reflecting of what they are learning through task and group work, practicing in their job and writing about it, documenting the process by taking pictures, filming and more. The pedagogical driving theme of the program is that the participants will learn about leadership in a digital time through how this leadership program is developed and run; meta learning. The program is in its nature inspired by newer pedagogical approaches based on digital learning platforms, but will also use insights and techniques from research about digital leadership. The program Mindful leadership (in a digital time) is in its contents and format based on participants' being involved and co-producing in the learning process by actively sharing and participating both in the class room and in the digital space. This form of shared, network based, sharing, co-producing pedagogics places the participants in the center with the professional teacher as coach and adviser in the learning process, just like leadership should be in a digital time.

Appendix 4: Interview guide (first round)

INTRODUKSJON

- Kort forklaring av hensikten med intervjuet
- Avklaring rundt praktisk (Samtykkeerklæring og godkjenning av opptak)

- Gi en kort beskrivelse av hvem du er og hva du driver med
 - Er du leder?
 - Har du vært leder?
 - Har du ambisjoner om å bli leder?

HOVEDDEL

Forventninger og deltagelse

- Hvorfor valgte du å melde deg på programmet tilstedeværende ledelse?
 - Digitalisering og ledelse -> "gap"
- Hvordan fikk du vite om kurset?
- Hvilke forventninger har du til programmet?

Insendi

- Hvordan var det første møtet ditt med plattformen Insendi?
 - Når var det? Før eller etter samling 1
- Hvor mye tid /Hvor ofte har du jobbet med/vært inne på plattformen?
- Har du opplevd noen utfordringer i forbindelse med bruk av plattformen Insendi?
 - Hvis ja, utdyp hva?
- Hvordan har ... fungert for deg som læringsressurs?
 - Podcast
 - Pensum
 - Relevans og vanskelighetsgrad
 - Anbefalt litteratur
 - Læringslogg
 - Virtuelle oppgaver som sticky notes/whiteboard osv.

Utdyp (Hva lærte du/Hva fikk du lyst til å lære mer om)

- Hva synes du om denne måten å lære på?
 - Positivt/Negativt

Første samling

- Hvordan synes du første samling har vært?
- Hva har du noe "konkret" lært/sitter du igjen med etter første samling?
- Hvordan påvirket samlingen deg til å benytte Insendi fremover?
- Har du møttes med ditt virtuelle læringsteam?
 - Hva gjorde dere?
 - Hvordan kommuniserte dere?
 - Hvordan fungerte dere?

AVSLUTNING

- Er det noe du ønsker å legge til?
- Takke for at de tok seg tid til å delta og svare på spørsmål!

Generelle oppfølgingsspørsmål

- Kan du utdype det?
- Kan du gi et eksempel?
- Hva legger du i det?

Appendix 5: Interview guide (second round)

INTRODUKSJON

- Siden vi hadde en kort bli-kjent del forrige intervju, så hopper jeg rett til hoveddelen.

HOVEDDEL

Om ledelse

- Hva er ledelse for deg?
- Hva er viktig å ta hensyn til i en digital tid som leder?
- Hvilke utfordringer har du lagt merke til?
 - Har du erfart noe av dette personlig?
 - Hvis ja: hvordan har det påvirket deg?
- Hva mener du en leder må ta hensyn til i dagens arbeidsliv?
 - Har dette programmet bidratt til å øke denne forståelsen?
 - I så fall hvordan?

Italia + siste samling

- Hvordan var samlingen i Italia?
 - Hva gjorde det med deg personlig?
 - Hva gjorde det med deg i jobb sammenheng?
- Hva er det mest verdifulle du tok med deg hjem fra den samlingen?
- Var det noe du skulle ønske var gjort annerledes?

- Hvordan var siste samling?
- Sitter du igjen med noe spesielt etter denne samlingen?

- Nå som du har hatt hele programmet – hvordan har kombinasjonen av digitale units og samling fungert for deg?
 - Utfordringer?

Utbytte

- Hvordan vil du beskrive ditt utbytte av dette programmet?
- Hva vil du trekke frem ved programmet som har vært viktig for ditt utbytte?
 - Hva har "disse punktene " hjulpet med?
 - Hvorfor?
- Har det ført til noen endringer i din arbeidshverdag?
 - I så fall hvordan?
- Har tilstedeværende ledelse påvirket deg som person?
 - Hvordan?
- Hvordan syns du overføringsverdien fra dette programmet til jobben din har vært?
- Hvilke kilder til læring og utvikling har vært viktig for deg?
- Har motivasjonen din blitt påvirket av din deltagelse på dette programmet?

-
- Beskriv hvordan?

Programmet + muligheter

- Nå som programmet er gjennomført er det noe du mener har manglet eller burde vært gjort bedre?
 - Temaer, pensum, ulike læringsaktiviteter

AVSLUTNING

- Forrige intervju spurte jeg deg om forventningene dine til kurset, nå som du er ferdig. Føler du forventningene er møtt?
 - Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?

«Lim inn svaret til deltager fra forrige intervju om forventninger»

- Har dette programmet gitt deg innsikt i verktøy og kunnskap som du trenger for å utvikle deg som leder?
 - I så fall hva/hvilke?
- Føler du deg mer rustet til utfordringer som er knyttet til digitalisering og ledelse?
 - Hvis ja...
- Kan du prøve å beskrive hvordan deltagelsen i tilstedeværende ledelse har gjort deg litt mer rustet til å takle utfordringer som er knyttet til digitalisering og ledelse?

Generelle oppfølgingsspørsmål

- Kan du utdype det?
- Kan du gi et eksempel?
- Hva legger du i det?

Appendix 6: Questionnaire

BI Executive Tilstedeværende ledelse 2019

Q1 1. FORVENTNINGER TIL PROGRAMMET

Ta stilling til påstandene under der 1 er helt uenig og 5 er helt enig.

	Click to write Scale Point 1 (1)	Click to write Scale Point 2 (2)	Click to write Scale Point 3 (3)	Click to write Scale Point 4 (4)	Click to write Scale Point 5 (5)
Jeg hadde en klar oppfatning av hva læringsutbyttet skulle være fra 'Tilstedeværende Ledelse' (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg hadde en klar oppfatning av hva som var forventet av meg som student (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet har innfridd mine forventninger (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 2. LÆRINGSEFFEKTER FOR KUNNSKAP OG FERDIGHETER I LEDELSE

Ta stilling til påstandene under der 5 er helt enig og 1 er helt uenig.

	Click to write Scale Point 1 (1)	Click to write Scale Point 2 (2)	Click to write Scale Point 3 (3)	Click to write Scale Point 4 (4)	Click to write Scale Point 5 (5)
Kunnskapsmålene for programmet ble oppnådd (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ferdighetsmålene for programmet ble oppnådd (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet bidro til bevisstgjøring av meg selv som leder eller medarbeider (meg og min leder) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet ga meg økt selvbevissthet som leder eller medarbeider (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet ga meg økt selvtilit som leder eller medarbeider (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet har bidratt til at jeg har blitt tydeligere som leder (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet har bidratt til at jeg har blitt tydeligere i forventninger til ledelse (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet har gitt meg inspirasjon i jobben (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programmet har gitt meg økt motivasjon til å bli leder (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 3. UTBYTTE AV LÆRINGSAKTIVITETENE (PÅ SAMLINGER OG DIGITALT)

Hvordan har de ulike læringsaktivitetene listet opp under bidratt til din læring? Bruk dine egne ord fritt under hvert punkt. (Fritekst)

Struktur og innhold i læringsenhetene (Units) på Insendiplattformen (1)

Pensum (Core) (2) _____

Anbefalt litteratur (Supplementary) (3)

Videofilmer med Donatella De Paoli (4)

Andre videofilmer (Ted-talks etc.) (5)

Podcaster (intervjuer) (6) _____

Refleksjonsoppgaver til podcastene (7)

Avklaring av ledelsesperspektiv (samtaler om ledelse) (8)

Webinar om prosjektoppgaven (11. desember) (9)

Q4 4. LÆRINGSLOGG

Har du praktisert læringslogg? (1)

Hvis ja, hvordan bidro dette til din læring? Bruk dine egne ord fritt. (2)

Q5 5. VIRTUELLE LÆRINGSTEAM

- Hvor ofte møttes dere i det virtuelle læringsteamet? (1) _____
 - Hvordan møttes dere? (2) _____
 - Hvordan har det virtuelle læringsteamet bidratt til din læring? Besvar hver enkelt linje. Bruk dine egne ord fritt. (3) _____
 - Kommunikasjon i virtuelle læringsteam (4) _____
 - Erfaringsdeling i virtuelle læringsteam (5) _____
 - Samarbeid i virtuelle læringsteam (6) _____
 - Møteledelse i virtuelle læringsteam (7) _____
 - Overføringsverdi av arbeid i det virtuelle læringsteamet til egen arbeidsplass (8) _____
-

Q6 6. UTBYTTE AV SAMLINGER

Hvordan har disse ulike læringsaktivitetene bidratt til din læring? Bruk dine egne ord fritt.
Samling 1 på BI i Oslo

- Tematiske forelesninger (1) _____
 - Samtaler 2 og 2 (2) _____
 - Moderne dans (3) _____
-

Q8 UTBYTTE AV SAMLINGER

Samling 2 i Italia

Dag 1 – Meningsfulle møtesteder + Besøk i huset til Donatella (1)

Dag 2 - Storytelling (2) _____

Dag 3 – Kropp- og kommunikasjonsspråk fra teatret (3)

Q9 UTBYTTE AV SAMLINGER

Samling 3 på BI i Oslo

Tematiske forelesninger (1)

Samtaler to og to (2) _____

Q10 7. UTBYTTE AV ARBEID MED EKSAMEN

Hvordan har de to eksamensformene bidratt til din læring? Bruk dine egne ord fritt

Hjemmeeksamen (case) (1)

Prosjektoppgaven (2) _____